

Good News Bible

Old Testament
(Genesis s.d. Job)

Genesis

1 ¹ In the beginning, when God created the universe,

² the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water.

³ Then God commanded, Let there be light -- and light appeared.

⁴ God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated the light from the darkness,

⁵ and he named the light Day and the darkness Night. Evening passed and morning came -- that was the first day.

⁶ Then God commanded, Let there be a dome to divide the water and to keep it in two separate places -- and it was done. So God made a dome, and it separated the water under it from the water above it.

⁷ (1: 6)

⁸ He named the dome Sky. Evening passed and morning came -- that was the second day.

⁹Then God commanded, Let the water below the sky come together in one place, so that the land will appear -- and it was done.

¹⁰He named the land Earth, and the water which had come together he named Sea. And God was pleased with what he saw.

¹¹Then he commanded, Let the earth produce all kinds of plants, those that bear grain and those that bear fruit -- and it was done.

¹²So the earth produced all kinds of plants, and God was pleased with what he saw.

¹³Evening passed and morning came -- that was the third day.

¹⁴Then God commanded, Let lights appear in the sky to separate day from night and to show the time when days, years, and religious festivals begin;

¹⁵they will shine in the sky to give light to the earth -- and it was done.

¹⁶So God made the two larger lights, the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night; he also made the stars.

¹⁷ He placed the lights in the sky to shine on the earth,

¹⁸ to rule over the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God was pleased with what he saw.

¹⁹ Evening passed and morning came -- that was the fourth day.

²⁰ Then God commanded, Let the water be filled with many kinds of living beings, and let the air be filled with birds.

²¹ So God created the great sea monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw.

²² He blessed them all and told the creatures that live in the water to reproduce and to fill the sea, and he told the birds to increase in number.

²³ Evening passed and morning came -- that was the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God commanded, Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life: domestic and wild, large and small -- and it was done.

²⁵ So God made them all, and he was pleased with what he saw.

²⁶ Then God said, And now we will make human beings; they will be like us

and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small.

²⁷ So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female,

²⁸ blessed them, and said, Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.

²⁹ I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat;

³⁰ but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food -- and it was done.

³¹ God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came -- that was the sixth day.

2¹ And so the whole universe was completed.

² By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working.

³ He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that

day he had completed his creation and stopped working.

⁴And that is how the universe was created. When the LORD God made the universe,

⁵there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted, because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land;

⁶but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

⁷Then the LORD God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed.

⁹He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.

¹⁰A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; beyond Eden it divided into four rivers.

¹¹ The first river is the Pishon; it flows around the country of Havilah.

¹² (Pure gold is found there and also rare perfume and precious stones.)

¹³ The second river is the Gihon; it flows around the country of Cush.

¹⁴ The third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria, and the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ Then the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it.

¹⁶ He told him, You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden,

¹⁷ except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.

¹⁹ So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names.

²⁰So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him.

²¹Then the LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh.

²²He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him.

²³Then the man said, At last, here is one of my own kind -- Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh. Woman is her name because she was taken out of man.

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

²⁵The man and the woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.

3¹ Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?

²We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, the woman answered,

³ except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die.

⁴ The snake replied, That's not true; you will not die.

⁵ God said that because he knows that when you eat it, you will be like God and know what is good and what is bad.

⁶ The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it.

⁷ As soon as they had eaten it, they were given understanding and realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and covered themselves.

⁸ That evening they heard the LORD God walking in the garden, and they hid from him among the trees.

⁹ But the LORD God called out to the man, Where are you?

¹⁰ He answered, I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked.

¹¹ Who told you that you were naked? God asked. Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?

¹² The man answered, The woman you put here with me gave me the fruit, and I ate it.

¹³ The LORD God asked the woman, Why did you do this? She replied, The snake tricked me into eating it.

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the snake, You will be punished for this; you alone of all the animals must bear this curse: From now on you will crawl on your belly, and you will have to eat dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring's heel.

¹⁶ And he said to the woman, I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth. In spite of this, you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him.

¹⁷ And he said to the man, You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you

have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you.

¹⁸It will produce weeds and thorns, and you will have to eat wild plants.

¹⁹You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again.

²⁰Adam named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all human beings.

²¹And the LORD God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them.

²²Then the LORD God said, Now these human beings have become like one of us and have knowledge of what is good and what is bad. They must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live forever.

²³So the LORD God sent them out of the Garden of Eden and made them cultivate the soil from which they had been formed.

²⁴Then at the east side of the garden he put living creatures and a flaming

sword which turned in all directions. This was to keep anyone from coming near the tree that gives life.

4¹ Then Adam had intercourse with his wife, and she became pregnant. She bore a son and said, By the LORD's help I have gotten a son. So she named him Cain.

² Later she gave birth to another son, Abel. Abel became a shepherd, but Cain was a farmer.

³ After some time Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the LORD.

⁴ Then Abel brought the first lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it, and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering,

⁵ but he rejected Cain and his offering. Cain became furious, and he scowled in anger.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, Why are you angry? Why that scowl on your face?

⁷ If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling; but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your

door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it.

⁸Then Cain said to his brother Abel, Let's go out in the fields. When they were out in the fields, Cain turned on his brother and killed him.

⁹The LORD asked Cain, Where is your brother Abel? He answered, I don't know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother?

¹⁰Then the LORD said, Why have you done this terrible thing? Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground, like a voice calling for revenge.

¹¹You are placed under a curse and can no longer farm the soil. It has soaked up your brother's blood as if it had opened its mouth to receive it when you killed him.

¹²If you try to grow crops, the soil will not produce anything; you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.

¹³And Cain said to the LORD, This punishment is too hard for me to bear.

¹⁴You are driving me off the land and away from your presence. I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.

¹⁵But the LORD answered, No. If anyone kills you, seven lives will be taken in revenge. So the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who met him not to kill him.

¹⁶And Cain went away from the LORD's presence and lived in a land called Wandering, which is east of Eden.

¹⁷Cain and his wife had a son and named him Enoch. Then Cain built a city and named it after his son.

¹⁸Enoch had a son named Irad, who was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael had a son named Methushael, who was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech had two wives, Adah and Zillah.

²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the ancestor of those who raise livestock and live in tents.

²¹His brother was Jubal, the ancestor of all musicians who play the harp and the flute.

²²Zillah gave birth to Tubal Cain, who made all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal Cain was Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, listen to me: I have killed a young man because he struck me.

²⁴If seven lives are taken to pay for killing Cain, Seventy-seven will be taken if anyone kills me.

²⁵Adam and his wife had another son. She said, God has given me a son to replace Abel, whom Cain killed. So she named him Seth.

²⁶Seth had a son whom he named Enosh. It was then that people began using the LORD's holy name in worship.

5¹This is the list of the descendants of Adam. (When God created human beings, he made them like himself.

²He created them male and female, blessed them, and named them Human Beings.)

³When Adam was 130 years old, he had a son who was like him, and he named him Seth.

⁴After that, Adam lived another 800 years. He had other children

⁵and died at the age of 930.

⁶When Seth was 105, he had a son, Enosh,

⁷ and then lived another 807 years. He had other children

⁸ and died at the age of 912.

⁹ When Enosh was 90, he had a son, Kenan,

¹⁰ and then lived another 815 years. He had other children

¹¹ and died at the age of 905.

¹² When Kenan was 70, he had a son, Mahalalel,

¹³ and then lived another 840 years. He had other children

¹⁴ and died at the age of 910.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel was 65, he had a son, Jared,

¹⁶ and then lived another 830 years. He had other children

¹⁷ and died at the age of 895.

¹⁸ When Jared was 162, he had a son, Enoch,

¹⁹ and then lived another 800 years. He had other children

²⁰ and died at the age of 962.

²¹ When Enoch was 65, he had a son, Methuselah.

²² After that, Enoch lived in fellowship with God for 300 years and had other children.

²³ He lived to be 365 years old.

²⁴ He spent his life in fellowship with God, and then he disappeared, because God took him away.

²⁵ When Methuselah was 187, he had a son, Lamech,

²⁶ and then lived another 782 years. He had other children

²⁷ and died at the age of 969.

²⁸ When Lamech was 182, he had a son

²⁹ and said, From the very ground on which the LORD put a curse, this child will bring us relief from all our hard work; so he named him Noah.

³⁰ Lamech lived another 595 years. He had other children

³¹ and died at the age of 777.

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

6¹ When people had spread all over the world, and daughters were being born,

² some of the heavenly beings saw that these young women were beautiful, so they took the ones they liked.

³ Then the LORD said, I will not allow people to live forever; they are mortal.

From now on they will live no longer than 120 years.

⁴In those days, and even later, there were giants on the earth who were descendants of human women and the heavenly beings. They were the great heroes and famous men of long ago.

⁵When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time,

⁶he was sorry that he had ever made them and put them on the earth. He was so filled with regret

⁷that he said, I will wipe out these people I have created, and also the animals and the birds, because I am sorry that I made any of them.

⁸But the LORD was pleased with Noah.

⁹This is the story of Noah. He had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Noah had no faults and was the only good man of his time. He lived in fellowship with God,

¹⁰(6:9)

¹¹but everyone else was evil in God's sight, and violence had spread everywhere.

¹²God looked at the world and saw that it was evil, for the people were all living evil lives.

¹³God said to Noah, I have decided to put an end to all people. I will destroy them completely, because the world is full of their violent deeds.

¹⁴Build a boat for yourself out of good timber; make rooms in it and cover it with tar inside and out.

¹⁵Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

¹⁶Make a roof for the boat and leave a space of 18 inches between the roof and the sides. Build it with three decks and put a door in the side.

¹⁷I am going to send a flood on the earth to destroy every living being. Everything on the earth will die,

¹⁸but I will make a covenant with you. Go into the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives.

¹⁹Take into the boat with you a male and a female of every kind of animal and of every kind of bird, in order to keep them alive.

²⁰(6: 19)

²¹ Take along all kinds of food for you and for them.

²² Noah did everything that God commanded.

7 ¹ The LORD said to Noah, Go into the boat with your whole family; I have found that you are the only one in all the world who does what is right.

² Take with you seven pairs of each kind of ritually clean animal, but only one pair of each kind of unclean animal.

³ Take also seven pairs of each kind of bird. Do this so that every kind of animal and bird will be kept alive to reproduce again on the earth.

⁴ Seven days from now I am going to send rain that will fall for forty days and nights, in order to destroy all the living beings that I have made.

⁵ And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded.

⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came on the earth.

⁷ He and his wife, and his sons and their wives, went into the boat to escape the flood.

⁸A male and a female of every kind of animal and bird, whether ritually clean or unclean,

⁹went into the boat with Noah, as God had commanded.

¹⁰Seven days later the flood came.

¹¹When Noah was six hundred years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month all the outlets of the vast body of water beneath the earth burst open, all the floodgates of the sky were opened,

¹²and rain fell on the earth for forty days and nights.

¹³On that same day Noah and his wife went into the boat with their three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives.

¹⁴With them went every kind of animal, domestic and wild, large and small, and every kind of bird.

¹⁵A male and a female of each kind of living being went into the boat with Noah,

¹⁶as God had commanded. Then the LORD shut the door behind Noah.

¹⁷ The flood continued for forty days, and the water became deep enough for the boat to float.

¹⁸ The water became deeper, and the boat drifted on the surface.

¹⁹ It became so deep that it covered the highest mountains;

²⁰ it went on rising until it was about twenty-five feet above the tops of the mountains.

²¹ Every living being on the earth died -- every bird, every animal, and every person.

²² Everything on earth that breathed died.

²³ The LORD destroyed all living beings on the earth -- human beings, animals, and birds. The only ones left were Noah and those who were with him in the boat.

²⁴ The water did not start going down for a hundred and fifty days.

8¹ God had not forgotten Noah and all the animals with him in the boat; he caused a wind to blow, and the water started going down.

²The outlets of the water beneath the earth and the floodgates of the sky were closed. The rain stopped,

³and the water gradually went down for 150 days.

⁴On the seventeenth day of the seventh month the boat came to rest on a mountain in the Ararat range.

⁵The water kept going down, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains appeared.

⁶After forty days Noah opened a window

⁷and sent out a raven. It did not come back, but kept flying around until the water was completely gone.

⁸Meanwhile, Noah sent out a dove to see if the water had gone down,

⁹but since the water still covered all the land, the dove did not find a place to light. It flew back to the boat, and Noah reached out and took it in.

¹⁰He waited another seven days and sent out the dove again.

¹¹It returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. So Noah knew that the water had gone down.

¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent out the dove once more; this time it did not come back.

¹³When Noah was 601 years old, on the first day of the first month, the water was gone. Noah removed the covering of the boat, looked around, and saw that the ground was getting dry.

¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵God said to Noah,

¹⁶Go out of the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives.

¹⁷Take all the birds and animals out with you, so that they may reproduce and spread over all the earth.

¹⁸So Noah went out of the boat with his wife, his sons, and their wives.

¹⁹All the animals and birds went out of the boat in groups of their own kind.

²⁰Noah built an altar to the LORD; he took one of each kind of ritually clean animal and bird, and burned them whole as a sacrifice on the altar.

²¹The odor of the sacrifice pleased the LORD, and he said to himself, Never again will I put the earth under a curse

because of what people do; I know that from the time they are young their thoughts are evil. Never again will I destroy all living beings, as I have done this time.

²²As long as the world exists, there will be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.

9¹ God blessed Noah and his sons and said, Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth.

²All the animals, birds, and fish will live in fear of you. They are all placed under your power.

³Now you can eat them, as well as green plants; I give them all to you for food.

⁴The one thing you must not eat is meat with blood still in it; I forbid this because the life is in the blood.

⁵If anyone takes human life, he will be punished. I will punish with death any animal that takes a human life.

⁶Human beings were made like God, so whoever murders one of them will be killed by someone else.

⁷ You must have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth.

⁸ God said to Noah and his sons,

⁹ I am now making my covenant with you and with your descendants,

¹⁰ and with all living beings -- all birds and all animals -- everything that came out of the boat with you.

¹¹ With these words I make my covenant with you: I promise that never again will all living beings be destroyed by a flood; never again will a flood destroy the earth.

¹² As a sign of this everlasting covenant which I am making with you and with all living beings,

¹³ I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant with the world.

¹⁴ Whenever I cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears,

¹⁵ I will remember my promise to you and to all the animals that a flood will never again destroy all living beings.

¹⁶ When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the

everlasting covenant between me and all living beings on earth.

¹⁷That is the sign of the promise which I am making to all living beings.

¹⁸The sons of Noah who went out of the boat were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)

¹⁹These three sons of Noah were the ancestors of all the people on earth.

²⁰Noah, who was a farmer, was the first man to plant a vineyard.

²¹After he drank some of the wine, he became drunk, took off his clothes, and lay naked in his tent.

²²When Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked, he went out and told his two brothers.

²³Then Shem and Japheth took a robe and held it behind them on their shoulders. They walked backward into the tent and covered their father, keeping their faces turned away so as not to see him naked.

²⁴When Noah sobered up and learned what his youngest son had done to him,

²⁵he said, A curse on Canaan! He will be a slave to his brothers.

²⁶Give praise to the LORD, the God of Shem! Canaan will be the slave of Shem.

²⁷May God cause Japheth to increase! May his descendants live with the people of Shem! Canaan will be the slave of Japheth.

²⁸After the flood Noah lived 350 years

²⁹and died at the age of 950.

10¹These are the descendants of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. These three had sons after the flood.

²The sons of Japheth -- Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras -- were the ancestors of the peoples who bear their names.

³The descendants of Gomer were the people of Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴The descendants of Javan were the people of Elishah, Spain, Cyprus, and Rhodes;

⁵they were the ancestors of the people who live along the coast and on the islands. These are the descendants of Japheth, living in their different tribes and countries, each group speaking its own language.

⁶The sons of Ham -- Cush, Egypt, Libya, and Canaan -- were the ancestors of the peoples who bear their names.

⁷The descendants of Cush were the people of Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were the people of Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush had a son named Nimrod, who became the world's first great conqueror.

⁹By the LORD's help he was a great hunter, and that is why people say, May the LORD make you as great a hunter as Nimrod!

¹⁰At first his kingdom included Babylon, Erech, and Accad, all three of them in Babylonia.

¹¹From that land he went to Assyria and built the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah,

¹²and Resen, which is between Nineveh and the great city of Calah.

¹³The descendants of Egypt were the people of Lydia, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh,

¹⁴Pathrus, Casluh, and of Crete, from whom the Philistines are descended.

¹⁵ Canaan's sons -- Sidon, the oldest, and Heth -- were the ancestors of the peoples who bear their names.

¹⁶ Canaan was also the ancestor of the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites,

¹⁷ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites,

¹⁸ the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. The different tribes of the Canaanites spread out,

¹⁹ until the Canaanite borders reached from Sidon southward to Gerar near Gaza, and eastward to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim near Lasha.

²⁰ These are the descendants of Ham, living in their different tribes and countries, each group speaking its own language.

²¹ Shem, the older brother of Japheth, was the ancestor of all the Hebrews.

²² Shem's sons -- Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram -- were the ancestors of the peoples who bear their names.

²³ The descendants of Aram were the people of Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshek.

²⁴ Arpachshad was the father of Shelah, who was the father of Eber.

²⁵Eber had two sons: one was named Peleg, because during his time the people of the world were divided; and the other was named Joktan.

²⁶The descendants of Joktan were the people of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba,

²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All of them were descended from Joktan.

³⁰The land in which they lived extended from Mesha to Sephar in the eastern hill country.

³¹These are the descendants of Shem, living in their different tribes and countries, each group speaking its own language.

³²All these peoples are the descendants of Noah, nation by nation, according to their different lines of descent. After the flood all the nations of the earth were descended from the sons of Noah.

11 ¹At first, the people of the whole world had only one language and used the same words.

²As they wandered about in the East, they came to a plain in Babylonia and settled there.

³They said to one another, Come on! Let's make bricks and bake them hard. So they had bricks to build with and tar to hold them together.

⁴They said, Now let's build a city with a tower that reaches the sky, so that we can make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the earth.

⁵Then the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which they had built,

⁶and he said, Now then, these are all one people and they speak one language; this is just the beginning of what they are going to do. Soon they will be able to do anything they want!

⁷Let us go down and mix up their language so that they will not understand each other.

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

⁹The city was called Babylon, because there the LORD mixed up the language of all the people, and from there he scattered them all over the earth.

¹⁰These are the descendants of Shem. Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he had a son, Arpachshad.

¹¹After that, he lived another 500 years and had other children.

¹²When Arpachshad was 35 years old, he had a son, Shelah;

¹³after that, he lived another 403 years and had other children.

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he had a son, Eber;

¹⁵after that, he lived another 403 years and had other children.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he had a son, Peleg;

¹⁷after that, he lived another 430 years and had other children.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he had a son, Reu;

¹⁹after that, he lived another 209 years and had other children.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he had a son, Serug;

²¹after that, he lived another 207 years and had other children.

²²When Serug was 30 years old, he had a son, Nahor;

²³ after that, he lived another 200 years and had other children.

²⁴ When Nahor was 29 years old, he had a son, Terah;

²⁵ after that, he lived another 119 years and had other children.

²⁶ After Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

²⁷ These are the descendants of Terah, who was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot,

²⁸ and Haran died in his hometown of Ur in Babylonia, while his father was still living.

²⁹ Abram married Sarai, and Nahor married Milcah, the daughter of Haran, who was also the father of Iscah.

³⁰ Sarai was not able to have children.

³¹ Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, who was the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, Abram's wife, and with them he left the city of Ur in Babylonia to go to the land of Canaan. They went as far as Haran and settled there.

³² Terah died there at the age of 205.

12¹ The LORD said to Abram, Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's home, and go to a land that I am going to show you.

² I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you, But I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations.

⁴ When Abram was seventy-five years old, he started out from Haran, as the LORD had told him to do; and Lot went with him.

⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the wealth and all the slaves they had acquired in Haran, and they started out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan,

⁶ Abram traveled through the land until he came to the sacred tree of Moreh, the holy place at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were still living in the land.)

⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, This is the country that I am going to give to your descendants. Then

Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

⁸After that, he moved on south to the hill country east of the city of Bethel and set up his camp between Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There also he built an altar and worshiped the LORD.

⁹Then he moved on from place to place, going toward the southern part of Canaan.

¹⁰But there was a famine in Canaan, and it was so bad that Abram went farther south to Egypt, to live there for a while.

¹¹When he was about to cross the border into Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, You are a beautiful woman.

¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will assume that you are my wife, and so they will kill me and let you live.

¹³Tell them that you are my sister; then because of you they will let me live and treat me well.

¹⁴When he crossed the border into Egypt, the Egyptians did see that his wife was beautiful.

¹⁵Some of the court officials saw her and told the king how beautiful she was; so she was taken to his palace.

¹⁶Because of her the king treated Abram well and gave him flocks of sheep and goats, cattle, donkeys, slaves, and camels.

¹⁷But because the king had taken Sarai, the LORD sent terrible diseases on him and on the people of his palace.

¹⁸Then the king sent for Abram and asked him, What have you done to me? Why didn't you tell me that she was your wife?

¹⁹Why did you say that she was your sister, and let me take her as my wife? Here is your wife; take her and get out!

²⁰The king gave orders to his men, so they took Abram and put him out of the country, together with his wife and everything he owned.

13¹Abram went north out of Egypt to the southern part of Canaan with his wife and everything he owned, and Lot went with him.

²Abram was a very rich man, with sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as silver and gold.

³Then he left there and moved from place to place, going toward Bethel. He reached the place between Bethel and Ai where he had camped before

⁴and had built an altar. There he worshiped the LORD.

⁵Lot also had sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as his own family and servants.

⁶And so there was not enough pasture land for the two of them to stay together, because they had too many animals.

⁷So quarrels broke out between the men who took care of Abram's animals and those who took care of Lot's animals. (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were still living in the land.)

⁸Then Abram said to Lot, We are relatives, and your men and my men shouldn't be quarreling.

⁹So let's separate. Choose any part of the land you want. You go one way, and I'll go the other.

¹⁰Lot looked around and saw that the whole Jordan Valley, all the way to Zoar, had plenty of water, like the Garden of the LORD or like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD had destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.)

¹¹ So Lot chose the whole Jordan Valley for himself and moved away toward the east. That is how the two men parted.

¹² Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, and Lot settled among the cities in the valley and camped near Sodom,

¹³ whose people were wicked and sinned against the LORD.

¹⁴ After Lot had left, the LORD said to Abram, From where you are, look carefully in all directions.

¹⁵ I am going to give you and your descendants all the land that you see, and it will be yours forever.

¹⁶ I am going to give you so many descendants that no one will be able to count them all; it would be as easy to count all the specks of dust on earth!

¹⁷ Now, go and look over the whole land, because I am going to give it all to you.

¹⁸ So Abram moved his camp and settled near the sacred trees of Mamre at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

14 ¹ Four kings, Amraphel of
Babylonia, Arioch of Ellasar,

Chedorlaomer of Elam, and Tidal of Goiim,

²went to war against five other kings: Bera of Sodom, Birsha of Gomorrah, Shinab of Admah, Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (or Zoar).

³These five kings had formed an alliance and joined forces in Siddim Valley, which is now the Dead Sea.

⁴They had been under the control of Chedorlaomer for twelve years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

⁵In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and his allies came with their armies and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in the plain of Kiriathaim,

⁶and the Horites in the mountains of Edom, pursuing them as far as Elparan on the edge of the desert.

⁷Then they turned around and came back to Kadesh (then known as Enmishpat). They conquered all the land of the Amalekites and defeated the Amorites who lived in Hazazon Tamar.

⁸Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela drew up their

armies for battle in Siddim Valley and fought

⁹against the kings of Elam, Goiim, Babylonia, and Ellasar, five kings against four.

¹⁰The valley was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah tried to run away from the battle, they fell into the pits; but the other three kings escaped to the mountains.

¹¹The four kings took everything in Sodom and Gomorrah, including the food, and went away.

¹²Lot, Abram's nephew, was living in Sodom, so they took him and all his possessions.

¹³But a man escaped and reported all this to Abram, the Hebrew, who was living near the sacred trees belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his brothers Eshcol and Aner were Abram's allies.

¹⁴When Abram heard that his nephew had been captured, he called together all the fighting men in his camp, 318 in all, and pursued the four kings all the way to Dan.

¹⁵ There he divided his men into groups, attacked the enemy by night, and defeated them. He chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus,

¹⁶ and got back all the loot that had been taken. He also brought back his nephew Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other prisoners.

¹⁷ When Abram came back from his victory over Chedorlaomer and the other kings, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in Shaveh Valley (also called King's Valley).

¹⁸ And Melchizedek, who was king of Salem and also a priest of the Most High God, brought bread and wine to Abram,

¹⁹ blessed him, and said, May the Most High God, who made heaven and earth, bless Abram!

²⁰ May the Most High God, who gave you victory over your enemies, be praised! And Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the loot he had recovered.

²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, Keep the loot, but give me back all my people.

²² Abram answered, I solemnly swear before the LORD, the Most High God, Maker of heaven and earth,

²³ that I will not keep anything of yours, not even a thread or a sandal strap. Then you can never say, I am the one who made Abram rich.

²⁴ I will take nothing for myself. I will accept only what my men have used. But let my allies, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, take their share.

15 ¹ After this, Abram had a vision and heard the LORD say to him, Do not be afraid, Abram. I will shield you from danger and give you a great reward.

² But Abram answered, Sovereign LORD, what good will your reward do me, since I have no children? My only heir is Eliezer of Damascus.

³ You have given me no children, and one of my slaves will inherit my property.

⁴ Then he heard the LORD speaking to him again: This slave Eliezer will not inherit your property; your own son will be your heir.

⁵ The LORD took him outside and said, Look at the sky and try to count the

stars; you will have as many descendants as that.

⁶Abram put his trust in the LORD, and because of this the LORD was pleased with him and accepted him.

⁷Then the LORD said to him, I am the LORD, who led you out of Ur in Babylonia, to give you this land as your own.

⁸But Abram asked, Sovereign LORD, how can I know that it will be mine?

⁹He answered, Bring me a cow, a goat, and a ram, each of them three years old, and a dove and a pigeon.

¹⁰Abram brought the animals to God, cut them in half, and placed the halves opposite each other in two rows; but he did not cut up the birds.

¹¹Vultures came down on the bodies, but Abram drove them off.

¹²When the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and fear and terror came over him.

¹³The LORD said to him, Your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land; they will be slaves there and will be treated cruelly for four hundred years.

¹⁴ But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and when they leave that foreign land, they will take great wealth with them.

¹⁵ You yourself will live to a ripe old age, die in peace, and be buried.

¹⁶ It will be four generations before your descendants come back here, because I will not drive out the Amorites until they become so wicked that they must be punished.

¹⁷ When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch suddenly appeared and passed between the pieces of the animals.

¹⁸ Then and there the LORD made a covenant with Abram. He said, I promise to give your descendants all this land from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates River,

¹⁹ including the lands of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,

²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

16¹ Abram's wife Sarai had not borne him any children. But she

had an Egyptian slave woman named Hagar,

²and so she said to Abram, The LORD has kept me from having children. Why don't you sleep with my slave? Perhaps she can have a child for me. Abram agreed with what Sarai said.

³So she gave Hagar to him to be his concubine. (This happened after Abram had lived in Canaan for ten years.)

⁴Abram had intercourse with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she found out that she was pregnant, she became proud and despised Sarai.

⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, It's your fault that Hagar despises me. I myself gave her to you, and ever since she found out that she was pregnant, she has despised me. May the LORD judge which of us is right, you or me!

⁶Abram answered, Very well, she is your slave and under your control; do whatever you want with her. Then Sarai treated Hagar so cruelly that she ran away.

⁷The angel of the LORD met Hagar at a spring in the desert on the road to Shur

⁸and said, Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going? She answered, I am running away from my mistress.

⁹He said, Go back to her and be her slave.

¹⁰Then he said, I will give you so many descendants that no one will be able to count them.

¹¹You are going to have a son, and you will name him Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your cry of distress.

¹²But your son will live like a wild donkey; he will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. He will live apart from all his relatives.

¹³Hagar asked herself, Have I really seen God and lived to tell about it? So she called the LORD, who had spoken to her, A God Who Sees.

¹⁴That is why people call the well between Kadesh and Bered The Well of the Living One Who Sees Me.

¹⁵Hagar bore Abram a son, and he named him Ishmael.

¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old at the time.

17 ¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, I am the Almighty God. Obey me and always do what is right.

²I will make my covenant with you and give you many descendants.

³Abram bowed down with his face touching the ground, and God said,

⁴I make this covenant with you: I promise that you will be the ancestor of many nations.

⁵Your name will no longer be Abram, but Abraham, because I am making you the ancestor of many nations.

⁶I will give you many descendants, and some of them will be kings. You will have so many descendants that they will become nations.

⁷I will keep my promise to you and to your descendants in future generations as an everlasting covenant. I will be your God and the God of your descendants.

⁸I will give to you and to your descendants this land in which you are now a foreigner. The whole land of Canaan will belong to your descendants forever, and I will be their God.

⁹God said to Abraham, You also must agree to keep the covenant with me, both you and your descendants in future generations.

¹⁰You and your descendants must all agree to circumcise every male among you.

¹¹From now on you must circumcise every baby boy when he is eight days old, including slaves born in your homes and slaves bought from foreigners. This will show that there is a covenant between you and me.

¹²(17:11)

¹³Each one must be circumcised, and this will be a physical sign to show that my covenant with you is everlasting.

¹⁴Any male who has not been circumcised will no longer be considered one of my people, because he has not kept the covenant with me.

¹⁵God said to Abraham, You must no longer call your wife Sarai; from now on her name is Sarah.

¹⁶I will bless her, and I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will become the mother of nations, and there will be kings among her descendants.

¹⁷ Abraham bowed down with his face touching the ground, but he began to laugh when he thought, Can a man have a child when he is a hundred years old? Can Sarah have a child at ninety?

¹⁸ He asked God, Why not let Ishmael be my heir?

¹⁹ But God said, No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will name him Isaac. I will keep my covenant with him and with his descendants forever. It is an everlasting covenant.

²⁰ I have heard your request about Ishmael, so I will bless him and give him many children and many descendants. He will be the father of twelve princes, and I will make a great nation of his descendants.

²¹ But I will keep my covenant with your son Isaac, who will be born to Sarah about this time next year.

²² When God finished speaking to Abraham, he left him.

²³ On that same day Abraham obeyed God and circumcised his son Ishmael and all the other males in his household, including the slaves born in his home and those he had bought.

²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised,

²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen.

²⁶ They were both circumcised on the same day,

²⁷ together with all of Abraham's slaves.

18¹ The LORD appeared to Abraham at the sacred trees of Mamre. As Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the hottest part of the day,

² he looked up and saw three men standing there. As soon as he saw them, he ran out to meet them. Bowing down with his face touching the ground,

³ he said, Sirs, please do not pass by my home without stopping; I am here to serve you.

⁴ Let me bring some water for you to wash your feet; you can rest here beneath this tree.

⁵ I will also bring a bit of food; it will give you strength to continue your journey. You have honored me by coming to my home, so let me serve you. They replied, Thank you; we accept.

⁶Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, Quick, take a sack of your best flour, and bake some bread.

⁷Then he ran to the herd and picked out a calf that was tender and fat, and gave it to a servant, who hurried to get it ready.

⁸He took some cream, some milk, and the meat, and set the food before the men. There under the tree he served them himself, and they ate.

⁹Then they asked him, Where is your wife Sarah? She is there in the tent, he answered.

¹⁰One of them said, Nine months from now I will come back, and your wife Sarah will have a son. Sarah was behind him, at the door of the tent, listening.

¹¹Abraham and Sarah were very old, and Sarah had stopped having her monthly periods.

¹²So Sarah laughed to herself and said, Now that I am old and worn out, can I still enjoy sex? And besides, my husband is old too.

¹³Then the LORD asked Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh and say, Can I really have a child when I am so old?

¹⁴Is anything too hard for the LORD? As I said, nine months from now I will return, and Sarah will have a son.

¹⁵Because Sarah was afraid, she denied it. I didn't laugh, she said. Yes, you did, he replied. You laughed.

¹⁶Then the men left and went to a place where they could look down at Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on their way.

¹⁷And the LORD said to himself, I will not hide from Abraham what I am going to do.

¹⁸His descendants will become a great and mighty nation, and through him I will bless all the nations.

¹⁹I have chosen him in order that he may command his sons and his descendants to obey me and to do what is right and just. If they do, I will do everything for him that I have promised.

²⁰Then the LORD said to Abraham, There are terrible accusations against Sodom and Gomorrah, and their sin is very great.

²¹I must go down to find out whether or not the accusations which I have heard are true.

²²Then the two men left and went on toward Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham.

²³Abraham approached the LORD and asked, Are you really going to destroy the innocent with the guilty?

²⁴If there are fifty innocent people in the city, will you destroy the whole city? Won't you spare it in order to save the fifty?

²⁵Surely you won't kill the innocent with the guilty. That's impossible! You can't do that. If you did, the innocent would be punished along with the guilty. That is impossible. The judge of all the earth has to act justly.

²⁶The LORD answered, If I find fifty innocent people in Sodom, I will spare the whole city for their sake.

²⁷Abraham spoke again: Please forgive my boldness in continuing to speak to you, Lord. I am only a man and have no right to say anything.

²⁸But perhaps there will be only forty-five innocent people instead of fifty. Will you destroy the whole city because there are five too few? The

LORD answered, I will not destroy the city if I find forty-five innocent people.

²⁹Abraham spoke again: Perhaps there will be only forty. He replied, I will not destroy it if there are forty.

³⁰Abraham said, Please don't be angry, Lord, but I must speak again. What if there are only thirty? He said, I will not do it if I find thirty.

³¹Abraham said, Please forgive my boldness in continuing to speak to you, Lord. Suppose that only twenty are found? He said, I will not destroy the city if I find twenty.

³²Abraham said, Please don't be angry, Lord, and I will speak only once more. What if only ten are found? He said, I will not destroy it if there are ten.

³³After he had finished speaking with Abraham, the LORD went away, and Abraham returned home.

19¹When the two angels came to Sodom that evening, Lot was sitting at the city gate. As soon as he saw them, he got up and went to meet them. He bowed down before them

²and said, Sirs, I am here to serve you. Please come to my house. You can wash

your feet and spend the night. In the morning you can get up early and go on your way. But they answered, No, we will spend the night here in the city square.

³He kept on urging them, and finally they went with him to his house. Lot ordered his servants to bake some bread and prepare a fine meal for the guests. When it was ready, they ate it.

⁴Before the guests went to bed, the men of Sodom surrounded the house. All the men of the city, both young and old, were there.

⁵They called out to Lot and asked, Where are the men who came to stay with you tonight? Bring them out to us! The men of Sodom wanted to have sex with them.

⁶Lot went outside and closed the door behind him.

⁷He said to them, Friends, I beg you, don't do such a wicked thing!

⁸Look, I have two daughters who are still virgins. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do whatever you want with them. But don't do anything to these men; they are guests in my house, and I must protect them.

⁹But they said, Get out of our way, you foreigner! Who are you to tell us what to do? Out of our way, or we will treat you worse than them. They pushed Lot back and moved up to break down the door.

¹⁰But the two men inside reached out, pulled Lot back into the house, and shut the door.

¹¹Then they struck all the men outside with blindness, so that they couldn't find the door.

¹²The two men said to Lot, If you have anyone else here -- sons, daughters, sons-in-law, or any other relatives living in the city -- get them out of here,

¹³because we are going to destroy this place. The LORD has heard the terrible accusations against these people and has sent us to destroy Sodom.

¹⁴Then Lot went to the men that his daughters were going to marry, and said, Hurry up and get out of here; the LORD is going to destroy this place. But they thought he was joking.

¹⁵At dawn the angels tried to make Lot hurry. Quick! they said. Take your wife and your two daughters and get out, so

that you will not lose your lives when the city is destroyed.

¹⁶Lot hesitated. The LORD, however, had pity on him; so the men took him, his wife, and his two daughters by the hand and led them out of the city.

¹⁷Then one of the angels said, Run for your lives! Don't look back and don't stop in the valley. Run to the hills, so that you won't be killed.

¹⁸But Lot answered, No, please don't make us do that, sir.

¹⁹You have done me a great favor and saved my life. But the hills are too far away; the disaster will overtake me, and I will die before I get there.

²⁰Do you see that little town? It is near enough. Let me go over there -- you can see it is just a small place -- and I will be safe.

²¹He answered, All right, I agree. I won't destroy that town.

²²Hurry! Run! I can't do anything until you get there. Because Lot called it small, the town was named Zoar.

²³The sun was rising when Lot reached Zoar.

²⁴ Suddenly the LORD rained burning sulfur on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah

²⁵ and destroyed them and the whole valley, along with all the people there and everything that grew on the land.

²⁶ But Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

²⁷ Early the next morning Abraham hurried to the place where he had stood in the presence of the LORD.

²⁸ He looked down at Sodom and Gomorrah and the whole valley and saw smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a huge furnace.

²⁹ But when God destroyed the cities of the valley where Lot was living, he kept Abraham in mind and allowed Lot to escape to safety.

³⁰ Because Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar, he and his two daughters moved up into the hills and lived in a cave.

³¹ The older daughter said to her sister, Our father is getting old, and there are no men in the whole world to marry us so that we can have children.

³² Come on, let's get our father drunk, so that we can sleep with him and have children by him.

³³ That night they gave him wine to drink, and the older daughter had intercourse with him. But he was so drunk that he didn't know it.

³⁴ The next day the older daughter said to her sister, I slept with him last night; now let's get him drunk again tonight, and you sleep with him. Then each of us will have a child by our father.

³⁵ So that night they got him drunk, and the younger daughter had intercourse with him. Again he was so drunk that he didn't know it.

³⁶ In this way both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their own father.

³⁷ The older daughter had a son, whom she named Moab. He was the ancestor of the present-day Moabites.

³⁸ The younger daughter also had a son, whom she named Benammi. He was the ancestor of the present-day Ammonites.

20¹ Abraham moved from Mamre to the southern part of Canaan and lived between Kadesh and Shur. Later, while he was living in Gerar,

² he said that his wife Sarah was his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him.

³ One night God appeared to him in a dream and said, You are going to die, because you have taken this woman; she is already married.

⁴ But Abimelech had not come near her, and he said, Lord, I am innocent! Would you destroy me and my people?

⁵ Abraham himself said that she was his sister, and she said the same thing. I did this with a clear conscience, and I have done no wrong.

⁶ God replied in the dream, Yes, I know that you did it with a clear conscience; so I kept you from sinning against me and did not let you touch her.

⁷ But now, give the woman back to her husband. He is a prophet, and he will pray for you, so that you will not die. But if you do not give her back, I warn you that you are going to die, you and all your people.

⁸ Early the next morning Abimelech called all his officials and told them what had happened, and they were terrified.

⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham and asked, What have you done to us? What wrong have I done to you to make you bring this disaster on me and my kingdom? No one should ever do what you have done to me.

¹⁰Why did you do it?

¹¹Abraham answered, I thought that there would be no one here who has reverence for God and that they would kill me to get my wife.

¹²She really is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not of my mother, and I married her.

¹³So when God sent me from my father's house into foreign lands, I said to her, You can show how loyal you are to me by telling everyone that I am your brother.

¹⁴Then Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham, and at the same time he gave him sheep, cattle, and slaves.

¹⁵He said to Abraham, Here is my whole land; live anywhere you like.

¹⁶He said to Sarah, I am giving your brother a thousand pieces of silver as proof to all who are with you that you

are innocent; everyone will know that you have done no wrong.

¹⁷ Because of what had happened to Sarah, Abraham's wife, the LORD had made it impossible for any woman in Abimelech's palace to have children. So Abraham prayed for Abimelech, and God healed him. He also healed his wife and his slave women, so that they could have children.

¹⁸ (20: 17)

21 ¹ The LORD blessed Sarah, as he had promised,

² and she became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham when he was old. The boy was born at the time God had said he would be born.

³ Abraham named him Isaac,

⁴ and when Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded.

⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born.

⁶ Sarah said, God has brought me joy and laughter. Everyone who hears about it will laugh with me.

⁷ Then she added, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse

children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.

⁸The child grew, and on the day that he was weaned, Abraham gave a great feast.

⁹One day Ishmael, whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, was playing with Sarah's son Isaac.

¹⁰Sarah saw them and said to Abraham, Send this slave and her son away. The son of this woman must not get any part of your wealth, which my son Isaac should inherit.

¹¹This troubled Abraham very much, because Ishmael also was his son.

¹²But God said to Abraham, Don't be worried about the boy and your slave Hagar. Do whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that you will have the descendants I have promised.

¹³I will also give many children to the son of the slave woman, so that they will become a nation. He too is your son.

¹⁴Early the next morning Abraham gave Hagar some food and a leather bag full of water. He put the child on her back and sent her away. She left

and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.

¹⁵When the water was all gone, she left the child under a bush

¹⁶and sat down about a hundred yards away. She said to herself, I can't bear to see my child die. While she was sitting there, she began to cry.

¹⁷God heard the boy crying, and from heaven the angel of God spoke to Hagar, What are you troubled about, Hagar? Don't be afraid. God has heard the boy crying.

¹⁸Get up, go and pick him up, and comfort him. I will make a great nation out of his descendants.

¹⁹Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well. She went and filled the leather bag with water and gave some to the boy.

²⁰God was with the boy as he grew up; he lived in the wilderness of Paran and became a skillful hunter.

²¹His mother got an Egyptian wife for him.

²²At that time Abimelech went with Phicol, the commander of his army, and

said to Abraham, God is with you in everything you do.

²³ So make a vow here in the presence of God that you will not deceive me, my children, or my descendants. I have been loyal to you, so promise that you will also be loyal to me and to this country in which you are living.

²⁴ Abraham said, I promise.

²⁵ Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well which the servants of Abimelech had seized.

²⁶ Abimelech said, I don't know who did this. You didn't tell me about it, and this is the first I have heard of it.

²⁷ Then Abraham gave some sheep and cattle to Abimelech, and the two of them made an agreement.

²⁸ Abraham separated seven lambs from his flock,

²⁹ and Abimelech asked him, Why did you do that?

³⁰ Abraham answered, Accept these seven lambs. By doing this, you admit that I am the one who dug this well.

³¹ And so the place was called Beersheba, because it was there that the two of them made a vow.

³²After they had made this agreement at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol went back to Philistia.

³³Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and worshiped the LORD, the Everlasting God.

³⁴Abraham lived in Philistia for a long time.

22¹Some time later God tested Abraham; he called to him, Abraham! And Abraham answered, Yes, here I am!

²Take your son, God said, your only son, Isaac, whom you love so much, and go to the land of Moriah. There on a mountain that I will show you, offer him as a sacrifice to me.

³Early the next morning Abraham cut some wood for the sacrifice, loaded his donkey, and took Isaac and two servants with him. They started out for the place that God had told him about.

⁴On the third day Abraham saw the place in the distance.

⁵Then he said to the servants, Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there and worship, and then we will come back to you.

⁶Abraham made Isaac carry the wood for the sacrifice, and he himself carried a knife and live coals for starting the fire. As they walked along together,

⁷Isaac spoke up, Father! He answered, Yes, my son? Isaac asked, I see that you have the coals and the wood, but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?

⁸Abraham answered, God himself will provide one. And the two of them walked on together.

⁹When they came to the place which God had told him about, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. He tied up his son and placed him on the altar, on top of the wood.

¹⁰Then he picked up the knife to kill him.

¹¹But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, Abraham, Abraham! He answered, Yes, here I am.

¹²Don't hurt the boy or do anything to him, he said. Now I know that you honor and obey God, because you have not kept back your only son from him.

¹³Abraham looked around and saw a ram caught in a bush by its horns. He

went and got it and offered it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

¹⁴ Abraham named that place The LORD Provides. And even today people say, On the LORD's mountain he provides.

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

¹⁶ I make a vow by my own name -- the LORD is speaking -- that I will richly bless you. Because you did this and did not keep back your only son from me,

¹⁷ I promise that I will give you as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand along the seashore. Your descendants will conquer their enemies.

¹⁸ All the nations will ask me to bless them as I have blessed your descendants -- all because you obeyed my command.

¹⁹ Abraham went back to his servants, and they went together to Beersheba, where Abraham settled.

²⁰ Some time later Abraham learned that Milcah had borne eight children to his brother Nahor:

²¹ Uz the first-born, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram,

²²Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel,

²³Rebecca's father. Milcah bore these eight sons to Nahor, Abraham's brother.

²⁴Reumah, Nahor's concubine, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

23 ¹Sarah lived to be 127 years old. ²She died in Hebron in the land of Canaan, and Abraham mourned her death.

³He left the place where his wife's body was lying, went to the Hittites, and said,

⁴I am a foreigner living here among you; sell me some land, so that I can bury my wife.

⁵They answered,

⁶Listen to us, sir. We look upon you as a mighty leader; bury your wife in the best grave that we have. Any of us would be glad to give you a grave, so that you can bury her.

⁷Then Abraham bowed before them

⁸and said, If you are willing to let me bury my wife here, please ask Ephron son of Zohar

⁹to sell me Machpelah Cave, which is near the edge of his field. Ask him to sell it to me for its full price, here in your

presence, so that I can own it as a burial ground.

¹⁰Ephron himself was sitting with the other Hittites at the meeting place at the city gate; he answered in the hearing of everyone there,

¹¹Listen, sir; I will give you the whole field and the cave that is in it. Here in the presence of my own people, I will give it to you, so that you can bury your wife.

¹²But Abraham bowed before the Hittites

¹³and said to Ephron, so that everyone could hear, May I ask you, please, to listen. I will buy the whole field. Accept my payment, and I will bury my wife there.

¹⁴Ephron answered,

¹⁵Sir, land worth only four hundred pieces of silver -- what is that between us? Bury your wife in it.

¹⁶Abraham agreed and weighed out the amount that Ephron had mentioned in the hearing of the people -- four hundred pieces of silver, according to the standard weights used by the merchants.

¹⁷ That is how the property which had belonged to Ephron at Machpelah east of Mamre, became Abraham's. It included the field, the cave which was in it, and all the trees in the field up to the edge of the property.

¹⁸ It was recognized as Abraham's property by all the Hittites who were there at the meeting.

¹⁹ Then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in that cave in the land of Canaan.

²⁰ So the field which had belonged to the Hittites, and the cave in it, became the property of Abraham for a burial ground.

24 ¹ Abraham was now very old, and the LORD had blessed him in everything he did.

² He said to his oldest servant, who was in charge of all that he had, Place your hand between my thighs and make a vow.

³ I want you to make a vow in the name of the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not choose a wife for my son from the people here in Canaan.

⁴You must go back to the country where I was born and get a wife for my son Isaac from among my relatives.

⁵But the servant asked, What if the young woman will not leave home to come with me to this land? Shall I send your son back to the land you came from?

⁶Abraham answered, Make sure that you don't send my son back there!

⁷The LORD, the God of heaven, brought me from the home of my father and from the land of my relatives, and he solemnly promised me that he would give this land to my descendants. He will send his angel before you, so that you can get a wife there for my son.

⁸If the young woman is not willing to come with you, you will be free from this promise. But you must not under any circumstances take my son back there.

⁹So the servant put his hand between the thighs of Abraham, his master, and made a vow to do what Abraham had asked.

¹⁰The servant, who was in charge of Abraham's property, took ten of his master's camels and went to the city

where Nahor had lived in northern Mesopotamia.

¹¹ When he arrived, he made the camels kneel down at the well outside the city. It was late afternoon, the time when women came out to get water.

¹² He prayed, LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today and keep your promise to my master.

¹³ Here I am at the well where the young women of the city will be coming to get water.

¹⁴ I will say to one of them, Please, lower your jar and let me have a drink. If she says, Drink, and I will also bring water for your camels, may she be the one that you have chosen for your servant Isaac. If this happens, I will know that you have kept your promise to my master.

¹⁵ Before he had finished praying, Rebecca arrived with a water jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham's brother Nahor and his wife Milcah.

¹⁶ She was a very beautiful young woman and still a virgin. She went down to the well, filled her jar, and came back.

¹⁷ The servant ran to meet her and said, Please give me a drink of water from your jar.

¹⁸ She said, Drink, sir, and quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and held it while he drank.

¹⁹ When he had finished, she said, I will also bring water for your camels and let them have all they want.

²⁰ She quickly emptied her jar into the animals' drinking trough and ran to the well to get more water, until she had watered all his camels.

²¹ The man kept watching her in silence, to see if the LORD had given him success.

²² When she had finished, the man took an expensive gold ring and put it in her nose and put two large gold bracelets on her arms.

²³ He said, Please tell me who your father is. Is there room in his house for my men and me to spend the night?

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

²⁵ There is plenty of straw and fodder at our house, and there is a place for you to stay.

²⁶ Then the man knelt down and worshiped the LORD.

²⁷ He said, Praise the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has faithfully kept his promise to my master. The LORD has led me straight to my master's relatives.

²⁸ The young woman ran to her mother's house and told the whole story.

²⁹ Now Rebecca had a brother named Laban, and he ran outside to go to the well where Abraham's servant was.

³⁰ Laban had seen the nose ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms and had heard her say what the man had told her. He went to Abraham's servant, who was standing by his camels at the well,

³¹ and said, Come home with me. You are a man whom the LORD has blessed. Why are you standing out here? I have a room ready for you in my house, and there is a place for your camels.

³² So the man went into the house, and Laban unloaded the camels and gave them straw and fodder. Then he brought water for Abraham's servant and his men to wash their feet.

³³When food was brought, the man said, I will not eat until I have said what I have to say. Laban said, Go on and speak.

³⁴I am the servant of Abraham, he began.

³⁵The LORD has greatly blessed my master and made him a rich man. He has given him flocks of sheep and goats, cattle, silver, gold, male and female slaves, camels, and donkeys.

³⁶Sarah, my master's wife, bore him a son when she was old, and my master has given everything he owns to him.

³⁷My master made me promise with a vow to obey his command. He said, Do not choose a wife for my son from the young women in the land of Canaan.

³⁸Instead, go to my father's people, to my relatives, and choose a wife for him.

³⁹And I asked my master, What if she will not come with me?

⁴⁰He answered, The LORD, whom I have always obeyed, will send his angel with you and give you success. You will get for my son a wife from my own people, from my father's family.

⁴¹ There is only one way for you to be free from your vow: if you go to my relatives and they refuse you, then you will be free.

⁴² When I came to the well today, I prayed, LORD, God of my master Abraham, please give me success in what I am doing.

⁴³ Here I am at the well. When a young woman comes out to get water, I will ask her to give me a drink of water from her jar.

⁴⁴ If she agrees and also offers to bring water for my camels, may she be the one that you have chosen as the wife for my master's son.

⁴⁵ Before I had finished my silent prayer, Rebecca came with a water jar on her shoulder and went down to the well to get water. I said to her, Please give me a drink.

⁴⁶ She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, Drink, and I will also water your camels. So I drank, and she watered the camels.

⁴⁷ I asked her, Who is your father? And she answered, My father is Bethuel son of Nahor and Milcah. Then I put the ring

in her nose and the bracelets on her arms.

⁴⁸I knelt down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me straight to my master's relative, where I found his daughter for my master's son.

⁴⁹Now, if you intend to fulfill your responsibility toward my master and treat him fairly, please tell me; if not, say so, and I will decide what to do.

⁵⁰Laban and Bethuel answered, Since this matter comes from the LORD, it is not for us to make a decision.

⁵¹Here is Rebecca; take her and go. Let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD himself has said.

⁵²When the servant of Abraham heard this, he bowed down and worshiped the LORD.

⁵³Then he brought out clothing and silver and gold jewelry, and gave them to Rebecca. He also gave expensive gifts to her brother and to her mother.

⁵⁴Then Abraham's servant and the men with him ate and drank, and spent the night there. When they got up in the

morning, he said, Let me go back to my master.

⁵⁵ But Rebecca's brother and her mother said, Let her stay with us a week or ten days, and then she may go.

⁵⁶ But he said, Don't make us stay. The LORD has made my journey a success; let me go back to my master.

⁵⁷ They answered, Let's call her and find out what she has to say.

⁵⁸ So they called Rebecca and asked, Do you want to go with this man? Yes, she answered.

⁵⁹ So they let Rebecca and her old family servant go with Abraham's servant and his men.

⁶⁰ And they gave Rebecca their blessing in these words: May you, sister, become the mother of millions! May your descendants conquer the cities of their enemies!

⁶¹ Then Rebecca and her young women got ready and mounted the camels to go with Abraham's servant, and they all started out.

⁶² Isaac had come into the wilderness of The Well of the Living One Who Sees

Me and was staying in the southern part of Canaan.

⁶³He went out in the early evening to take a walk in the fields and saw camels coming.

⁶⁴When Rebecca saw Isaac, she got down from her camel

⁶⁵and asked Abraham's servant, Who is that man walking toward us in the field? He is my master, the servant answered. So she took her scarf and covered her face.

⁶⁶The servant told Isaac everything he had done.

⁶⁷Then Isaac brought Rebecca into the tent that his mother Sarah had lived in, and she became his wife. Isaac loved Rebecca, and so he was comforted for the loss of his mother.

25¹Abraham married another woman, whose name was Keturah.

²She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

³Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan, and the descendants of Dedan were the Asshurim, the Letushim, and the Leummim.

⁴The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were Keturah's descendants.

⁵Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac;

⁶but while he was still alive, he gave presents to the sons his other wives had borne him. Then he sent these sons to the land of the East, away from his son Isaac.

⁷Abraham died at the ripe old age of 175.

⁸(25: 7)

⁹His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in Machpelah Cave, in the field east of Mamre that had belonged to Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite.

¹⁰It was the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites; both Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there.

¹¹After the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac, who lived near The Well of the Living One Who Sees Me.

¹²Ishmael, whom Hagar, the Egyptian slave of Sarah, bore to Abraham,

¹³had the following sons, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

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

¹⁶ They were the ancestors of twelve tribes, and their names were given to their villages and camping places.

¹⁷ Ishmael was 137 years old when he died.

¹⁸ The descendants of Ishmael lived in the territory between Havilah and Shur, to the east of Egypt on the way to Assyria. They lived apart from the other descendants of Abraham.

¹⁹ This is the story of Abraham's son Isaac.

²⁰ Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel (an Aramean from Mesopotamia) and sister of Laban.

²¹ Because Rebecca had no children, Isaac prayed to the LORD for her. The LORD answered his prayer, and Rebecca became pregnant.

²² She was going to have twins, and before they were born, they struggled against each other in her womb. She said, Why should something like this

happen to me? So she went to ask the LORD for an answer.

²³The LORD said to her, Two nations are within you; You will give birth to two rival peoples. One will be stronger than the other; The older will serve the younger.

²⁴The time came for her to give birth, and she had twin sons.

²⁵The first one was reddish, and his skin was like a hairy robe, so he was named Esau.

²⁶The second one was born holding on tightly to the heel of Esau, so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

²⁷The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilled hunter, a man who loved the outdoors, but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home.

²⁸Isaac preferred Esau, because he enjoyed eating the animals Esau killed, but Rebecca preferred Jacob.

²⁹One day while Jacob was cooking some bean soup, Esau came in from hunting. He was hungry

³⁰and said to Jacob, I'm starving; give me some of that red stuff. (That is why he was named Edom.)

³¹Jacob answered, I will give it to you if you give me your rights as the first-born son.

³²Esau said, All right! I am about to die; what good will my rights do me?

³³Jacob answered, First make a vow that you will give me your rights. Esau made the vow and gave his rights to Jacob.

³⁴Then Jacob gave him some bread and some of the soup. He ate and drank and then got up and left. That was all Esau cared about his rights as the first-born son.

26¹ There was another famine in the land besides the earlier one during the time of Abraham. Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, at Gerar.

²The LORD had appeared to Isaac and had said, Do not go to Egypt; stay in this land, where I tell you to stay.

³Live here, and I will be with you and bless you. I am going to give all this territory to you and to your descendants.

I will keep the promise I made to your father Abraham.

⁴I will give you as many descendants as there are stars in the sky, and I will give them all this territory. All the nations will ask me to bless them as I have blessed your descendants.

⁵I will bless you, because Abraham obeyed me and kept all my laws and commands.

⁶So Isaac lived at Gerar.

⁷When the men there asked about his wife, he said that she was his sister. He would not admit that she was his wife, because he was afraid that the men there would kill him to get Rebecca, who was very beautiful.

⁸When Isaac had been there for some time, King Abimelech looked down from his window and saw Isaac and Rebecca making love.

⁹Abimelech sent for Isaac and said, So she is your wife! Why did you say she was your sister? He answered, I thought I would be killed if I said she was my wife.

¹⁰What have you done to us? Abimelech said. One of my men might easily have

slept with your wife, and you would have been responsible for our guilt.

¹¹ Abimelech warned all the people: Anyone who mistreats this man or his wife will be put to death.

¹² Isaac sowed crops in that land, and that year he harvested a hundred times as much as he had sown, because the LORD blessed him.

¹³ He continued to prosper and became a very rich man.

¹⁴ Because he had many herds of sheep and cattle and many servants, the Philistines were jealous of him.

¹⁵ So they filled in all the wells which the servants of his father Abraham had dug while Abraham was alive.

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

¹⁷ So Isaac left and set up his camp in Gerar Valley, where he stayed for some time.

¹⁸ He dug once again the wells which had been dug during the time of Abraham and which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham's death. Isaac

gave the wells the same names that his father had given them.

¹⁹ Isaac's servants dug a well in the valley and found water.

²⁰ The shepherds of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's shepherds and said, This water belongs to us. So Isaac named the well Quarrel.

²¹ Isaac's servants dug another well, and there was a quarrel about that one also, so he named it Enmity.

²² He moved away from there and dug another well. There was no dispute about this one, so he named it Freedom. He said, Now the LORD has given us freedom to live in the land, and we will be prosperous here.

²³ Isaac left and went to Beersheba.

²⁴ That night the LORD appeared to him and said, I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid; I am with you. I will bless you and give you many descendants because of my promise to my servant Abraham.

²⁵ Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the LORD. Then he set up his camp there, and his servants dug another well.

²⁶Abimelech came from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army to see Isaac.

²⁷So Isaac asked, Why have you now come to see me, when you were so unfriendly to me before and made me leave your country?

²⁸They answered, Now we know that the LORD is with you, and we think that there should be a solemn agreement between us. We want you to promise

²⁹that you will not harm us, just as we did not harm you. We were kind to you and let you go peacefully. Now it is clear that the LORD has blessed you.

³⁰Isaac prepared a feast for them, and they ate and drank.

³¹Early next morning each man made his promise and sealed it with a vow. Isaac said good-bye to them, and they parted as friends.

³²On that day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug. They said, We have found water.

³³He named the well Vow. That is how the city of Beersheba got its name.

³⁴When Esau was forty years old, he married two Hittites, Judith the daughter of Beerli, and Basemath the daughter of Elon.

³⁵They made life miserable for Isaac and Rebecca.

27 ¹Isaac was now old and had become blind. He sent for his older son Esau and said to him, Son! Yes, he answered.

²Isaac said, You see that I am old and may die soon.

³Take your bow and arrows, go out into the country, and kill an animal for me.

⁴Cook me some of that tasty food that I like, and bring it to me. After I have eaten it, I will give you my final blessing before I die.

⁵While Isaac was talking to Esau, Rebecca was listening. So when Esau went out to hunt,

⁶she said to Jacob, I have just heard your father say to Esau,

⁷Bring me an animal and cook it for me. After I have eaten it, I will give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.

⁸Now, son, Rebecca continued, listen to me and do what I say.

⁹Go to the flock and pick out two fat young goats, so that I can cook them and make some of that food your father likes so much.

¹⁰You can take it to him to eat, and he will give you his blessing before he dies.

¹¹But Jacob said to his mother, You know that Esau is a hairy man, but I have smooth skin.

¹²Perhaps my father will touch me and find out that I am deceiving him; in this way, I will bring a curse on myself instead of a blessing.

¹³His mother answered, Let any curse against you fall on me, my son; just do as I say, and go and get the goats for me.

¹⁴So he went to get them and brought them to her, and she cooked the kind of food that his father liked.

¹⁵Then she took Esau's best clothes, which she kept in the house, and put them on Jacob.

¹⁶She put the skins of the goats on his arms and on the hairless part of his neck.

¹⁷ She handed him the tasty food, along with the bread she had baked.

¹⁸ Then Jacob went to his father and said, Father! Yes, he answered. Which of my sons are you?

¹⁹ Jacob answered, I am your older son Esau; I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of the meat that I have brought you, so that you can give me your blessing.

²⁰ Isaac said, How did you find it so quickly, son? Jacob answered, The LORD your God helped me find it.

²¹ Isaac said to Jacob, Please come closer so that I can touch you. Are you really Esau?

²² Jacob moved closer to his father, who felt him and said, Your voice sounds like Jacob's voice, but your arms feel like Esau's arms.

²³ He did not recognize Jacob, because his arms were hairy like Esau's. He was about to give him his blessing,

²⁴ but asked again, Are you really Esau? I am, he answered.

²⁵ Isaac said, Bring me some of the meat. After I eat it, I will give you my

blessing. Jacob brought it to him, and he also brought him some wine to drink.

²⁶Then his father said to him, Come closer and kiss me, son.

²⁷As he came up to kiss him, Isaac smelled his clothes -- so he gave him his blessing. He said, The pleasant smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed.

²⁸May God give you dew from heaven and make your fields fertile! May he give you plenty of grain and wine!

²⁹May nations be your servants, and may peoples bow down before you. May you rule over all your relatives, and may your mother's descendants bow down before you. May those who curse you be cursed, and may those who bless you be blessed.

³⁰Isaac finished giving his blessing, and as soon as Jacob left, his brother Esau came in from hunting.

³¹He also cooked some tasty food and took it to his father. He said, Please, father, sit up and eat some of the meat that I have brought you, so that you can give me your blessing.

³²Who are you? Isaac asked. Your older son Esau, he answered.

³³Isaac began to tremble and shake all over, and he asked, Who was it, then, who killed an animal and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came. I gave him my final blessing, and so it is his forever.

³⁴When Esau heard this, he cried out loudly and bitterly and said, Give me your blessing also, father!

³⁵Isaac answered, Your brother came and deceived me. He has taken away your blessing.

³⁶Esau said, This is the second time that he has cheated me. No wonder his name is Jacob. He took my rights as the first-born son, and now he has taken away my blessing. Haven't you saved a blessing for me?

³⁷Isaac answered, I have already made him master over you, and I have made all his relatives his slaves. I have given him grain and wine. Now there is nothing that I can do for you, son!

³⁸Esau continued to plead with his father: Do you have only one blessing,

father? Bless me too, father! He began to cry.

³⁹Then Isaac said to him, No dew from heaven for you, No fertile fields for you.

⁴⁰You will live by your sword, But be your brother's slave. Yet when you rebel, You will break away from his control.

⁴¹Esau hated Jacob, because his father had given Jacob the blessing. He thought, The time to mourn my father's death is near; then I will kill Jacob.

⁴²But when Rebecca heard about Esau's plan, she sent for Jacob and said, Listen, your brother Esau is planning to get even with you and kill you.

⁴³Now, son, do what I say. Go at once to my brother Laban in Haran,

⁴⁴and stay with him for a while, until your brother's anger cools down

⁴⁵and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send someone to bring you back. Why should I lose both of my sons on the same day?

⁴⁶Rebecca said to Isaac, I am sick and tired of Esau's foreign wives. If Jacob also marries one of these Hittites, I might as well die.

28¹ Isaac called Jacob, greeted him, and told him, Don't marry a Canaanite.

² Go instead to Mesopotamia, to the home of your grandfather Bethuel, and marry one of the young women there, one of your uncle Laban's daughters.

³ May Almighty God bless your marriage and give you many children, so that you will become the father of many nations!

⁴ May he bless you and your descendants as he blessed Abraham, and may you take possession of this land, in which you have lived and which God gave to Abraham!

⁵ Isaac sent Jacob away to Mesopotamia, to Laban, who was the son of Bethuel the Aramean and the brother of Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶ Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Mesopotamia to find a wife. He also learned that when Isaac blessed him, he commanded him not to marry a Canaanite woman.

⁷ He found out that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Mesopotamia.

⁸Esau then understood that his father Isaac did not approve of Canaanite women.

⁹So he went to Ishmael son of Abraham and married his daughter Mahalath, who was the sister of Nebaioth.

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and started toward Haran.

¹¹At sunset he came to a holy place and camped there. He lay down to sleep, resting his head on a stone.

¹²He dreamed that he saw a stairway reaching from earth to heaven, with angels going up and coming down on it.

¹³And there was the LORD standing beside him. I am the LORD, the God of Abraham and Isaac, he said. I will give to you and to your descendants this land on which you are lying.

¹⁴They will be as numerous as the specks of dust on the earth. They will extend their territory in all directions, and through you and your descendants I will bless all the nations.

¹⁵Remember, I will be with you and protect you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not

leave you until I have done all that I have promised you.

¹⁶Jacob woke up and said, The LORD is here! He is in this place, and I didn't know it!

¹⁷He was afraid and said, What a terrifying place this is! It must be the house of God; it must be the gate that opens into heaven.

¹⁸Jacob got up early next morning, took the stone that was under his head, and set it up as a memorial. Then he poured olive oil on it to dedicate it to God.

¹⁹He named the place Bethel. (The town there was once known as Luz.)

²⁰Then Jacob made a vow to the LORD: If you will be with me and protect me on the journey I am making and give me food and clothing,

²¹and if I return safely to my father's home, then you will be my God.

²²This memorial stone which I have set up will be the place where you are worshiped, and I will give you a tenth of everything you give me.

29¹ Jacob continued on his way and went toward the land of the East.

² Suddenly he came upon a well out in the fields with three flocks of sheep lying around it. The flocks were watered from this well, which had a large stone over the opening.

³ Whenever all the flocks came together there, the shepherds would roll the stone back and water them. Then they would put the stone back in place.

⁴ Jacob asked the shepherds, My friends, where are you from? From Haran, they answered.

⁵ He asked, Do you know Laban, grandson of Nahor? Yes, we do, they answered.

⁶ Is he well? he asked. He is well, they answered. Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with his flock.

⁷ Jacob said, Since it is still broad daylight and not yet time to bring the flocks in, why don't you water them and take them back to pasture?

⁸ They answered, We can't do that until all the flocks are here and the stone has been rolled back; then we will water the flocks.

⁹ While Jacob was still talking with them, Rachel arrived with the flock.

¹⁰When Jacob saw Rachel with his uncle Laban's flock, he went to the well, rolled the stone back, and watered the sheep.

¹¹Then he kissed her and began to cry for joy.

¹²He told her, I am your father's relative, the son of Rebecca. She ran to tell her father;

¹³and when he heard the news about his nephew Jacob, he ran to meet him, hugged him and kissed him, and brought him into the house. When Jacob told Laban everything that had happened,

¹⁴Laban said, Yes, indeed, you are my own flesh and blood. Jacob stayed there a whole month.

¹⁵Laban said to Jacob, You shouldn't work for me for nothing just because you are my relative. How much pay do you want?

¹⁶Laban had two daughters; the older was named Leah, and the younger Rachel.

¹⁷Leah had lovely eyes, but Rachel was shapely and beautiful.

¹⁸Jacob was in love with Rachel, so he said, I will work seven years for you, if you will let me marry Rachel.

¹⁹ Laban answered, I would rather give her to you than to anyone else; stay here with me.

²⁰ Jacob worked seven years so that he could have Rachel, and the time seemed like only a few days to him, because he loved her.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, The time is up; let me marry your daughter.

²² So Laban gave a wedding feast and invited everyone.

²³ But that night, instead of Rachel, he took Leah to Jacob, and Jacob had intercourse with her.

²⁴ (Laban gave his slave woman Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her maid.)

²⁵ Not until the next morning did Jacob discover that it was Leah. He went to Laban and said, Why did you do this to me? I worked to get Rachel. Why have you tricked me?

²⁶ Laban answered, It is not the custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older.

²⁷ Wait until the week's marriage celebrations are over, and I will give you Rachel, if you will work for me another seven years.

²⁸ Jacob agreed, and when the week of marriage celebrations was over, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.

²⁹ (Laban gave his slave woman Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid.)

³⁰ Jacob had intercourse with Rachel also, and he loved her more than Leah. Then he worked for Laban another seven years.

³¹ When the LORD saw that Leah was loved less than Rachel, he made it possible for her to have children, but Rachel remained childless.

³² Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, The LORD has seen my trouble, and now my husband will love me; so she named him Reuben.

³³ She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, The LORD has given me this son also, because he heard that I was not loved; so she named him Simeon.

³⁴ Once again she became pregnant and gave birth to another son. She said, Now my husband will be bound more tightly to me, because I have borne him three sons; so she named him Levi.

³⁵Then she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, This time I will praise the LORD; so she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

30¹ But Rachel had not borne Jacob any children, and so she became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob, Give me children, or I will die.

²Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, I can't take the place of God. He is the one who keeps you from having children.

³She said, Here is my slave Bilhah; sleep with her, so that she can have a child for me. In this way I can become a mother through her.

⁴So she gave Bilhah to her husband, and he had intercourse with her.

⁵Bilhah became pregnant and bore Jacob a son.

⁶Rachel said, God has judged in my favor. He has heard my prayer and has given me a son; so she named him Dan.

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

⁸Rachel said, I have fought a hard fight with my sister, but I have won; so she named him Naphtali.

⁹When Leah realized that she had stopped having children, she gave her slave Zilpah to Jacob as his wife.

¹⁰Then Zilpah bore Jacob a son.

¹¹Leah said, I have been lucky; so she named him Gad.

¹²Zilpah bore Jacob another son,

¹³and Leah said, How happy I am! Now women will call me happy; so she named him Asher.

¹⁴During the wheat harvest Reuben went into the fields and found mandrakes, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, Please give me some of your son's mandrakes.

¹⁵Leah answered, Isn't it enough that you have taken away my husband? Now you are even trying to take away my son's mandrakes. Rachel said, If you will give me your son's mandrakes, you can sleep with Jacob tonight.

¹⁶When Jacob came in from the fields in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, You are going to sleep with me tonight, because I have paid for you

with my son's mandrakes. So he had intercourse with her that night.

¹⁷ God answered Leah's prayer, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son.

¹⁸ Leah said, God has given me my reward, because I gave my slave to my husband; so she named her son Issachar.

¹⁹ Leah became pregnant again and bore Jacob a sixth son.

²⁰ She said, God has given me a fine gift. Now my husband will accept me, because I have borne him six sons; so she named him Zebulun.

²¹ Later she bore a daughter, whom she named Dinah.

²² Then God remembered Rachel; he answered her prayer and made it possible for her to have children.

²³ She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, God has taken away my disgrace by giving me a son.

²⁴ May the LORD give me another son; so she named him Joseph.

²⁵ After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, Let me go, so that I can return home.

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

²⁷Laban said to him, Let me say this: I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you.

²⁸Name your wages, and I will pay them.

²⁹Jacob answered, You know how I have worked for you and how your flocks have prospered under my care.

³⁰The little you had before I came has grown enormously, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I went. Now it is time for me to look out for my own interests.

³¹What shall I pay you? Laban asked. Jacob answered, I don't want any wages. I will continue to take care of your flocks if you agree to this suggestion:

³²Let me go through all your flocks today and take every black lamb and every spotted or speckled young goat. That is all the wages I want.

³³In the future you can easily find out if I have been honest. When you come to check up on my wages, if I have any

goat that isn't speckled or spotted or any sheep that isn't black, you will know that it has been stolen.

³⁴ Laban answered, Agreed. We will do as you suggest.

³⁵ But that day Laban removed the male goats that had stripes or spots and all the females that were speckled and spotted or which had white on them; he also removed all the black sheep. He put his sons in charge of them,

³⁶ and then went away from Jacob with this flock as far as he could travel in three days. Jacob took care of the rest of Laban's flocks.

³⁷ Jacob got green branches of poplar, almond, and plane trees and stripped off some of the bark so that the branches had white stripes on them.

³⁸ He placed these branches in front of the flocks at their drinking troughs. He put them there, because the animals mated when they came to drink.

³⁹ So when the goats bred in front of the branches, they produced young that were streaked, speckled, and spotted.

⁴⁰ Jacob kept the sheep separate from the goats and made them face in the

direction of the streaked and black animals of Laban's flock. In this way he built up his own flock and kept it apart from Laban's.

⁴¹ When the healthy animals were mating, Jacob put the branches in front of them at the drinking troughs, so that they would breed among the branches.

⁴² But he did not put the branches in front of the weak animals. Soon Laban had all the weak animals, and Jacob all the healthy ones.

⁴³ In this way Jacob became very wealthy. He had many flocks, slaves, camels, and donkeys.

31 ¹ Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, Jacob has taken everything that belonged to our father. He got all his wealth from what our father owned.

² He also saw that Laban was no longer as friendly as he had been earlier.

³ Then the LORD said to him, Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives. I will be with you.

⁴ So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field where his flocks were.

⁵He said to them, I have noticed that your father is not as friendly toward me as he used to be; but my father's God has been with me.

⁶You both know that I have worked for your father with all my strength.

⁷Yet he has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not let him harm me.

⁸Whenever Laban said, The speckled goats shall be your wages, all the flocks produced speckled young. When he said, The striped goats shall be your wages, all the flocks produced striped young.

⁹God has taken flocks away from your father and given them to me.

¹⁰During the breeding season I had a dream, and I saw that the male goats that were mating were striped, spotted, and speckled.

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

¹²Look, he continued, all the male goats that are mating are striped, spotted, and speckled. I am making this happen because I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.

¹³I am the God who appeared to you at Bethel, where you dedicated a stone as a memorial by pouring olive oil on it and where you made a vow to me. Now get ready and go back to the land where you were born.

¹⁴Rachel and Leah answered Jacob, There is nothing left for us to inherit from our father.

¹⁵He treats us like foreigners. He sold us, and now he has spent all the money he was paid for us.

¹⁶All this wealth which God has taken from our father belongs to us and to our children. Do whatever God has told you.

¹⁷So Jacob got ready to go back to his father in the land of Canaan. He put his children and his wives on the camels, and drove all his flocks ahead of him, with everything that he had gotten in Mesopotamia.

¹⁸(31: 17)

¹⁹Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and during his absence Rachel stole the household gods that belonged to her father.

²⁰Jacob deceived Laban by not letting him know that he was leaving.

²¹ He took everything he owned and left in a hurry. He crossed the Euphrates River and started for the hill country of Gilead.

²² Three days later Laban was told that Jacob had fled.

²³ He took his men with him and pursued Jacob for seven days until he caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead.

²⁴ In a dream that night God came to Laban and said to him, Be careful not to threaten Jacob in any way.

²⁵ Jacob had set up his camp on a mountain, and Laban set up his camp with his relatives in the hill country of Gilead.

²⁶ Laban said to Jacob, Why did you deceive me and carry off my daughters like women captured in war?

²⁷ Why did you deceive me and slip away without telling me? If you had told me, I would have sent you on your way with rejoicing and singing to the music of tambourines and harps.

²⁸ You did not even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters good-bye. That was a foolish thing to do!

²⁹I have the power to do you harm, but last night the God of your father warned me not to threaten you in any way.

³⁰I know that you left because you were so anxious to get back home, but why did you steal my household gods?

³¹Jacob answered, I was afraid, because I thought that you might take your daughters away from me.

³²But if you find that anyone here has your gods, he will be put to death. Here, with our men as witnesses, look for anything that belongs to you and take what is yours. Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen Laban's gods.

³³Laban went and searched Jacob's tent; then he went into Leah's tent, and the tent of the two slave women, but he did not find his gods. Then he went into Rachel's tent.

³⁴Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in a camel's saddlebag and was sitting on them. Laban searched through the whole tent, but did not find them.

³⁵Rachel said to her father, Do not be angry with me, sir, but I am not able to stand up in your presence; I am having

my monthly period. Laban searched but did not find his household gods.

³⁶Then Jacob lost his temper. What crime have I committed? he asked angrily. What law have I broken that gives you the right to hunt me down?

³⁷Now that you have searched through all my belongings, what household article have you found that belongs to you? Put it out here where your men and mine can see it, and let them decide which one of us is right.

³⁸I have been with you now for twenty years; your sheep and your goats have not failed to reproduce, and I have not eaten any rams from your flocks.

³⁹Whenever a sheep was killed by wild animals, I always bore the loss myself. I didn't take it to you to show that it was not my fault. You demanded that I make good anything that was stolen during the day or during the night.

⁴⁰Many times I suffered from the heat during the day and from the cold at night. I was not able to sleep.

⁴¹It was like that for the whole twenty years I was with you. For fourteen years I worked to win your two daughters --

and six years for your flocks. And even then, you changed my wages ten times.

⁴²If the God of my fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac, had not been with me, you would have already sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my trouble and the work I have done, and last night he gave his judgment.

⁴³Laban answered Jacob, These young women are my daughters; their children belong to me, and these flocks are mine. In fact, everything you see here belongs to me. But since I can do nothing to keep my daughters and their children,

⁴⁴I am ready to make an agreement with you. Let us make a pile of stones to remind us of our agreement.

⁴⁵So Jacob got a stone and set it up as a memorial.

⁴⁶He told his men to gather some rocks and pile them up. Then they ate a meal beside the pile of rocks.

⁴⁷Laban named it Jegar Sahadutha, while Jacob named it Galeed.

⁴⁸Laban said to Jacob, This pile of rocks will be a reminder for both of us. That is why that place was named Galeed.

⁴⁹ Laban also said, May the LORD keep an eye on us while we are separated from each other. So the place was also named Mizpah.

⁵⁰ Laban went on, If you mistreat my daughters or if you marry other women, even though I don't know about it, remember that God is watching us.

⁵¹ Here are the rocks that I have piled up between us, and here is the memorial stone.

⁵² Both this pile and this memorial stone are reminders. I will never go beyond this pile to attack you, and you must never go beyond it or beyond this memorial stone to attack me.

⁵³ The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor will judge between us. Then, in the name of the God whom his father Isaac worshiped, Jacob solemnly vowed to keep this promise.

⁵⁴ He killed an animal, which he offered as a sacrifice on the mountain, and he invited his men to the meal. After they had eaten, they spent the night on the mountain.

⁵⁵ Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters good-bye, and left to go back home.

32¹ As Jacob went on his way, some angels met him.

² When he saw them, he said, This is God's camp; so he named the place Mahanaim.

³ Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the country of Edom.

⁴ He instructed them to say: I, Jacob, your obedient servant, report to my master Esau that I have been staying with Laban and that I have delayed my return until now.

⁵ I own cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and slaves. I am sending you word, sir, in the hope of gaining your favor.

⁶ When the messengers came back to Jacob, they said, We went to your brother Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you. He has four hundred men with him.

⁷ Jacob was frightened and worried. He divided into two groups the people who were with him, and also his sheep, goats, cattle, and camels.

⁸He thought, If Esau comes and attacks the first group, the other may be able to escape.

⁹Then Jacob prayed, God of my grandfather Abraham and God of my father Isaac, hear me! You told me, LORD, to go back to my land and to my relatives, and you would make everything go well for me.

¹⁰I am not worth all the kindness and faithfulness that you have shown me, your servant. I crossed the Jordan with nothing but a walking stick, and now I have come back with these two groups.

¹¹Save me, I pray, from my brother Esau. I am afraid -- afraid that he is coming to attack us and destroy us all, even the women and children.

¹²Remember that you promised to make everything go well for me and to give me more descendants than anyone could count, as many as the grains of sand along the seashore.

¹³After spending the night there, Jacob chose from his livestock as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 males, 200 female sheep and 20 males, 30 milk camels with their young,

40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 males.

¹⁴ (32: 13)

¹⁵ (32: 13)

¹⁶ He divided them into herds and put one of his servants in charge of each herd. He said to them, Go ahead of me, and leave a space between each herd and the one behind it.

¹⁷ He ordered the first servant, When my brother Esau meets you and asks, Who is your master? Where are you going? Who owns these animals in front of you?

¹⁸ you must answer, They belong to your servant Jacob. He sends them as a present to his master Esau. Jacob himself is right behind us.

¹⁹ He gave the same order to the second, the third, and to all the others who were in charge of the herds: This is what you must say to Esau when you meet him.

²⁰ You must say, Yes, your servant Jacob is right behind us. Jacob was thinking, I will win him over with the gifts, and when I meet him, perhaps he will forgive me.

²¹ He sent the gifts on ahead of him and spent that night in camp.

²² That same night Jacob got up, took his two wives, his two concubines, and his eleven children, and crossed the Jabbok River.

²³ After he had sent them across, he also sent across all that he owned,

²⁴ but he stayed behind, alone. Then a man came and wrestled with him until just before daybreak.

²⁵ When the man saw that he was not winning the struggle, he hit Jacob on the hip, and it was thrown out of joint.

²⁶ The man said, Let me go; daylight is coming. I won't, unless you bless me, Jacob answered.

²⁷ What is your name? the man asked. Jacob, he answered.

²⁸ The man said, Your name will no longer be Jacob. You have struggled with God and with men, and you have won; so your name will be Israel.

²⁹ Jacob said, Now tell me your name. But he answered, Why do you want to know my name? Then he blessed Jacob.

³⁰ Jacob said, I have seen God face-to-face, and I am still alive; so he named the place Peniel.

³¹ The sun rose as Jacob was leaving Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

³² Even today the descendants of Israel do not eat the muscle which is on the hip joint, because it was on this muscle that Jacob was hit.

33¹ Jacob saw Esau coming with his four hundred men, so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two concubines.

² He put the concubines and their children first, then Leah and her children, and finally Rachel and Joseph at the rear.

³ Jacob went ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

⁴ But Esau ran to meet him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. They were both crying.

⁵ When Esau looked around and saw the women and the children, he asked, Who are these people with you? These, sir, are the children whom God has

been good enough to give me, Jacob answered.

⁶Then the concubines came up with their children and bowed down;

⁷then Leah and her children came, and last of all Joseph and Rachel came and bowed down.

⁸Esau asked, What about that other group I met? What did that mean? Jacob answered, It was to gain your favor.

⁹But Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep what you have.

¹⁰Jacob said, No, please, if I have gained your favor, accept my gift. To see your face is for me like seeing the face of God, now that you have been so friendly to me.

¹¹Please accept this gift which I have brought for you; God has been kind to me and given me everything I need. Jacob kept on urging him until he accepted.

¹²Esau said, Let's get ready and leave. I will go ahead of you.

¹³Jacob answered, You know that the children are weak, and I must think of the sheep and livestock with their young.

If they are driven hard for even one day, the whole herd will die.

¹⁴Please go on ahead of me, and I will follow slowly, going as fast as I can with the livestock and the children until I catch up with you in Edom.

¹⁵Esau said, Then let me leave some of my men with you. But Jacob answered, There is no need for that for I only want to gain your favor.

¹⁶So that day Esau started on his way back to Edom.

¹⁷But Jacob went to Sukkoth, where he built a house for himself and shelters for his livestock. That is why the place was named Sukkoth.

¹⁸On his return from Mesopotamia Jacob arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan and set up his camp in a field near the city.

¹⁹He bought that part of the field from the descendants of Hamor father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver.

²⁰He put up an altar there and named it for El, the God of Israel.

34¹One day Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, went to visit some of the Canaanite women.

²When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, who was chief of that region, saw her, he took her and raped her.

³But he found the young woman so attractive that he fell in love with her and tried to win her affection.

⁴He told his father, I want you to get Dinah for me as my wife.

⁵Jacob learned that his daughter had been disgraced, but because his sons were out in the fields with his livestock, he did nothing until they came back.

⁶Shechem's father Hamor went out to talk with Jacob,

⁷just as Jacob's sons were coming in from the fields. When they heard about it, they were shocked and furious that Shechem had done such a thing and had insulted the people of Israel by raping Jacob's daughter.

⁸Hamor said to him, My son Shechem has fallen in love with your daughter; please let him marry her.

⁹Let us make an agreement that there will be intermarriage between our people and yours.

¹⁰Then you may stay here in our country with us; you may live anywhere you wish, trade freely, and own property.

¹¹Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and brothers, Do me this favor, and I will give you whatever you want.

¹²Tell me what presents you want, and set the payment for the bride as high as you wish; I will give you whatever you ask, if you will only let me marry her.

¹³Because Shechem had disgraced their sister Dinah, Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor in a deceitful way.

¹⁴They said to him, We cannot let our sister marry a man who is not circumcised; that would be a disgrace for us.

¹⁵We can agree only on the condition that you become like us by circumcising all your males.

¹⁶Then we will agree to intermarriage. We will settle among you and become one people with you.

¹⁷But if you will not accept our terms and be circumcised, we will take her and leave.

¹⁸These terms seemed fair to Hamor and his son Shechem,

¹⁹and the young man lost no time in doing what was suggested, because he was in love with Jacob's daughter. He was the most important member of his family.

²⁰Hamor and his son Shechem went to the meeting place at the city gate and spoke to the people of the town:

²¹These men are friendly; let them live in the land with us and travel freely. The land is large enough for them also. Let us marry their daughters and give them ours in marriage.

²²But these men will agree to live among us and be one people with us only on the condition that we circumcise all our males, as they are circumcised.

²³Won't all their livestock and everything else they own be ours? So let us agree that they can live among us.

²⁴All the citizens of the city agreed with what Hamor and Shechem proposed, and all the males were circumcised.

²⁵Three days later, when the men were still sore from their circumcision, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, the

brothers of Dinah, took their swords, went into the city without arousing suspicion, and killed all the men,

²⁶including Hamor and his son Shechem. Then they took Dinah from Shechem's house and left.

²⁷After the slaughter Jacob's other sons looted the town to take revenge for their sister's disgrace.

²⁸They took the flocks, the cattle, the donkeys, and everything else in the city and in the fields.

²⁹They took everything of value, captured all the women and children, and carried off everything in the houses.

³⁰Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, You have gotten me into trouble; now the Canaanites, the Perizzites, and everybody else in the land will hate me. I do not have many men; if they all band together against me and attack me, our whole family will be destroyed.

³¹But they answered, We cannot let our sister be treated like a common whore.

35¹ God said to Jacob, Go to Bethel at once, and live there. Build an altar there to me, the God who appeared

to you when you were running away from your brother Esau.

²So Jacob said to his family and to all who were with him, Get rid of the foreign gods that you have; purify yourselves and put on clean clothes.

³We are going to leave here and go to Bethel, where I will build an altar to the God who helped me in the time of my trouble and who has been with me everywhere I have gone.

⁴So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods that they had and also the earrings that they were wearing. He buried them beneath the oak tree near Shechem.

⁵When Jacob and his sons started to leave, great fear fell on the people of the nearby towns, and they did not pursue them.

⁶Jacob came with all his people to Luz, which is now known as Bethel, in the land of Canaan.

⁷He built an altar there and named the place for the God of Bethel, because God had revealed himself to him there when he was running away from his brother.

⁸Rebecca's nurse Deborah died and was buried beneath the oak south of Bethel. So it was named Oak of Weeping.

⁹When Jacob returned from Mesopotamia, God appeared to him again and blessed him.

¹⁰God said to him, Your name is Jacob, but from now on it will be Israel. So God named him Israel.

¹¹And God said to him, I am Almighty God. Have many children. Nations will be descended from you, and you will be the ancestor of kings.

¹²I will give you the land which I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, and I will also give it to your descendants after you.

¹³Then God left him.

¹⁴There, where God had spoken to him, Jacob set up a memorial stone and consecrated it by pouring wine and olive oil on it.

¹⁵He named the place Bethel.

¹⁶Jacob and his family left Bethel, and when they were still some distance from Ephrath, the time came for Rachel to have her baby, and she was having difficult labor.

¹⁷When her labor pains were at their worst, the midwife said to her, Don't be afraid, Rachel; it's another boy.

¹⁸But she was dying, and as she breathed her last, she named her son Benoni, but his father named him Benjamin.

¹⁹When Rachel died, she was buried beside the road to Ephrath, now known as Bethlehem.

²⁰Jacob set up a memorial stone there, and it still marks Rachel's grave to this day.

²¹Jacob moved on and set up his camp on the other side of the tower of Eder.

²²While Jacob was living in that land, Reuben had sexual intercourse with Bilhah, one of his father's concubines; Jacob heard about it and was furious. Jacob had twelve sons.

²³The sons of Leah were Reuben (Jacob's oldest son), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

²⁴The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵The sons of Rachel's slave Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶The sons of Leah's slave Zilpah were Gad and Asher. These sons were born in Mesopotamia.

²⁷Jacob went to his father Isaac at Mamre, near Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had lived.

²⁸Isaac lived to be a hundred and eighty years old

²⁹and died at a ripe old age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

36 ¹These are the descendants of Esau, also called Edom.

²Esau married Canaanite women: Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah son of Zibeon the Hivite;

³and Basemath, the daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.

⁴Adah bore Eliphaz; Basemath bore Reuel;

⁵and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. All these sons were born to Esau in the land of Canaan.

⁶Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the people of his house, along with all his livestock and all the possessions he had gotten in the

land of Canaan, and went away from his brother Jacob to another land.

⁷ He left because the land where he and Jacob were living was not able to support them; they had too much livestock and could no longer stay together.

⁸ So Esau lived in the hill country of Edom.

⁹ These are the descendants of Esau, the ancestor of the Edomites.

¹⁰ Esau's wife Adah bore him one son, Eliphaz, and Eliphaz had five sons: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. And by another wife, Timna, he had one more son, Amalek. Esau's wife Basemath bore him one son, Reuel, and Reuel had four sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

¹¹ (36: 10)

¹² (36: 10)

¹³ (36: 10)

¹⁴ Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah son of Zibeon, bore him three sons: Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

¹⁵ These are the tribes descended from Esau. Esau's first son Eliphaz was the ancestor of the following tribes: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz,

¹⁶Korah, Gatam, and Amalek. These were all descendants of Esau's wife Adah.

¹⁷Esau's son Reuel was the ancestor of the following tribes: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were all descendants of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁸The following tribes were descended from Esau by his wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah: Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

¹⁹All these tribes were descended from Esau.

²⁰The original inhabitants of the land of Edom were divided into tribes which traced their ancestry to the following descendants of Seir, a Horite: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

²¹ (36: 20)

²²Lotan was the ancestor of the clans of Hori and Heman. (Lotan had a sister named Timna.)

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

²⁴Zibeon had two sons, Aiah and Anah. (This is the Anah who found the hot

springs in the wilderness when he was taking care of his father's donkeys.)

²⁵Anah was the father of Dishon, who was the ancestor of the clans of Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. Anah also had a daughter named Oholibamah.

²⁶(36: 25)

²⁷Ezer was the ancestor of the clans of Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

²⁸Dishan was the ancestor of the clans of Uz and Aran.

²⁹These are the Horite tribes in the land of Edom: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

³⁰(36: 29)

³¹Before there were any kings in Israel, the following kings ruled the land of Edom in succession: Bela son of Beor from Dinhabah Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah Husham from the region of Teman Hadad son of Bedad from Avith (he defeated the Midianites in a battle in the country of Moab) Samlah from Masrekah Shaul from Rehoboth-on-the-River Baal Hanan son of Achbor Hadad from Pau (his wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Mezahab)

32 (36: 31)

33 (36: 31)

34 (36: 31)

35 (36: 31)

36 (36: 31)

37 (36: 31)

38 (36: 31)

39 (36: 31)

⁴⁰ Esau was the ancestor of the following Edomite tribes: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. The area where each of these tribes lived was known by the name of the tribe.

⁴¹ (36: 40)

⁴² (36: 40)

⁴³ (36: 40)

37 ¹ Jacob continued to live in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived,

² and this is the story of Jacob's family. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, took care of the sheep and goats with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's concubines. He brought bad reports to his father about what his brothers were doing.

³ Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other sons, because he had been born to him when he was old. He made a long robe with full sleeves for him.

⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them, they hated their brother so much that they would not speak to him in a friendly manner.

⁵ One time Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him even more.

⁶ He said, Listen to the dream I had.

⁷ We were all in the field tying up sheaves of wheat, when my sheaf got up and stood up straight. Yours formed a circle around mine and bowed down to it.

⁸ Do you think you are going to be a king and rule over us? his brothers asked. So they hated him even more because of his dreams and because of what he said about them.

⁹ Then Joseph had another dream and told his brothers, I had another dream, in which I saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowing down to me.

¹⁰He also told the dream to his father, and his father scolded him: What kind of a dream is that? Do you think that your mother, your brothers, and I are going to come and bow down to you?

¹¹Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept thinking about the whole matter.

¹²One day when Joseph's brothers had gone to Shechem to take care of their father's flock,

¹³Jacob said to Joseph, I want you to go to Shechem, where your brothers are taking care of the flock. Joseph answered, I am ready.

¹⁴His father told him, Go and see if your brothers are safe and if the flock is all right; then come back and tell me. So his father sent him on his way from Hebron Valley. Joseph arrived at Shechem

¹⁵and was wandering around in the country when a man saw him and asked him, What are you looking for?

¹⁶I am looking for my brothers, who are taking care of their flock, he answered. Can you tell me where they are?

¹⁷The man said, They have already left. I heard them say that they were going to Dothan. So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

¹⁸They saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted against him and decided to kill him.

¹⁹They said to one another, Here comes that dreamer.

²⁰Come on now, let's kill him and throw his body into one of the dry wells. We can say that a wild animal killed him. Then we will see what becomes of his dreams.

²¹Reuben heard them and tried to save Joseph. Let's not kill him, he said.

²²Just throw him into this well in the wilderness, but don't hurt him. He said this, planning to save him from them and send him back to his father.

²³When Joseph came up to his brothers, they ripped off his long robe with full sleeves.

²⁴Then they took him and threw him into the well, which was dry.

²⁵While they were eating, they suddenly saw a group of Ishmaelites traveling from Gilead to Egypt. Their

camels were loaded with spices and resins.

²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, What will we gain by killing our brother and covering up the murder?

²⁷ Let's sell him to these Ishmaelites. Then we won't have to hurt him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood. His brothers agreed,

²⁸ and when some Midianite traders came by, the brothers pulled Joseph out of the well and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben came back to the well and found that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes in sorrow.

³⁰ He returned to his brothers and said, The boy is not there! What am I going to do?

³¹ Then they killed a goat and dipped Joseph's robe in its blood.

³² They took the robe to their father and said, We found this. Does it belong to your son?

³³ He recognized it and said, Yes, it is his! Some wild animal has killed him. My son Joseph has been torn to pieces!

³⁴ Jacob tore his clothes in sorrow and put on sackcloth. He mourned for his son a long time.

³⁵ All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, I will go down to the world of the dead still mourning for my son. So he continued to mourn for his son Joseph.

³⁶ Meanwhile, in Egypt the Midianites had sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of the king's officers, who was the captain of the palace guard.

38 ¹ About that time Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah, who was from the town of Adullam.

² There Judah met a young Canaanite woman whose father was named Shua. He married her,

³ and she bore him a son, whom he named Er.

⁴ She became pregnant again and bore another son and named him Onan.

⁵ Again she had a son and named him Shelah. Judah was at Achzib when the boy was born.

⁶For his first son Er, Judah got a wife whose name was Tamar.

⁷Er's conduct was evil, and it displeased the LORD, so the LORD killed him.

⁸Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, Go and sleep with your brother's widow. Fulfill your obligation to her as her husband's brother, so that your brother may have descendants.

⁹But Onan knew that the children would not belong to him, so when he had intercourse with his brother's widow, he let the semen spill on the ground, so that there would be no children for his brother.

¹⁰What he did displeased the LORD, and the LORD killed him also.

¹¹Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, Return to your father's house and remain a widow until my son Shelah grows up. He said this because he was afraid that Shelah would be killed, as his brothers had been. So Tamar went back home.

¹²After some time Judah's wife died. When he had finished the time of mourning, he and his friend Hirah of

Adullam went to Timnah, where his sheep were being sheared.

¹³Someone told Tamar that her father-in-law was going to Timnah to shear his sheep.

¹⁴So she changed from the widow's clothes she had been wearing, covered her face with a veil, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim, a town on the road to Timnah. As she well knew, Judah's youngest son Shelah was now grown up, and yet she had not been given to him in marriage.

¹⁵When Judah saw her, he thought that she was a prostitute, because she had her face covered.

¹⁶He went over to her at the side of the road and said, All right, how much do you charge? (He did not know that she was his daughter-in-law.) She said, What will you give me?

¹⁷He answered, I will send you a young goat from my flock. She said, All right, if you will give me something to keep as a pledge until you send the goat.

¹⁸What shall I give you as a pledge? he asked. She answered, Your seal with its cord and the walking stick you are

carrying. He gave them to her. Then they had intercourse, and she became pregnant.

¹⁹Tamar went home, took off her veil, and put her widow's clothes back on.

²⁰Judah sent his friend Hirah to take the goat and get back from the woman the articles he had pledged, but Hirah could not find her.

²¹He asked some men at Enaim, Where is the prostitute who was here by the road? There has never been a prostitute here, they answered.

²²He returned to Judah and said, I couldn't find her. The men of the place said that there had never been a prostitute there.

²³Judah said, Let her keep the things. We don't want people to laugh at us. I did try to pay her, but you couldn't find her.

²⁴About three months later someone told Judah, Your daughter-in-law Tamar has been acting like a whore, and now she is pregnant. Judah ordered, Take her out and burn her to death.

²⁵As she was being taken out, she sent word to her father-in-law: I am pregnant

by the man who owns these things. Look at them and see whose they are -- this seal with its cord and this walking stick.

²⁶ Judah recognized them and said, She is in the right. I have failed in my obligation to her -- I should have given her to my son Shelah in marriage. And Judah never had intercourse with her again.

²⁷ When the time came for her to give birth, it was discovered that she was going to have twins.

²⁸ While she was in labor, one of them put out an arm; the midwife caught it, tied a red thread around it, and said, This one was born first.

²⁹ But he pulled his arm back, and his brother was born first. Then the midwife said, So this is how you break your way out! So he was named Perez.

³⁰ Then his brother was born with the red thread on his arm, and he was named Zerah.

39¹ Now the Ishmaelites had taken Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, one of the king's officers, who was the captain of the palace guard.

²The LORD was with Joseph and made him successful. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master,

³who saw that the LORD was with Joseph and had made him successful in everything he did.

⁴Potiphar was pleased with him and made him his personal servant; so he put him in charge of his house and everything he owned.

⁵From then on, because of Joseph the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian and everything that he had in his house and in his fields.

⁶Potiphar turned over everything he had to the care of Joseph and did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Joseph was well-built and good-looking,

⁷and after a while his master's wife began to desire Joseph and asked him to go to bed with her.

⁸He refused and said to her, Look, my master does not have to concern himself with anything in the house, because I am here. He has put me in charge of everything he has.

⁹I have as much authority in this house as he has, and he has not kept back anything from me except you. How then could I do such an immoral thing and sin against God?

¹⁰Although she asked Joseph day after day, he would not go to bed with her.

¹¹But one day when Joseph went into the house to do his work, none of the house servants was there.

¹²She caught him by his robe and said, Come to bed with me. But he escaped and ran outside, leaving his robe in her hand.

¹³When she saw that he had left his robe and had run out of the house,

¹⁴she called to her house servants and said, Look at this! This Hebrew that my husband brought to the house is insulting us. He came into my room and tried to rape me, but I screamed as loud as I could.

¹⁵When he heard me scream, he ran outside, leaving his robe beside me.

¹⁶She kept his robe with her until Joseph's master came home.

¹⁷ Then she told him the same story: That Hebrew slave that you brought here came into my room and insulted me.

¹⁸ But when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his robe beside me.

¹⁹ Joseph's master was furious

²⁰ and had Joseph arrested and put in the prison where the king's prisoners were kept, and there he stayed.

²¹ But the LORD was with Joseph and blessed him, so that the jailer was pleased with him.

²² He put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and made him responsible for everything that was done in the prison.

²³ The jailer did not have to look after anything for which Joseph was responsible, because the LORD was with Joseph and made him succeed in everything he did.

40¹ Some time later the king of Egypt's wine steward and his chief baker offended the king.

² He was angry with these two officials

³ and put them in prison in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same place where Joseph was being kept.

⁴They spent a long time in prison, and the captain assigned Joseph as their servant.

⁵One night there in prison the wine steward and the chief baker each had a dream, and the dreams had different meanings.

⁶When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were upset.

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

⁸They answered, Each of us had a dream, and there is no one here to explain what the dreams mean. It is God who gives the ability to interpret dreams, Joseph said. Tell me your dreams.

⁹So the wine steward said, In my dream there was a grapevine in front of me

¹⁰with three branches on it. As soon as the leaves came out, the blossoms appeared, and the grapes ripened.

¹¹I was holding the king's cup; so I took the grapes and squeezed them into the cup and gave it to him.

¹²Joseph said, This is what it means: the three branches are three days.

¹³In three days the king will release you, pardon you, and restore you to your position. You will give him his cup as you did before when you were his wine steward.

¹⁴But please remember me when everything is going well for you, and please be kind enough to mention me to the king and help me get out of this prison.

¹⁵After all, I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here in Egypt I didn't do anything to deserve being put in prison.

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that the interpretation of the wine steward's dream was favorable, he said to Joseph, I had a dream too; I was carrying three breadbaskets on my head.

¹⁷In the top basket there were all kinds of baked goods for the king, and the birds were eating them.

¹⁸Joseph answered, This is what it means: the three baskets are three days.

¹⁹In three days the king will release you -- and have your head cut off! Then

he will hang your body on a pole, and the birds will eat your flesh.

²⁰On his birthday three days later the king gave a banquet for all his officials; he released his wine steward and his chief baker and brought them before his officials.

²¹He restored the wine steward to his former position,

²²but he executed the chief baker. It all happened just as Joseph had said.

²³But the wine steward never gave Joseph another thought -- he forgot all about him.

41 ¹After two years had passed, the king of Egypt dreamed that he was standing by the Nile River,

²when seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the river and began to feed on the grass.

³Then seven other cows came up; they were thin and bony. They came and stood by the other cows on the riverbank,

⁴and the thin cows ate up the fat cows. Then the king woke up.

⁵ He fell asleep again and had another dream. Seven heads of grain, full and ripe, were growing on one stalk.

⁶ Then seven other heads of grain sprouted, thin and scorched by the desert wind,

⁷ and the thin heads of grain swallowed the full ones. The king woke up and realized that he had been dreaming.

⁸ In the morning he was worried, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. He told them his dreams, but no one could explain them to him.

⁹ Then the wine steward said to the king, I must confess today that I have done wrong.

¹⁰ You were angry with the chief baker and me, and you put us in prison in the house of the captain of the guard.

¹¹ One night each of us had a dream, and the dreams had different meanings.

¹² A young Hebrew was there with us, a slave of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us.

¹³ Things turned out just as he said: you restored me to my position, but you executed the baker.

¹⁴The king sent for Joseph, and he was immediately brought from the prison. After he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came into the king's presence.

¹⁵The king said to him, I have had a dream, and no one can explain it. I have been told that you can interpret dreams.

¹⁶Joseph answered, I cannot, Your Majesty, but God will give a favorable interpretation.

¹⁷The king said, I dreamed that I was standing on the bank of the Nile,

¹⁸when seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the river and began feeding on the grass.

¹⁹Then seven other cows came up which were thin and bony. They were the poorest cows I have ever seen anywhere in Egypt.

²⁰The thin cows ate up the fat ones,

²¹but no one would have known it, because they looked just as bad as before. Then I woke up.

²²I also dreamed that I saw seven heads of grain which were full and ripe, growing on one stalk.

²³ Then seven heads of grain sprouted, thin and scorched by the desert wind,
²⁴ and the thin heads of grain swallowed the full ones. I told the dreams to the magicians, but none of them could explain them to me.

²⁵ Joseph said to the king, The two dreams mean the same thing; God has told you what he is going to do.

²⁶ The seven fat cows are seven years, and the seven full heads of grain are also seven years; they have the same meaning.

²⁷ The seven thin cows which came up later and the seven thin heads of grain scorched by the desert wind are seven years of famine.

²⁸ It is just as I told you -- God has shown you what he is going to do.

²⁹ There will be seven years of great plenty in all the land of Egypt.

³⁰ After that, there will be seven years of famine, and all the good years will be forgotten, because the famine will ruin the country.

³¹ The time of plenty will be entirely forgotten, because the famine which follows will be so terrible.

³²The repetition of your dream means that the matter is fixed by God and that he will make it happen in the near future.

³³Now you should choose some man with wisdom and insight and put him in charge of the country.

³⁴You must also appoint other officials and take a fifth of the crops during the seven years of plenty.

³⁵Order them to collect all the food during the good years that are coming, and give them authority to store up grain in the cities and guard it.

³⁶The food will be a reserve supply for the country during the seven years of famine which are going to come on Egypt. In this way the people will not starve.

³⁷The king and his officials approved this plan,

³⁸and he said to them, We will never find a better man than Joseph, a man who has God's spirit in him.

³⁹The king said to Joseph, God has shown you all this, so it is obvious that you have greater wisdom and insight than anyone else.

⁴⁰ I will put you in charge of my country, and all my people will obey your orders. Your authority will be second only to mine.

⁴¹ I now appoint you governor over all Egypt.

⁴² The king removed from his finger the ring engraved with the royal seal and put it on Joseph's finger. He put a fine linen robe on him, and placed a gold chain around his neck.

⁴³ He gave him the second royal chariot to ride in, and his guard of honor went ahead of him and cried out, Make way! Make way! And so Joseph was appointed governor over all Egypt.

⁴⁴ The king said to him, I am the king -- and no one in all Egypt shall so much as lift a hand or a foot without your permission.

⁴⁵ He gave Joseph the Egyptian name Zaphenath Paneah, and he gave him a wife, Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, a priest in the city of Heliopolis. Joseph was thirty years old when he began to serve the king of Egypt. He left the king's court and traveled all over the land.

⁴⁶ (41:45)

⁴⁷ During the seven years of plenty the land produced abundant crops,

⁴⁸ all of which Joseph collected and stored in the cities. In each city he stored the food from the fields around it.

⁴⁹ There was so much grain that Joseph stopped measuring it -- it was like the sand of the sea.

⁵⁰ Before the years of famine came, Joseph had two sons by Asenath.

⁵¹ He said, God has made me forget all my sufferings and all my father's family; so he named his first son Manasseh.

⁵² He also said, God has given me children in the land of my trouble; so he named his second son Ephraim.

⁵³ The seven years of plenty that the land of Egypt had enjoyed came to an end,

⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in every other country, but there was food throughout Egypt.

⁵⁵ When the Egyptians began to be hungry, they cried out to the king for food. So he ordered them to go to Joseph and do what he told them.

⁵⁶The famine grew worse and spread over the whole country, so Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians.

⁵⁷People came to Egypt from all over the world to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

42¹When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, Why don't you do something?

²I hear that there is grain in Egypt; go there and buy some to keep us from starving to death.

³So Joseph's ten half brothers went to buy grain in Egypt,

⁴but Jacob did not send Joseph's full brother Benjamin with them, because he was afraid that something might happen to him.

⁵The sons of Jacob came with others to buy grain, because there was famine in the land of Canaan.

⁶Joseph, as governor of the land of Egypt, was selling grain to people from all over the world. So Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the ground.

⁷ When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he acted as if he did not know them. He asked them harshly, Where do you come from? We have come from Canaan to buy food, they answered.

⁸ Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.

⁹ He remembered the dreams he had dreamed about them and said, You are spies; you have come to find out where our country is weak.

¹⁰ No, sir, they answered. We have come as your slaves, to buy food.

¹¹ We are all brothers. We are not spies, sir, we are honest men.

¹² Joseph said to them, No! You have come to find out where our country is weak.

¹³ They said, We were twelve brothers in all, sir, sons of the same man in the land of Canaan. One brother is dead, and the youngest is now with our father.

¹⁴ It is just as I said, Joseph answered. You are spies.

¹⁵ This is how you will be tested: I swear by the name of the king that you

will never leave unless your youngest brother comes here.

¹⁶One of you must go and get him. The rest of you will be kept under guard until the truth of what you say can be tested. Otherwise, as sure as the king lives, you are spies.

¹⁷With that, he put them in prison for three days.

¹⁸On the third day Joseph said to them, I am a God-fearing man, and I will spare your lives on one condition.

¹⁹To prove that you are honest, one of you will stay in the prison where you have been kept; the rest of you may go and take back to your starving families the grain that you have bought.

²⁰Then you must bring your youngest brother to me. This will prove that you have been telling the truth, and I will not put you to death. They agreed to this

²¹and said to one another, Yes, now we are suffering the consequences of what we did to our brother; we saw the great trouble he was in when he begged for help, but we would not listen. That is why we are in this trouble now.

²² Reuben said, I told you not to harm the boy, but you wouldn't listen. And now we are being paid back for his death.

²³ Joseph understood what they said, but they did not know it, because they had been speaking to him through an interpreter.

²⁴ Joseph left them and began to cry. When he was able to speak again, he came back, picked out Simeon, and had him tied up in front of them.

²⁵ Joseph gave orders to fill his brothers' packs with grain, to put each man's money back in his sack, and to give them food for the trip. This was done.

²⁶ The brothers loaded their donkeys with the grain they had bought, and then they left.

²⁷ At the place where they spent the night, one of them opened his sack to feed his donkey and found his money at the top of the sack.

²⁸ My money has been returned to me, he called to his brothers. Here it is in my sack! Their hearts sank, and in fear they asked one another, What has God done to us?

²⁹When they came to their father Jacob in Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them:

³⁰The governor of Egypt spoke harshly to us and accused us of spying against his country.

³¹We are not spies, we answered, we are honest men.

³²We were twelve brothers in all, sons of the same father. One brother is dead, and the youngest is still in Canaan with our father.

³³The man answered, This is how I will find out if you are honest men: One of you will stay with me; the rest will take grain for your starving families and leave.

³⁴Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know that you are not spies, but honest men; I will give your brother back to you, and you can stay here and trade.

³⁵Then when they emptied out their sacks, every one of them found his bag of money; and when they saw the money, they and their father Jacob were afraid.

³⁶Their father said to them, Do you want to make me lose all my children? Joseph is gone; Simeon is gone; and now you want to take away Benjamin. I am the one who suffers!

³⁷Reuben said to his father, If I do not bring Benjamin back to you, you can kill my two sons. Put him in my care, and I will bring him back.

³⁸But Jacob said, My son cannot go with you; his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. Something might happen to him on the way. I am an old man, and the sorrow you would cause me would kill me.

43 ¹The famine in Canaan got worse, ²and when the family of Jacob had eaten all the grain which had been brought from Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, Go back and buy a little food for us.

³Judah said to him, The man sternly warned us that we would not be admitted to his presence unless we had our brother with us.

⁴If you are willing to send our brother with us, we will go and buy food for you.

⁵If you are not willing, we will not go, because the man told us we would not be admitted to his presence unless our brother was with us.

⁶Jacob said, Why did you cause me so much trouble by telling the man that you had another brother?

⁷They answered, The man kept asking about us and our family, Is your father still living? Do you have another brother? We had to answer his questions. How could we know that he would tell us to bring our brother with us?

⁸Judah said to his father, Send the boy with me, and we will leave at once. Then none of us will starve to death.

⁹I will pledge my own life, and you can hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you safe and sound, I will always bear the blame.

¹⁰If we had not waited so long, we could have been there and back twice by now.

¹¹Their father said to them, If that is how it has to be, then take the best products of the land in your packs as a present for the governor: a little resin, a

little honey, spices, pistachio nuts, and almonds.

¹²Take with you also twice as much money, because you must take back the money that was returned in the top of your sacks. Maybe it was a mistake.

¹³Take your brother and return at once.

¹⁴May Almighty God cause the man to have pity on you, so that he will give Benjamin and your other brother back to you. As for me, if I must lose my children, I must lose them.

¹⁵So the brothers took the gifts and twice as much money, and set out for Egypt with Benjamin. There they presented themselves to Joseph.

¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the servant in charge of his house, Take these men to my house. They are going to eat with me at noon, so kill an animal and prepare it.

¹⁷The servant did as he was commanded and took the brothers to Joseph's house.

¹⁸As they were being brought to the house, they were afraid and thought, We are being brought here because of the money that was returned in our sacks

the first time. They will suddenly attack us, take our donkeys, and make us his slaves.

¹⁹So at the door of the house, they said to the servant in charge,

²⁰If you please, sir, we came here once before to buy food.

²¹When we set up camp on the way home, we opened our sacks, and each man found his money in the top of his sack -- every bit of it. We have brought it back to you.

²²We have also brought some more money with us to buy more food. We do not know who put our money back in our sacks.

²³The servant said, Don't worry. Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the money in your sacks for you. I received your payment. Then he brought Simeon to them.

²⁴The servant took the brothers into the house. He gave them water so that they could wash their feet, and he fed their donkeys.

²⁵They got their gifts ready to present to Joseph when he arrived at noon,

because they had been told that they were to eat with him.

²⁶When Joseph got home, they took the gifts into the house to him and bowed down to the ground before him.

²⁷He asked about their health and then said, You told me about your old father -- how is he? Is he still alive and well?

²⁸They answered, Your humble servant, our father, is still alive and well. And they knelt and bowed down before him.

²⁹When Joseph saw his brother Benjamin, he said, So this is your youngest brother, the one you told me about. God bless you, my son.

³⁰Then Joseph left suddenly, because his heart was full of tender feelings for his brother. He was about to break down, so he went to his room and cried.

³¹After he had washed his face, he came out, and controlling himself, he ordered the meal to be served.

³²Joseph was served at one table and his brothers at another. The Egyptians who were eating there were served separately, because they considered it beneath their dignity to eat with Hebrews.

³³The brothers had been seated at the table, facing Joseph, in the order of their age from the oldest to the youngest. When they saw how they had been seated, they looked at one another in amazement.

³⁴Food was served to them from Joseph's table, and Benjamin was served five times as much as the rest of them. So they ate and drank with Joseph until they were drunk.

44¹ Joseph commanded the servant in charge of his house, Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can carry, and put each man's money in the top of his sack.

²Put my silver cup in the top of the youngest brother's sack, together with the money for his grain. He did as he was told.

³Early in the morning the brothers were sent on their way with their donkeys.

⁴When they had gone only a short distance from the city, Joseph said to the servant in charge of his house, Hurry after those men. When you catch up with them, ask them, Why have you paid back evil for good?

⁵Why did you steal my master's silver cup? It is the one he drinks from, the one he uses for divination. You have committed a serious crime!

⁶When the servant caught up with them, he repeated these words.

⁷They answered him, What do you mean, sir, by talking like this? We swear that we have done no such thing.

⁸You know that we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money we found in the top of our sacks. Why then should we steal silver or gold from your master's house?

⁹Sir, if any one of us is found to have it, he will be put to death, and the rest of us will become your slaves.

¹⁰He said, I agree; but only the one who has taken the cup will become my slave, and the rest of you can go free.

¹¹So they quickly lowered their sacks to the ground, and each man opened his sack.

¹²Joseph's servant searched carefully, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

¹³The brothers tore their clothes in sorrow, loaded their donkeys, and returned to the city.

¹⁴When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They bowed down before him,

¹⁵and Joseph said, What have you done? Didn't you know that a man in my position could find you out by practicing divination?

¹⁶What can we say to you, sir? Judah answered. How can we argue? How can we clear ourselves? God has uncovered our guilt. All of us are now your slaves and not just the one with whom the cup was found.

¹⁷Joseph said, Oh, no! I would never do that! Only the one who had the cup will be my slave. The rest of you may go back safe and sound to your father.

¹⁸Judah went up to Joseph and said, Please, sir, allow me to speak with you freely. Don't be angry with me; you are like the king himself.

¹⁹Sir, you asked us, Do you have a father or another brother?

²⁰We answered, We have a father who is old and a younger brother, born to him

in his old age. The boy's brother is dead, and he is the only one of his mother's children still alive; his father loves him very much.

²¹ Sir, you told us to bring him here, so that you could see him,

²² and we answered that the boy could not leave his father; if he did, his father would die.

²³ Then you said, You will not be admitted to my presence again unless your youngest brother comes with you.

²⁴ When we went back to our father, we told him what you had said.

²⁵ Then he told us to return and buy a little food.

²⁶ We answered, We cannot go; we will not be admitted to the man's presence unless our youngest brother is with us. We can go only if our youngest brother goes also.

²⁷ Our father said to us, You know that my wife Rachel bore me only two sons.

²⁸ One of them has already left me. He must have been torn to pieces by wild animals, because I have not seen him since he left.

²⁹ If you take this one from me now and something happens to him, the sorrow you would cause me would kill me, as old as I am.

³⁰ And now, sir, Judah continued, if I go back to my father without the boy, as soon as he sees that the boy is not with me, he will die. His life is wrapped up with the life of the boy, and he is so old that the sorrow we would cause him would kill him.

³¹ (44: 30)

³² What is more, I pledged my life to my father for the boy. I told him that if I did not bring the boy back to him, I would bear the blame all my life.

³³ And now, sir, I will stay here as your slave in place of the boy; let him go back with his brothers.

³⁴ How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I cannot bear to see this disaster come upon my father.

45¹ Joseph was no longer able to control his feelings in front of his servants, so he ordered them all to leave the room. No one else was with him when Joseph told his brothers who he was.

² He cried with such loud sobs that the Egyptians heard it, and the news was taken to the king's palace.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph. Is my father still alive? But when his brothers heard this, they were so terrified that they could not answer.

⁴ Then Joseph said to them, Please come closer. They did, and he said, I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

⁵ Now do not be upset or blame yourselves because you sold me here. It was really God who sent me ahead of you to save people's lives.

⁶ This is only the second year of famine in the land; there will be five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor reaping.

⁷ God sent me ahead of you to rescue you in this amazing way and to make sure that you and your descendants survive.

⁸ So it was not really you who sent me here, but God. He has made me the king's highest official. I am in charge of his whole country; I am the ruler of all Egypt.

⁹ Now hurry back to my father and tell him that this is what his son Joseph says: God has made me ruler of all Egypt; come to me without delay.

¹⁰ You can live in the region of Goshen, where you can be near me -- you, your children, your grandchildren, your sheep, your goats, your cattle, and everything else that you have.

¹¹ If you are in Goshen, I can take care of you. There will still be five years of famine; and I do not want you, your family, and your livestock to starve.

¹² Joseph continued, Now all of you, and you too, Benjamin, can see that I am really Joseph.

¹³ Tell my father how powerful I am here in Egypt and tell him about everything that you have seen. Then hurry and bring him here.

¹⁴ He threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and began to cry; Benjamin also cried as he hugged him.

¹⁵ Then, still weeping, he embraced each of his brothers and kissed them. After that, his brothers began to talk with him.

¹⁶When the news reached the palace that Joseph's brothers had come, the king and his officials were pleased.

¹⁷He said to Joseph, Tell your brothers to load their animals and to return to the land of Canaan.

¹⁸Let them get their father and their families and come back here. I will give them the best land in Egypt, and they will have more than enough to live on.

¹⁹Tell them also to take wagons with them from Egypt for their wives and small children and to bring their father with them.

²⁰They are not to worry about leaving their possessions behind; the best in the whole land of Egypt will be theirs.

²¹Jacob's sons did as they were told. Joseph gave them wagons, as the king had ordered, and food for the trip.

²²He also gave each of them a change of clothes, but he gave Benjamin three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothes.

²³He sent his father ten donkeys loaded with the best Egyptian goods and ten donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and other food for the trip.

²⁴ He sent his brothers off and as they left, he said to them, Don't quarrel on the way.

²⁵ They left Egypt and went back home to their father Jacob in Canaan.

²⁶ Joseph is still alive! they told him. He is the ruler of all Egypt! Jacob was stunned and could not believe them.

²⁷ But when they told him all that Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to take him to Egypt, he recovered from the shock.

²⁸ My son Joseph is still alive! he said. This is all I could ask for! I must go and see him before I die.

46¹ Jacob packed up all he had and went to Beersheba, where he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

² God spoke to him in a vision at night and called, Jacob, Jacob! Yes, here I am, he answered.

³ I am God, the God of your father, he said. Do not be afraid to go to Egypt; I will make your descendants a great nation there.

⁴ I will go with you to Egypt, and I will bring your descendants back to this land. Joseph will be with you when you die.

⁵ Jacob set out from Beersheba. His sons put him, their small children, and their wives in the wagons which the king of Egypt had sent.

⁶ They took their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan and went to Egypt. Jacob took all his descendants with him:

⁷ his sons, his grandsons, his daughters, and his granddaughters.

⁸ The members of Jacob's family who went to Egypt with him were his oldest son Reuben

⁹ and Reuben's sons: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

¹⁰ Simeon and his sons: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.

¹¹ Levi and his sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹² Judah and his sons: Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (Judah's other sons, Er and Onan, had died in Canaan.) Perez sons were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³Issachar and his sons: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

¹⁴Zebulun and his sons: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵These are the sons that Leah had borne to Jacob in Mesopotamia, besides his daughter Dinah. In all, his descendants by Leah numbered thirty-three.

¹⁶Gad and his sons: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arod, and Areli.

¹⁷Asher and his sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. Beriah's sons were Heber and Malchiel.

¹⁸These sixteen are the descendants of Jacob by Zilpah, the slave woman whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah.

¹⁹Jacob's wife Rachel bore him two sons: Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁰In Egypt Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, by Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, a priest in Heliopolis.

²¹Benjamin's sons were Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²²These fourteen are the descendants of Jacob by Rachel.

²³ Dan and his son Hushim.

²⁴ Naphtali and his sons: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵ These seven are the descendants of Jacob by Bilhah, the slave woman whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel.

²⁶ The total number of the direct descendants of Jacob who went to Egypt was sixty-six, not including his sons' wives.

²⁷ Two sons were born to Joseph in Egypt, bringing to seventy the total number of Jacob's family who went there.

²⁸ Jacob sent Judah ahead to ask Joseph to meet them in Goshen. When they arrived,

²⁹ Joseph got in his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father. When they met, Joseph threw his arms around his father's neck and cried for a long time.

³⁰ Jacob said to Joseph, I am ready to die, now that I have seen you and know that you are still alive.

³¹ Then Joseph said to his brothers and the rest of his father's family, I must go and tell the king that my brothers and

all my father's family, who were living in Canaan, have come to me.

³²I will tell him that you are shepherds and take care of livestock and that you have brought your flocks and herds and everything else that belongs to you.

³³When the king calls for you and asks what your occupation is,

³⁴be sure to tell him that you have taken care of livestock all your lives, just as your ancestors did. In this way he will let you live in the region of Goshen. Joseph said this because Egyptians will have nothing to do with shepherds.

47 ¹So Joseph took five of his brothers and went to the king. He told him, My father and my brothers have come from Canaan with their flocks, their herds, and all that they own. They are now in the region of Goshen.

²He then presented his brothers to the king.

³The king asked them, What is your occupation? We are shepherds, sir, just as our ancestors were, they answered.

⁴We have come to live in this country, because in the land of Canaan the famine is so severe that there is no pasture for

our flocks. Please give us permission to live in the region of Goshen.

⁵The king said to Joseph, Now that your father and your brothers have arrived,

⁶the land of Egypt is theirs. Let them settle in the region of Goshen, the best part of the land. And if there are any capable men among them, put them in charge of my own livestock.

⁷Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to the king. Jacob gave the king his blessing,

⁸and the king asked him, How old are you?

⁹Jacob answered, My life of wandering has lasted a hundred and thirty years. Those years have been few and difficult, unlike the long years of my ancestors in their wanderings.

¹⁰Jacob gave the king a farewell blessing and left.

¹¹Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt, giving them property in the best of the land near the city of Rameses, as the king had commanded.

¹²Joseph provided food for his father, his brothers, and all the rest of his

father's family, including the very youngest.

¹³The famine was so severe that there was no food anywhere, and the people of Egypt and Canaan became weak with hunger.

¹⁴As they bought grain, Joseph collected all the money and took it to the palace.

¹⁵When all the money in Egypt and Canaan was spent, the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, Give us food! Don't let us die. Do something! Our money is all gone.

¹⁶Joseph answered, Bring your livestock; I will give you food in exchange for it if your money is all gone.

¹⁷So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. That year he supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock.

¹⁸The following year they came to him and said, We will not hide the fact from you, sir, that our money is all gone and our livestock belongs to you. There

is nothing left to give you except our bodies and our lands.

¹⁹Don't let us die. Do something! Don't let our fields be deserted. Buy us and our land in exchange for food. We will be the king's slaves, and he will own our land. Give us grain to keep us alive and seed so that we can plant our fields.

²⁰Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for the king. Every Egyptian was forced to sell his land, because the famine was so severe; and all the land became the king's property.

²¹Joseph made slaves of the people from one end of Egypt to the other.

²²The only land he did not buy was the land that belonged to the priests. They did not have to sell their lands, because the king gave them an allowance to live on.

²³Joseph said to the people, You see, I have now bought you and your lands for the king. Here is seed for you to sow in your fields.

²⁴At the time of harvest you must give one-fifth to the king. You can use the rest for seed and for food for yourselves and your families.

²⁵They answered, You have saved our lives; you have been good to us, sir, and we will be the king's slaves.

²⁶So Joseph made it a law for the land of Egypt that one-fifth of the harvest should belong to the king. This law still remains in force today. Only the lands of the priests did not become the king's property.

²⁷The Israelites lived in Egypt in the region of Goshen, where they became rich and had many children.

²⁸Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, until he was a hundred and forty-seven years old.

²⁹When the time drew near for him to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, Place your hand between my thighs and make a solemn vow that you will not bury me in Egypt.

³⁰I want to be buried where my fathers are; carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried. Joseph answered, I will do as you say.

³¹Jacob said, Make a vow that you will. Joseph made the vow, and Jacob gave thanks there on his bed.

48¹ Some time later Joseph was told that his father was ill. So he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to see Jacob.

² When Jacob was told that his son Joseph had come to see him, he gathered his strength and sat up in bed.

³ Jacob said to Joseph, Almighty God appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me.

⁴ He said to me, I will give you many children, so that your descendants will become many nations; I will give this land to your descendants as their possession forever.

⁵ Jacob continued, Joseph, your two sons, who were born to you in Egypt before I came here, belong to me; Ephraim and Manasseh are just as much my sons as Reuben and Simeon.

⁶ If you have any more sons, they will not be considered mine; the inheritance they get will come through Ephraim and Manasseh.

⁷ I am doing this because of your mother Rachel. To my great sorrow she died in the land of Canaan, not far from Ephrath, as I was returning from

Mesopotamia. I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath. (Ephrath is now known as Bethlehem.)

⁸When Jacob saw Joseph's sons, he asked, Who are these boys?

⁹Joseph answered, These are my sons, whom God has given me here in Egypt. Jacob said, Bring them to me so that I may bless them.

¹⁰Jacob's eyesight was failing because of his age, and he could not see very well. Joseph brought the boys to him, and he hugged them and kissed them.

¹¹Jacob said to Joseph, I never expected to see you again, and now God has even let me see your children.

¹²Then Joseph took them from Jacob's lap and bowed down before him with his face to the ground.

¹³Joseph put Ephraim at Jacob's left and Manasseh at his right.

¹⁴But Jacob crossed his hands, and put his right hand on the head of Ephraim, even though he was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, who was the older.

¹⁵Then he blessed Joseph: May God, whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac

served, bless these boys! May God, who has led me to this very day, bless them!

¹⁶May the angel, who has rescued me from all harm, bless them! May my name and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac live on through these boys! May they have many children, many descendants!

¹⁷Joseph was upset when he saw that his father had put his right hand on Ephraim's head; so he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to the head of Manasseh.

¹⁸He said to his father, Not that way, father. This is the older boy; put your right hand on his head.

¹⁹His father refused, saying, I know, son, I know. Manasseh's descendants will also become a great people. But his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become great nations.

²⁰So he blessed them that day, saying, The Israelites will use your names when they pronounce blessings. They will say, May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh. In this way Jacob put Ephraim before Manasseh.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Joseph, As you see, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will take you back to the land of your ancestors.

²² It is to you and not to your brothers that I am giving Shechem, that fertile region which I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.

49 ¹ Jacob called for his sons and said, Gather around, and I will tell you what will happen to you in the future:

² Come together and listen, sons of Jacob. Listen to your father Israel.

³ Reuben, my first-born, you are my strength And the first child of my manhood, The proudest and strongest of all my sons.

⁴ You are like a raging flood, But you will not be the most important, For you slept with my concubine And dishonored your father's bed.

⁵ Simeon and Levi are brothers. They use their weapons to commit violence.

⁶ I will not join in their secret talks, Nor will I take part in their meetings, For they killed people in anger And they crippled bulls for sport.

⁷ A curse be on their anger, because it is so fierce, And on their fury, because it is so cruel. I will scatter them throughout the land of Israel. I will disperse them among its people.

⁸ Judah, your brothers will praise you. You hold your enemies by the neck. Your brothers will bow down before you.

⁹ Judah is like a lion, Killing his victim and returning to his den, Stretching out and lying down. No one dares disturb him.

¹⁰ Judah will hold the royal scepter, And his descendants will always rule. Nations will bring him tribute And bow in obedience before him.

¹¹ He ties his young donkey to a grapevine, To the very best of the vines. He washes his clothes in blood-red wine.

¹² His eyes are bloodshot from drinking wine, His teeth white from drinking milk.

¹³ Zebulun will live beside the sea. His shore will be a haven for ships. His territory will reach as far as Sidon.

¹⁴ Issachar is no better than a donkey That lies stretched out between its saddlebags.

¹⁵ But he sees that the resting place is good
And that the land is delightful. So
he bends his back to carry the load
And is forced to work as a slave.

¹⁶ Dan will be a ruler for his people.
They will be like the other tribes of
Israel.

¹⁷ Dan will be a snake at the side of
the road, A poisonous snake beside the
path, That strikes at the horse's heel, So
that the rider is thrown off backward.

¹⁸ I wait for your deliverance, LORD.

¹⁹ Gad will be attacked by a band of
robbers, But he will turn and pursue
them.

²⁰ Asher's land will produce rich food.
He will provide food fit for a king.

²¹ Naphtali is a deer that runs free, Who
bears lovely fawns.

²² Joseph is like a wild donkey by a
spring, A wild colt on a hillside.

²³ His enemies attack him fiercely
And pursue him with their bows and arrows.

²⁴ But his bow remains steady, And his
arms are made strong
By the power
of the Mighty God of Jacob, By the
Shepherd, the Protector of Israel.

²⁵It is your father's God who helps you,
The Almighty God who blesses you
With blessings of rain from above
And of deep waters from beneath the ground,
Blessings of many cattle and children,

²⁶Blessings of grain and flowers,
Blessings of ancient mountains,
Delightful things from everlasting hills.
May these blessings rest on the head of
Joseph, On the brow of the one set apart
from his brothers.

²⁷Benjamin is like a vicious wolf.
Morning and evening he kills and
devours.

²⁸These are the twelve tribes of Israel,
and this is what their father said as he
spoke a suitable word of farewell to each
son.

²⁹Then Jacob commanded his sons,
Now that I am going to join my people
in death, bury me with my fathers in the
cave that is in the field of Ephron the
Hittite,

³⁰at Machpelah east of Mamre in the
land of Canaan. Abraham bought this
cave and field from Ephron for a burial
ground.

³¹ That is where they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah; that is where they buried Isaac and his wife Rebecca; and that is where I buried Leah.

³² The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites. Bury me there.

³³ When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he lay back down and died.

50¹ Joseph threw himself on his father, crying and kissing his face.

² Then Joseph gave orders to embalm his father's body.

³ It took forty days, the normal time for embalming. The Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

⁴ When the time of mourning was over, Joseph said to the king's officials, Please take this message to the king:

⁵ When my father was about to die, he made me promise him that I would bury him in the tomb which he had prepared in the land of Canaan. So please let me go and bury my father, and then I will come back.

⁶ The king answered, Go and bury your father, as you promised you would.

⁷ So Joseph went to bury his father. All the king's officials, the senior men of his court, and all the leading men of Egypt went with Joseph.

⁸ His family, his brothers, and the rest of his father's family all went with him. Only their small children and their sheep, goats, and cattle stayed in the region of Goshen.

⁹ Men in chariots and men on horseback also went with him; it was a huge group.

¹⁰ When they came to the threshing place at Atad east of the Jordan, they mourned loudly for a long time, and Joseph performed mourning ceremonies for seven days.

¹¹ When the citizens of Canaan saw those people mourning at Atad, they said, What a solemn ceremony of mourning the Egyptians are holding! That is why the place was named Abel Mizraim.

¹² So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them;

¹³ they carried his body to Canaan and buried it in the cave at Machpelah east of Mamre in the field which Abraham

had bought from Ephron the Hittite for a burial ground.

¹⁴After Joseph had buried his father, he returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone with him for the funeral.

¹⁵After the death of their father, Joseph's brothers said, What if Joseph still hates us and plans to pay us back for all the harm we did to him?

¹⁶So they sent a message to Joseph: Before our father died,

¹⁷he told us to ask you, Please forgive the crime your brothers committed when they wronged you. Now please forgive us the wrong that we, the servants of your father's God, have done. Joseph cried when he received this message.

¹⁸Then his brothers themselves came and bowed down before him. Here we are before you as your slaves, they said.

¹⁹But Joseph said to them, Don't be afraid; I can't put myself in the place of God.

²⁰You plotted evil against me, but God turned it into good, in order to preserve the lives of many people who are alive today because of what happened.

²¹ You have nothing to fear. I will take care of you and your children. So he reassured them with kind words that touched their hearts.

²² Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father's family; he was a hundred and ten years old when he died.

²³ He lived to see Ephraim's children and grandchildren. He also lived to receive the children of Machir son of Manasseh into the family.

²⁴ He said to his brothers, I am about to die, but God will certainly take care of you and lead you out of this land to the land he solemnly promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

²⁵ Then Joseph asked his people to make a vow. Promise me, he said, that when God leads you to that land, you will take my body with you.

²⁶ So Joseph died in Egypt at the age of a hundred and ten. They embalmed his body and put it in a coffin.

Exodus

1 ¹The sons of Jacob who went to Egypt with him, each with his family, were

²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah,

³Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin,

⁴Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

⁵The total number of these people directly descended from Jacob was seventy. His son Joseph was already in Egypt.

⁶In the course of time Joseph, his brothers, and all the rest of that generation died,

⁷but their descendants, the Israelites, had many children and became so numerous and strong that Egypt was filled with them.

⁸Then, a new king, who knew nothing about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.

⁹He said to his people, These Israelites are so numerous and strong that they are a threat to us.

¹⁰In case of war they might join our enemies in order to fight against us,

and might escape from the country. We must find some way to keep them from becoming even more numerous.

¹¹ So the Egyptians put slave drivers over them to crush their spirits with hard labor. The Israelites built the cities of Pithom and Rameses to serve as supply centers for the king.

¹² But the more the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, the more they increased in number and the farther they spread through the land. The Egyptians came to fear the Israelites

¹³ and made their lives miserable by forcing them into cruel slavery. They made them work on their building projects and in their fields, and they had no pity on them.

¹⁴ (1:13)

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt spoke to Shiphrah and Puah, the two midwives who helped the Hebrew women.

¹⁶ When you help the Hebrew women give birth, he said to them, kill the baby if it is a boy; but if it is a girl, let it live.

¹⁷ But the midwives were God-fearing and so did not obey the king; instead, they let the boys live.

¹⁸So the king sent for the midwives and asked them, Why are you doing this? Why are you letting the boys live?

¹⁹They answered, The Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they give birth easily, and their babies are born before either of us gets there.

²⁰Because the midwives were God-fearing, God was good to them and gave them families of their own. And the Israelites continued to increase and become strong.

²¹ (1: 20)

²²Finally the king issued a command to all his people: Take every newborn Hebrew boy and throw him into the Nile, but let all the girls live.

2¹ During this time a man from the tribe of Levi married a woman of his own tribe,

²and she bore him a son. When she saw what a fine baby he was, she hid him for three months.

³But when she could not hide him any longer, she took a basket made of reeds and covered it with tar to make it watertight. She put the baby in it and

then placed it in the tall grass at the edge of the river.

⁴The baby's sister stood some distance away to see what would happen to him.

⁵The king's daughter came down to the river to bathe, while her servants walked along the bank. Suddenly she noticed the basket in the tall grass and sent a slave woman to get it.

⁶The princess opened it and saw a baby boy. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. This is one of the Hebrew babies, she said.

⁷Then his sister asked her, Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for you?

⁸Please do, she answered. So the girl went and brought the baby's own mother.

⁹The princess told the woman, Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you. So she took the baby and nursed him.

¹⁰Later, when the child was old enough, she took him to the king's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. She said to herself, I pulled him out of the water, and so I name him Moses.

¹¹ When Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his people, the Hebrews, and he saw how they were forced to do hard labor. He even saw an Egyptian kill a Hebrew, one of Moses' own people.

¹² Moses looked all around, and when he saw that no one was watching, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand.

¹³ The next day he went back and saw two Hebrew men fighting. He said to the one who was in the wrong, Why are you beating up a fellow Hebrew?

¹⁴ The man answered, Who made you our ruler and judge? Are you going to kill me just as you killed that Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid and said to himself, People have found out what I have done.

¹⁵ When the king heard about what had happened, he tried to have Moses killed, but Moses fled and went to live in the land of Midian. One day, when Moses was sitting by a well, seven daughters of Jethro, the priest of Midian, came to draw water and fill the troughs for their father's sheep and goats.

¹⁶ (2: 15)

¹⁷ But some shepherds drove Jethro's daughters away. Then Moses went to their rescue and watered their animals for them.

¹⁸ When they returned to their father, he asked, Why have you come back so early today?

¹⁹ An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds, they answered, and he even drew water for us and watered our animals.

²⁰ Where is he? he asked his daughters. Why did you leave the man out there? Go and invite him to eat with us.

²¹ So Moses decided to live there, and Jethro gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage,

²² who bore him a son. Moses said to himself, I am a foreigner in this land, and so I name him Gershom.

²³ Years later the king of Egypt died, but the Israelites were still groaning under their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry went up to God,

²⁴ who heard their groaning and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

²⁵ He saw the slavery of the Israelites and was concerned for them.

3¹ One day while Moses was taking care of the sheep and goats of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, he led the flock across the desert and came to Sinai, the holy mountain.

² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him as a flame coming from the middle of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire but that it was not burning up.

³ This is strange, he thought. Why isn't the bush burning up? I will go closer and see.

⁴ When the LORD saw that Moses was coming closer, he called to him from the middle of the bush and said, Moses! Moses! He answered, Yes, here I am.

⁵ God said, Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground.

⁶ I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So Moses covered his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the LORD said, I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in

Egypt; I have heard them cry out to be rescued from their slave drivers. I know all about their sufferings,

⁸and so I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land, one which is rich and fertile and in which the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites now live.

⁹I have indeed heard the cry of my people, and I see how the Egyptians are oppressing them.

¹⁰Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of his country.

¹¹But Moses said to God, I am nobody. How can I go to the king and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

¹²God answered, I will be with you, and when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship me on this mountain. That will be the proof that I have sent you.

¹³But Moses replied, When I go to the Israelites and say to them, The God of your ancestors sent me to you, they will

ask me, What is his name? So what can I tell them?

¹⁴God said, I am who I am. You must tell them: The one who is called I AM has sent me to you.

¹⁵Tell the Israelites that I, the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have sent you to them. This is my name forever; this is what all future generations are to call me.

¹⁶Go and gather the leaders of Israel together and tell them that I, the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, appeared to you. Tell them that I have come to them and have seen what the Egyptians are doing to them.

¹⁷I have decided that I will bring them out of Egypt, where they are being treated cruelly, and will take them to a rich and fertile land -- the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

¹⁸My people will listen to what you say to them. Then you must go with the leaders of Israel to the king of Egypt

and say to him, The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has revealed himself to us. Now allow us to travel three days into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD, our God.

¹⁹I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless he is forced to do so.

²⁰But I will use my power and will punish Egypt by doing terrifying things there. After that he will let you go.

²¹I will make the Egyptians respect you so that when my people leave, they will not go empty-handed.

²²Every Israelite woman will go to her Egyptian neighbors and to any Egyptian woman living in her house and will ask for clothing and for gold and silver jewelry. The Israelites will put these things on their sons and daughters and carry away the wealth of the Egyptians.

4¹Then Moses answered the LORD, But suppose the Israelites do not believe me and will not listen to what I say. What shall I do if they say that you did not appear to me?

²So the LORD asked him, What are you holding? A walking stick, he answered.

³The LORD said, Throw it on the ground. When Moses threw it down, it turned into a snake, and he ran away from it.

⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, Reach down and pick it up by the tail. So Moses reached down and caught it, and it became a walking stick again.

⁵The LORD said, Do this to prove to the Israelites that the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to you.

⁶The LORD spoke to Moses again, Put your hand inside your robe. Moses obeyed; and when he took his hand out, it was diseased, covered with white spots, like snow.

⁷Then the LORD said, Put your hand inside your robe again. He did so, and when he took it out this time, it was healthy, just like the rest of his body.

⁸The LORD said, If they will not believe you or be convinced by the first miracle, then this one will convince them.

⁹If in spite of these two miracles they still will not believe you, and if they refuse to listen to what you say, take some water from the Nile and pour it

on the ground. The water will turn into blood.

¹⁰But Moses said, No, LORD, don't send me. I have never been a good speaker, and I haven't become one since you began to speak to me. I am a poor speaker, slow and hesitant.

¹¹The LORD said to him, Who gives man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or dumb? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? It is I, the LORD.

¹²Now, go! I will help you to speak, and I will tell you what to say.

¹³But Moses answered, No, Lord, please send someone else.

¹⁴At this the LORD became angry with Moses and said, What about your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. In fact, he is now coming to meet you and will be glad to see you.

¹⁵You can speak to him and tell him what to say. I will help both of you to speak, and I will tell you both what to do.

¹⁶He will be your spokesman and speak to the people for you. Then you will be like God, telling him what to say.

¹⁷ Take this walking stick with you; for with it you will perform miracles.

¹⁸ Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law, and said to him, Please let me go back to my relatives in Egypt to see if they are still alive. Jethro agreed and told him good-bye.

¹⁹ While Moses was still in Midian, the LORD said to him, Go back to Egypt, for all those who wanted to kill you are dead.

²⁰ So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey, and set out with them for Egypt, carrying the walking stick that God had told him to take.

²¹ Again the LORD said to Moses, Now that you are going back to Egypt, be sure to perform before the king all the miracles which I have given you the power to do. But I will make the king stubborn, and he will not let the people go.

²² Then you must tell him that I, the LORD, say, Israel is my first-born son.

²³ I told you to let my son go, so that he might worship me, but you refused. Now I am going to kill your first-born son.

²⁴ At a camping place on the way to Egypt, the LORD met Moses and tried to kill him.

²⁵ Then Zipporah, his wife, took a sharp stone, cut off the foreskin of her son, and touched Moses' feet with it. Because of the rite of circumcision she said to Moses, You are a husband of blood to me. And so the LORD spared Moses' life.

²⁶ (4: 25)

²⁷ Meanwhile the LORD had said to Aaron, Go into the desert to meet Moses. So he went to meet him at the holy mountain; and when he met him, he kissed him.

²⁸ Then Moses told Aaron everything that the LORD had said when he told him to return to Egypt; he also told him about the miracles which the LORD had ordered him to perform.

²⁹ So Moses and Aaron went to Egypt and gathered all the Israelite leaders together.

³⁰ Aaron told them everything that the LORD had said to Moses, and then Moses performed all the miracles in front of the people.

³¹ They believed, and when they heard that the LORD had come to them and had seen how they were being treated cruelly, they bowed down and worshiped.

5¹ Then Moses and Aaron went to the king of Egypt and said, The LORD, the God of Israel, says, Let my people go, so that they can hold a festival in the desert to honor me.

² Who is the LORD? the king demanded. Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD; and I will not let Israel go.

³ Moses and Aaron replied, The God of the Hebrews has revealed himself to us. Allow us to travel three days into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God. If we don't do so, he will kill us with disease or by war.

⁴ The king said to Moses and Aaron, What do you mean by making the people neglect their work? Get those slaves back to work!

⁵ You people have become more numerous than the Egyptians. And now you want to stop working!

⁶That same day the king commanded the Egyptian slave drivers and the Israelite foremen:

⁷Stop giving the people straw for making bricks. Make them go and find it for themselves.

⁸But still require them to make the same number of bricks as before, not one brick less. They don't have enough work to do, and that is why they keep asking me to let them go and offer sacrifices to their God!

⁹Make them work harder and keep them busy, so that they won't have time to listen to a pack of lies.

¹⁰The slave drivers and the Israelite foremen went out and said to the Israelites, The king has said that he will not supply you with any more straw.

¹¹He says that you must go and get it for yourselves wherever you can find it, but you must still make the same number of bricks.

¹²So the people went all over Egypt looking for straw.

¹³The slave drivers kept trying to force them to make the same number of bricks

every day as they had made when they were given straw.

¹⁴The Egyptian slave drivers beat the Israelite foremen, whom they had put in charge of the work. They demanded, Why aren't you people making the same number of bricks that you made before?

¹⁵Then the foremen went to the king and complained, Why do you do this to us, Your Majesty?

¹⁶We are given no straw, but we are still ordered to make bricks! And now we are being beaten. It is your people that are at fault.

¹⁷The king answered, You are lazy and don't want to work, and that is why you ask me to let you go and offer sacrifices to the LORD.

¹⁸Now get back to work! You will not be given any straw, but you must still make the same number of bricks.

¹⁹The foremen realized that they were in trouble when they were told that they had to make the same number of bricks every day as they had made before.

²⁰As they were leaving, they met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them.

²¹ They said to Moses and Aaron, The LORD has seen what you have done and will punish you for making the king and his officers hate us. You have given them an excuse to kill us.

²² Then Moses turned to the LORD again and said, Lord, why do you mistreat your people? Why did you send me here?

²³ Ever since I went to the king to speak for you, he has treated them cruelly. And you have done nothing to help them!

6¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, Now you are going to see what I will do to the king. I will force him to let my people go. In fact, I will force him to drive them out of his land.

² God spoke to Moses and said, I am the LORD.

³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as Almighty God, but I did not make myself known to them by my holy name, the LORD.

⁴ I also made my covenant with them, promising to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they had lived as foreigners.

⁵ Now I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians have

enslaved, and I have remembered my covenant.

⁶So tell the Israelites that I say to them, I am the LORD; I will rescue you and set you free from your slavery to the Egyptians. I will raise my mighty arm to bring terrible punishment upon them, and I will save you.

⁷I will make you my own people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am the LORD your God when I set you free from slavery in Egypt.

⁸I will bring you to the land that I solemnly promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as your own possession. I am the LORD.

⁹Moses told this to the Israelites, but they would not listen to him, because their spirit had been broken by their cruel slavery.

¹⁰Then the LORD said to Moses,

¹¹Go and tell the king of Egypt that he must let the Israelites leave his land.

¹²But Moses replied, Even the Israelites will not listen to me, so why should the king? I am such a poor speaker.

¹³The LORD commanded Moses and Aaron: Tell the Israelites and the king of

Egypt that I have ordered you to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

¹⁴Reuben, Jacob's first-born, had four sons: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; they were the ancestors of the clans that bear their names.

¹⁵Simeon had six sons: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman; they were the ancestors of the clans that bear their names.

¹⁶Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; they were the ancestors of the clans that bear their names. Levi lived 137 years.

¹⁷Gershon had two sons: Libni and Shimei, and they had many descendants.

¹⁸Kohath had four sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Kohath lived 133 years.

¹⁹Merari had two sons: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of Levi with their descendants.

²⁰Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram lived 137 years.

²¹Izhar had three sons: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri.

²²Uzziel also had three sons: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

²³Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon; she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

²⁴Korah had three sons: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph; they were the ancestors of the divisions of the clan of Korah.

²⁵Eleazar, Aaron's son, married one of Putiel's daughters, who bore him Phinehas. These were the heads of the families and the clans of the tribe of Levi.

²⁶Aaron and Moses were the ones to whom the LORD said, Lead the tribes of Israel out of Egypt.

²⁷They were the men who told the king of Egypt to free the Israelites.

²⁸When the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt,

²⁹he said, I am the LORD. Tell the king of Egypt everything I tell you.

³⁰But Moses answered, You know that I am such a poor speaker; why should the king listen to me?

7¹The LORD said, I am going to make you like God to the king, and your

brother Aaron will speak to him as your prophet.

²Tell Aaron everything I command you, and he will tell the king to let the Israelites leave his country.

³But I will make the king stubborn, and he will not listen to you, no matter how many terrifying things I do in Egypt. Then I will bring severe punishment on Egypt and lead the tribes of my people out of the land.

⁴(7: 3)

⁵The Egyptians will then know that I am the LORD, when I raise my hand against them and bring the Israelites out of their country.

⁶Moses and Aaron did what the LORD commanded.

⁷At the time when they spoke to the king, Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron was eighty-three.

⁸The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

⁹If the king demands that you prove yourselves by performing a miracle, tell Aaron to take his walking stick and throw it down in front of the king, and it will turn into a snake.

¹⁰So Moses and Aaron went to the king and did as the LORD had commanded. Aaron threw his walking stick down in front of the king and his officers, and it turned into a snake.

¹¹Then the king called for his wise men and magicians, and by their magic they did the same thing.

¹²They threw down their walking sticks, and the sticks turned into snakes. But Aaron's stick swallowed theirs.

¹³The king, however, remained stubborn and, just as the LORD had said, the king would not listen to Moses and Aaron.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, The king is very stubborn and refuses to let the people go.

¹⁵So go and meet him in the morning when he goes down to the Nile. Take with you the walking stick that was turned into a snake, and wait for him on the riverbank.

¹⁶Then say to the king, The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to tell you to let his people go, so that they can worship him in the desert. But until now you have not listened.

¹⁷ Now, Your Majesty, the LORD says that you will find out who he is by what he is going to do. Look, I am going to strike the surface of the river with this stick, and the water will be turned into blood.

¹⁸ The fish will die, and the river will stink so much that the Egyptians will not be able to drink from it.

¹⁹ The LORD said to Moses, Tell Aaron to take his stick and hold it out over all the rivers, canals, and pools in Egypt. The water will become blood, and all over the land there will be blood, even in the wooden tubs and stone jars.

²⁰ Then Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the presence of the king and his officers, Aaron raised his stick and struck the surface of the river, and all the water in it was turned into blood.

²¹ The fish in the river died, and it smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink from it. There was blood everywhere in Egypt.

²² Then the king's magicians did the same thing by means of their magic, and the king was as stubborn as ever. Just as

the LORD had said, the king refused to listen to Moses and Aaron.

²³ Instead, he turned and went back to his palace without paying any attention even to this.

²⁴ All the Egyptians dug along the bank of the river for drinking water, because they were not able to drink water from the river.

²⁵ Seven days passed after the LORD struck the river.

8¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, Go to the king and tell him that the LORD says, Let my people go, so that they can worship me.

² If you refuse, I will punish your country by covering it with frogs.

³ The Nile will be so full of frogs that they will leave it and go into your palace, your bedroom, your bed, the houses of your officials and your people, and even into your ovens and baking pans.

⁴ They will jump up on you, your people, and all your officials.

⁵ The LORD said to Moses, Tell Aaron to hold out his walking stick over the rivers, the canals, and the pools, and

make frogs come up and cover the land of Egypt.

⁶So Aaron held it out over all the water, and the frogs came out and covered the land.

⁷But the magicians used magic, and they also made frogs come up on the land.

⁸The king called for Moses and Aaron and said, Pray to the LORD to take away these frogs, and I will let your people go, so that they can offer sacrifices to the LORD.

⁹Moses replied, I will be glad to pray for you. Just set the time when I am to pray for you, your officers, and your people. Then you will be rid of the frogs, and there will be none left except in the Nile.

¹⁰The king answered, Pray for me tomorrow. Moses said, I will do as you ask, and then you will know that there is no other god like the LORD, our God.

¹¹You, your officials, and your people will be rid of the frogs, and there will be none left except in the Nile.

¹²Then Moses and Aaron left the king, and Moses prayed to the LORD to take

away the frogs which he had brought on the king.

¹³The LORD did as Moses asked, and the frogs in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields died.

¹⁴The Egyptians piled them up in great heaps, until the land stank with them.

¹⁵When the king saw that the frogs were dead, he became stubborn again and, just as the LORD had said, the king would not listen to Moses and Aaron.

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses, Tell Aaron to strike the ground with his stick, and all over the land of Egypt the dust will change into gnats.

¹⁷So Aaron struck the ground with his stick, and all the dust in Egypt was turned into gnats, which covered the people and the animals.

¹⁸The magicians tried to use their magic to make gnats appear, but they failed. There were gnats everywhere,

¹⁹and the magicians said to the king, God has done this! But the king was stubborn and, just as the LORD had said, the king would not listen to Moses and Aaron.

²⁰The LORD said to Moses, Early tomorrow morning go and meet the king as he goes to the river, and tell him that the LORD says, Let my people go, so that they can worship me.

²¹I warn you that if you refuse, I will punish you by sending flies on you, your officials, and your people. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies, and the ground will be covered with them.

²²But I will spare the region of Goshen, where my people live, so that there will be no flies there. I will do this so that you will know that I, the LORD, am at work in this land.

²³I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This miracle will take place tomorrow.

²⁴The LORD sent great swarms of flies into the king's palace and the houses of his officials. The whole land of Egypt was brought to ruin by the flies.

²⁵Then the king called for Moses and Aaron and said, Go and offer sacrifices to your God here in this country.

²⁶It would not be right to do that, Moses answered, because the Egyptians would be offended by our sacrificing the

animals that we offer to the LORD our God. If we use these animals and offend the Egyptians by sacrificing them where they can see us, they will stone us to death.

²⁷We must travel three days into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, just as he commanded us.

²⁸The king said, I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD, your God, in the desert, if you do not go very far. Pray for me.

²⁹Moses answered, As soon as I leave, I will pray to the LORD that tomorrow the flies will leave you, your officials, and your people. But you must not deceive us again and prevent the people from going to sacrifice to the LORD.

³⁰Moses left the king and prayed to the LORD,

³¹and the LORD did as Moses asked. The flies left the king, his officials, and his people; not one fly remained.

³²But even this time the king became stubborn, and again he would not let the people go.

9¹The LORD said to Moses, Go to the king and tell him that the LORD, the

God of the Hebrews, says, Let my people go, so that they may worship me.

²If you again refuse to let them go,

³I will punish you by sending a terrible disease on all your animals -- your horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats.

⁴I will make a distinction between the animals of the Israelites and those of the Egyptians, and no animal that belongs to the Israelites will die.

⁵I, the LORD, have set tomorrow as the time when I will do this.

⁶The next day the LORD did as he had said, and all the animals of the Egyptians died, but not one of the animals of the Israelites died.

⁷The king asked what had happened and was told that none of the animals of the Israelites had died. But he was stubborn and would not let the people go.

⁸Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, Take a few handfuls of ashes from a furnace; Moses is to throw them into the air in front of the king.

⁹They will spread out like fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and everywhere

they will produce boils that become open sores on the people and the animals.

¹⁰So they got some ashes and stood before the king; Moses threw them into the air, and they produced boils that became open sores on the people and the animals.

¹¹The magicians were not able to appear before Moses, because they were covered with boils, like all the other Egyptians.

¹²But the LORD made the king stubborn and, just as the LORD had said, the king would not listen to Moses and Aaron.

¹³The LORD then said to Moses, Early tomorrow morning meet with the king and tell him that the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says, Let my people go, so that they may worship me.

¹⁴This time I will punish not only your officials and your people, but I will punish you as well, so that you may know that there is no one like me in all the world.

¹⁵If I had raised my hand to strike you and your people with disease, you would have been completely destroyed.

¹⁶But to show you my power I have let you live so that my fame might spread over the whole world.

¹⁷Yet you are still arrogant and refuse to let my people go.

¹⁸This time tomorrow I will cause a heavy hailstorm, such as Egypt has never known in all its history.

¹⁹Now give orders for your livestock and everything else you have in the open to be put under shelter. Hail will fall on the people and animals left outside unprotected, and they will all die.

²⁰Some of the king's officials were afraid because of what the LORD had said, and they brought their slaves and animals indoors for shelter.

²¹Others, however, paid no attention to the LORD's warning and left their slaves and animals out in the open.

²²Then the LORD said to Moses, Raise your hand toward the sky, and hail will fall over the whole land of Egypt -- on the people, the animals, and all the plants in the fields.

²³So Moses raised his stick toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail,

and lightning struck the ground. The LORD sent

²⁴a heavy hailstorm, with lightning flashing back and forth. It was the worst storm that Egypt had ever known in all its history.

²⁵All over Egypt the hail struck down everything in the open, including all the people and all the animals. It beat down all the plants in the fields and broke all the trees.

²⁶The region of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was the only place where there was no hail.

²⁷The king sent for Moses and Aaron and said, This time I have sinned; the LORD is in the right, and my people and I are in the wrong.

²⁸Pray to the LORD! We have had enough of this thunder and hail! I promise to let you go; you don't have to stay here any longer.

²⁹Moses said to him, As soon as I go out of the city, I will lift up my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth belongs to the LORD.

³⁰ But I know that you and your officials do not yet fear the LORD God.

³¹ The flax and the barley were ruined, because the barley was ripe, and the flax was budding.

³² But none of the wheat was ruined, because it ripens later.

³³ Moses left the king, went out of the city, and lifted up his hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder, the hail, and the rain all stopped.

³⁴ When the king saw what had happened, he sinned again. He and his officials remained as stubborn as ever

³⁵ and, just as the LORD had foretold through Moses, the king would not let the Israelites go.

10¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, Go and see the king. I have made him and his officials stubborn, in order that I may perform these miracles among them

² and in order that you may be able to tell your children and grandchildren how I made fools of the Egyptians when I performed the miracles. All of you will know that I am the LORD.

³ So Moses and Aaron went to the king and said to him, The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says, How much longer will you refuse to submit to me? Let my people go, so that they may worship me.

⁴ If you keep on refusing, then I will bring locusts into your country tomorrow.

⁵ There will be so many that they will completely cover the ground. They will eat everything that the hail did not destroy, even the trees that are left.

⁶ They will fill your palaces and the houses of all your officials and all your people. They will be worse than anything your ancestors ever saw. Then Moses turned and left.

⁷ The king's officials said to him, How long is this man going to give us trouble? Let the Israelite men go, so that they can worship the LORD their God. Don't you realize that Egypt is ruined?

⁸ So Moses and Aaron were brought back to the king, and he said to them, You may go and worship the LORD your God. But exactly who will go?

⁹ Moses answered, We will all go, including our children and our old people. We will take our sons and

daughters, our sheep and goats, and our cattle, because we must hold a festival to honor the LORD.

¹⁰The king said, I swear by the LORD that I will never let you take your women and children! It is clear that you are plotting to revolt.

¹¹No! Only the men may go and worship the LORD if that is what you want. With that, Moses and Aaron were driven out of the king's presence.

¹²Then the LORD said to Moses, Raise your hand over the land of Egypt to bring the locusts. They will come and eat everything that grows, everything that has survived the hail.

¹³So Moses raised his stick, and the LORD caused a wind from the east to blow on the land all that day and all that night. By morning it had brought the locusts.

¹⁴They came in swarms and settled over the whole country. It was the largest swarm of locusts that had ever been seen or that ever would be seen again.

¹⁵They covered the ground until it was black with them; they ate everything

that the hail had left, including all the fruit on the trees. Not a green thing was left on any tree or plant in all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶Then the king hurriedly called Moses and Aaron and said, I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you.

¹⁷Now forgive my sin this one time and pray to the LORD your God to take away this fatal punishment from me.

¹⁸Moses left the king and prayed to the LORD.

¹⁹And the LORD changed the east wind into a very strong west wind, which picked up the locusts and blew them into the Gulf of Suez. Not one locust was left in all of Egypt.

²⁰But the LORD made the king stubborn, and he did not let the Israelites go.

²¹The LORD then said to Moses, Raise your hand toward the sky, and a darkness thick enough to be felt will cover the land of Egypt.

²²Moses raised his hand toward the sky, and there was total darkness throughout Egypt for three days.

²³The Egyptians could not see each other, and no one left his house during that time. But the Israelites had light where they were living.

²⁴The king called Moses and said, You may go and worship the LORD; even your women and children may go with you. But your sheep, goats, and cattle must stay here.

²⁵Moses answered, Then you would have to provide us with animals for sacrifices and burnt offerings to offer to the LORD our God.

²⁶No, we will take our animals with us; not one will be left behind. We ourselves must select the animals with which to worship the LORD our God. And until we get there, we will not know what animals to sacrifice to him.

²⁷The LORD made the king stubborn, and he would not let them go.

²⁸He said to Moses, Get out of my sight! Don't let me ever see you again! On the day I do, you will die!

²⁹You are right, Moses answered. You will never see me again.

11 ¹Then the LORD said to Moses, I will send only one more

punishment on the king of Egypt and his people. After that he will let you leave. In fact, he will drive all of you out of here.

²Now speak to the people of Israel and tell all of them to ask their neighbors for gold and silver jewelry.

³The LORD made the Egyptians respect the Israelites. Indeed, the officials and all the people considered Moses to be a very great man.

⁴Moses then said to the king, The LORD says, At about midnight I will go through Egypt,

⁵and every first-born son in Egypt will die, from the king's son, who is heir to the throne, to the son of the slave woman who grinds grain. The first-born of all the cattle will die also.

⁶There will be loud crying all over Egypt, such as there has never been before or ever will be again.

⁷But not even a dog will bark at the Israelites or their animals. Then you will know that I, the LORD, make a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

⁸ Moses concluded by saying, All your officials will come to me and bow down before me, and they will beg me to take all my people and go away. After that, I will leave. Then in great anger Moses left the king.

⁹ The LORD had said to Moses, The king will continue to refuse to listen to you, in order that I may do more of my miracles in Egypt.

¹⁰ Moses and Aaron performed all these miracles before the king, but the LORD made him stubborn, and he would not let the Israelites leave his country.

12¹ The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Egypt:

² This month is to be the first month of the year for you.

³ Give these instructions to the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month each man must choose either a lamb or a young goat for his household.

⁴ If his family is too small to eat a whole animal, he and his next-door neighbor may share an animal, in proportion to the number of people and the amount that each person can eat.

⁵You may choose either a sheep or a goat, but it must be a one-year-old male without any defects.

⁶Then, on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, the whole community of Israel will kill the animals.

⁷The people are to take some of the blood and put it on the doorposts and above the doors of the houses in which the animals are to be eaten.

⁸That night the meat is to be roasted, and eaten with bitter herbs and with bread made without yeast.

⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled, but eat it roasted whole, including the head, the legs, and the internal organs.

¹⁰You must not leave any of it until morning; if any is left over, it must be burned.

¹¹You are to eat it quickly, for you are to be dressed for travel, with your sandals on your feet and your walking stick in your hand. It is the Passover Festival to honor me, the LORD.

¹²On that night I will go through the land of Egypt, killing every first-born male, both human and animal, and

punishing all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.

¹³The blood on the doorposts will be a sign to mark the houses in which you live. When I see the blood, I will pass over you and will not harm you when I punish the Egyptians.

¹⁴You must celebrate this day as a religious festival to remind you of what I, the LORD, have done. Celebrate it for all time to come.

¹⁵The LORD said, For seven days you must not eat any bread made with yeast -- eat only unleavened bread. On the first day you are to get rid of all the yeast in your houses, for if anyone during those seven days eats bread made with yeast, he shall no longer be considered one of my people.

¹⁶On the first day and again on the seventh day you are to meet for worship. No work is to be done on those days, but you may prepare food.

¹⁷Keep this festival, because it was on this day that I brought your tribes out of Egypt. For all time to come you must celebrate this day as a festival.

¹⁸From the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month to the evening of the twenty-first day, you must not eat any bread made with yeast.

¹⁹For seven days no yeast must be found in your houses, for if anyone, native-born or foreign, eats bread made with yeast, he shall no longer be considered one of my people.

²⁰(12: 19)

²¹Moses called for all the leaders of Israel and said to them, Each of you is to choose a lamb or a young goat and kill it, so that your families can celebrate Passover.

²²Take a sprig of hyssop, dip it in the bowl containing the animal's blood, and wipe the blood on the doorposts and the beam above the door of your house. Not one of you is to leave the house until morning.

²³When the LORD goes through Egypt to kill the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the beams and the doorposts and will not let the Angel of Death enter your houses and kill you.

²⁴You and your children must obey these rules forever.

²⁵When you enter the land that the LORD has promised to give you, you must perform this ritual.

²⁶When your children ask you, What does this ritual mean?

²⁷you will answer, It is the sacrifice of Passover to honor the LORD, because he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. He killed the Egyptians, but spared us. The Israelites knelt down and worshiped.

²⁸Then they went and did what the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

²⁹At midnight the LORD killed all the first-born sons in Egypt, from the king's son, who was heir to the throne, to the son of the prisoner in the dungeon; all the first-born of the animals were also killed.

³⁰That night, the king, his officials, and all the other Egyptians were awakened. There was loud crying throughout Egypt, because there was not one home in which there was not a dead son.

³¹That same night the king sent for Moses and Aaron and said, Get out, you and your Israelites! Leave my country; go and worship the LORD, as you asked.

³²Take your sheep, goats, and cattle, and leave. Also pray for a blessing on me.

³³The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country; they said, We will all be dead if you don't leave.

³⁴So the people filled their baking pans with unleavened dough, wrapped them in clothing, and carried them on their shoulders.

³⁵The Israelites had done as Moses had said, and had asked the Egyptians for gold and silver jewelry and for clothes.

³⁶The LORD made the Egyptians respect the people and give them what they asked for. In this way the Israelites carried away the wealth of the Egyptians.

³⁷The Israelites set out on foot from Rameses for Sukkoth. There were about 600,000 men, not counting women and children.

³⁸A large number of other people and many sheep, goats, and cattle also went with them.

³⁹They baked unleavened bread from the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for they had been driven out of Egypt so suddenly that they did not

have time to get their food ready or to prepare leavened dough.

⁴⁰The Israelites had lived in Egypt for 430 years.

⁴¹On the day the 430 years ended, all the tribes of the LORD's people left Egypt.

⁴²It was a night when the LORD kept watch to bring them out of Egypt; this same night is dedicated to the LORD for all time to come as a night when the Israelites must keep watch.

⁴³The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, These are the Passover regulations: No foreigner shall eat the Passover meal,

⁴⁴but any slave that you have bought may eat it if you circumcise him first.

⁴⁵No temporary resident or hired worker may eat it.

⁴⁶The whole meal must be eaten in the house in which it was prepared; it must not be taken outside. And do not break any of the animal's bones.

⁴⁷The whole community of Israel must celebrate this festival,

⁴⁸but no uncircumcised man may eat it. If a foreigner has settled among you and wants to celebrate Passover to honor the

LORD, you must first circumcise all the males of his household. He is then to be treated like a native-born Israelite and may join in the festival.

⁴⁹The same regulations apply to native-born Israelites and to foreigners who settle among you.

⁵⁰All the Israelites obeyed and did what the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

⁵¹On that day the LORD brought the Israelite tribes out of Egypt.

13¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Dedicate all the first-born males to me, for every first-born male Israelite and every first-born male animal belongs to me.

³Moses said to the people, Remember this day -- the day on which you left Egypt, the place where you were slaves. This is the day the LORD brought you out by his great power. No leavened bread is to be eaten.

⁴You are leaving Egypt on this day in the first month, the month of Abib.

⁵The LORD solemnly promised your ancestors to give you the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites,

the Hivites, and the Jebusites. When he brings you into that rich and fertile land, you must celebrate this festival in the first month of every year.

⁶For seven days you must eat unleavened bread and on the seventh day there is to be a festival to honor the LORD.

⁷For seven days you must not eat any bread made with yeast; there must be no yeast or leavened bread anywhere in your land.

⁸When the festival begins, explain to your sons that you do all this because of what the LORD did for you when you left Egypt.

⁹This observance will be a reminder, like something tied on your hand or on your forehead; it will remind you to continue to recite and study the Law of the LORD, because the LORD brought you out of Egypt by his great power.

¹⁰Celebrate this festival at the appointed time each year.

¹¹The LORD will bring you into the land of the Canaanites, which he solemnly promised to you and your ancestors. When he gives it to you,

¹²you must offer every first-born male to the LORD. Every first-born male of your animals belongs to the LORD,

¹³but you must buy back from him every first-born male donkey by offering a lamb in its place. If you do not want to buy back the donkey, break its neck. You must buy back every first-born male child of yours.

¹⁴In the future, when your son asks what this observance means, you will answer him, By using great power the LORD brought us out of Egypt, the place where we were slaves.

¹⁵When the king of Egypt was stubborn and refused to let us go, the LORD killed every first-born male in the land of Egypt, both human and animal. That is why we sacrifice every first-born male animal to the LORD, but buy back our first-born sons.

¹⁶This observance will be a reminder, like something tied on our hands or on our foreheads; it will remind us that the LORD brought us out of Egypt by his great power.

¹⁷When the king of Egypt let the people go, God did not take them by the road

that goes up the coast to Philistia, although it was the shortest way. God thought, I do not want the people to change their minds and return to Egypt when they see that they are going to have to fight.

¹⁸ Instead, he led them in a roundabout way through the desert toward the Red Sea. The Israelites were armed for battle.

¹⁹ Moses took the body of Joseph with him, as Joseph had made the Israelites solemnly promise to do. Joseph had said, When God rescues you, you must carry my body with you from this place.

²⁰ The Israelites left Sukkoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the desert.

²¹ During the day the LORD went in front of them in a pillar of cloud to show them the way, and during the night he went in front of them in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel night and day.

²² The pillar of cloud was always in front of the people during the day, and the pillar of fire at night.

14 ¹Then the LORD said to Moses,
²Tell the Israelites to turn
back and camp in front of Pi Hahiroth,
between Migdol and the Red Sea, near
Baal Zephon.

³The king will think that the Israelites
are wandering around in the country and
are closed in by the desert.

⁴I will make him stubborn, and he will
pursue you, and my victory over the king
and his army will bring me honor. Then
the Egyptians will know that I am the
LORD. The Israelites did as they were
told.

⁵When the king of Egypt was told that
the people had escaped, he and his
officials changed their minds and said,
What have we done? We have let the
Israelites escape, and we have lost them
as our slaves!

⁶The king got his war chariot and his
army ready.

⁷He set out with all his chariots,
including the six hundred finest,
commanded by their officers.

⁸The LORD made the king stubborn,
and he pursued the Israelites, who were
leaving triumphantly.

⁹The Egyptian army, with all the horses, chariots, and drivers, pursued them and caught up with them where they were camped by the Red Sea near Pi Hahiroth and Baal Zephon.

¹⁰When the Israelites saw the king and his army marching against them, they were terrified and cried out to the LORD for help.

¹¹They said to Moses, Weren't there any graves in Egypt? Did you have to bring us out here in the desert to die? Look what you have done by bringing us out of Egypt!

¹²Didn't we tell you before we left that this would happen? We told you to leave us alone and let us go on being slaves of the Egyptians. It would be better to be slaves there than to die here in the desert.

¹³Moses answered, Don't be afraid! Stand your ground, and you will see what the LORD will do to save you today; you will never see these Egyptians again.

¹⁴The LORD will fight for you, and all you have to do is keep still.

¹⁵The LORD said to Moses, Why are you crying out for help? Tell the people to move forward.

¹⁶Lift up your walking stick and hold it out over the sea. The water will divide, and the Israelites will be able to walk through the sea on dry ground.

¹⁷I will make the Egyptians so stubborn that they will go in after them, and I will gain honor by my victory over the king, his army, his chariots, and his drivers.

¹⁸When I defeat them, the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁹The angel of God, who had been in front of the army of Israel, moved and went to the rear. The pillar of cloud also moved until it was

²⁰between the Egyptians and the Israelites. The cloud made it dark for the Egyptians, but gave light to the people of Israel, and so the armies could not come near each other all night.

²¹Moses held out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind. It blew all night and turned the sea into dry land. The water was divided,

²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on both sides.

²³ The Egyptians pursued them and went after them into the sea with all their horses, chariots, and drivers.

²⁴ Just before dawn the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw them into a panic.

²⁵ He made the wheels of their chariots get stuck, so that they moved with great difficulty. The Egyptians said, The LORD is fighting for the Israelites against us. Let's get out of here!

²⁶ The LORD said to Moses, Hold out your hand over the sea, and the water will come back over the Egyptians and their chariots and drivers.

²⁷ So Moses held out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the water returned to its normal level. The Egyptians tried to escape from the water, but the LORD threw them into the sea.

²⁸ The water returned and covered the chariots, the drivers, and all the Egyptian army that had followed the Israelites into the sea; not one of them was left.

²⁹ But the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on both sides.

³⁰ On that day the LORD saved the people of Israel from the Egyptians, and the Israelites saw them lying dead on the seashore.

³¹ When the Israelites saw the great power with which the LORD had defeated the Egyptians, they stood in awe of the LORD; and they had faith in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

15 ¹ Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: I will sing to the LORD, because he has won a glorious victory; he has thrown the horses and their riders into the sea.

² The LORD is my strong defender; he is the one who has saved me. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will sing about his greatness.

³ The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name.

⁴ He threw Egypt's army and its chariots into the sea; the best of its officers were drowned in the Red Sea.

⁵ The deep sea covered them; they sank to the bottom like a stone.

⁶Your right hand, LORD, is awesome in power; it breaks the enemy in pieces.

⁷In majestic triumph you overthrow your foes; your anger blazes out and burns them up like straw.

⁸You blew on the sea and the water piled up high; it stood up straight like a wall; the deepest part of the sea became solid.

⁹The enemy said, I will pursue them and catch them; I will divide their wealth and take all I want; I will draw my sword and take all they have.

¹⁰But one breath from you, LORD, and the Egyptians were drowned; they sank like lead in the terrible water.

¹¹LORD, who among the gods is like you? Who is like you, wonderful in holiness? Who can work miracles and mighty acts like yours?

¹²You stretched out your right hand, and the earth swallowed our enemies.

¹³Faithful to your promise, you led the people you had rescued; by your strength you guided them to your sacred land.

¹⁴The nations have heard, and they tremble with fear; the Philistines are seized with terror.

¹⁵The leaders of Edom are terrified; Moab's mighty men are trembling; the people of Canaan lose their courage.

¹⁶Terror and dread fall upon them. They see your strength, O LORD, and stand helpless with fear until your people have marched past -- the people you set free from slavery.

¹⁷You bring them in and plant them on your mountain, the place that you, LORD, have chosen for your home, the Temple that you yourself have built.

¹⁸You, LORD, will be king forever and ever.

¹⁹The Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. But when the Egyptian chariots with their horses and drivers went into the sea, the LORD brought the water back, and it covered them.

²⁰The prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took her tambourine, and all the women followed her, playing tambourines and dancing.

²¹Miriam sang for them: Sing to the LORD, because he has won a glorious

victory; he has thrown the horses and their riders into the sea.

²²Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea into the desert of Shur. For three days they walked through the desert, but found no water.

²³Then they came to a place called Marah, but the water there was so bitter that they could not drink it. That is why it was named Marah.

²⁴The people complained to Moses and asked, What are we going to drink?

²⁵Moses prayed earnestly to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood, which he threw into the water; and the water became fit to drink. There the LORD gave them laws to live by, and there he also tested them.

²⁶He said, If you will obey me completely by doing what I consider right and by keeping my commands, I will not punish you with any of the diseases that I brought on the Egyptians. I am the LORD, the one who heals you.

²⁷Next they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees; there they camped by the water.

16¹ The whole Israelite community set out from Elim, and on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had left Egypt, they came to the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai.

² There in the desert they all complained to Moses and Aaron

³ and said to them, We wish that the LORD had killed us in Egypt. There we could at least sit down and eat meat and as much other food as we wanted. But you have brought us out into this desert to starve us all to death.

⁴ The LORD said to Moses, Now I am going to cause food to rain down from the sky for all of you. The people must go out every day and gather enough for that day. In this way I can test them to find out if they will follow my instructions.

⁵ On the sixth day they are to bring in twice as much as usual and prepare it.

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, This evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt.

⁷ In the morning you will see the dazzling light of the LORD's presence. He

has heard your complaints against him -- yes, against him, because we are only carrying out his instructions.

⁸Then Moses said, It is the LORD who will give you meat to eat in the evening and as much bread as you want in the morning, because he has heard how much you have complained against him. When you complain against us, you are really complaining against the LORD.

⁹Moses said to Aaron, Tell the whole community to come and stand before the LORD, because he has heard their complaints.

¹⁰As Aaron spoke to the whole community, they turned toward the desert, and suddenly the dazzling light of the LORD appeared in a cloud.

¹¹The LORD said to Moses,

¹²I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them that at twilight they will have meat to eat, and in the morning they will have all the bread they want. Then they will know that I, the LORD, am their God.

¹³In the evening a large flock of quails flew in, enough to cover the camp, and

in the morning there was dew all around the camp.

¹⁴When the dew evaporated, there was something thin and flaky on the surface of the desert. It was as delicate as frost.

¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they didn't know what it was and asked each other, What is it? Moses said to them, This is the food that the LORD has given you to eat.

¹⁶The LORD has commanded that each of you is to gather as much of it as he needs, two quarts for each member of his household.

¹⁷The Israelites did this, some gathering more, others less.

¹⁸When they measured it, those who gathered much did not have too much, and those who gathered less did not have too little. Each had gathered just what he needed.

¹⁹Moses said to them, No one is to keep any of it for tomorrow.

²⁰But some of them did not listen to Moses and saved part of it. The next morning it was full of worms and smelled rotten, and Moses was angry with them.

²¹ Every morning each one gathered as much as he needed; and when the sun grew hot, what was left on the ground melted.

²² On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, four quarts for each person. All the leaders of the community came and told Moses about it,

²³ and he said to them, The LORD has commanded that tomorrow is a holy day of rest, dedicated to him. Bake today what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Whatever is left should be put aside and kept for tomorrow.

²⁴ As Moses had commanded, they kept what was left until the next day; it did not spoil or get worms in it.

²⁵ Moses said, Eat this today, because today is the Sabbath, a day of rest dedicated to the LORD, and you will not find any food outside the camp.

²⁶ You must gather food for six days, but on the seventh day, the day of rest, there will be none.

²⁷ On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather food, but they did not find any.

²⁸Then the LORD said to Moses, How much longer will you people refuse to obey my commands?

²⁹Remember that I, the LORD, have given you a day of rest, and that is why on the sixth day I will always give you enough food for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day and not leave his home.

³⁰So the people did no work on the seventh day.

³¹The people of Israel called the food manna. It was like a small white seed, and tasted like thin cakes made with honey.

³²Moses said, The LORD has commanded us to save some manna, to be kept for our descendants, so that they can see the food which he gave us to eat in the desert when he brought us out of Egypt.

³³Moses said to Aaron, Take a jar, put two quarts of manna in it, and place it in the LORD's presence to be kept for our descendants.

³⁴As the LORD had commanded Moses, Aaron put it in front of the Covenant Box, so that it could be kept.

³⁵The Israelites ate manna for the next forty years, until they reached the land of Canaan, where they settled.

³⁶(The standard dry measure then in use equaled twenty quarts.)

17 ¹The whole Israelite community left the desert of Sin, moving from one place to another at the command of the LORD. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water there to drink.

²They complained to Moses and said, Give us water to drink. Moses answered, Why are you complaining? Why are you putting the LORD to the test?

³But the people were very thirsty and continued to complain to Moses. They said, Why did you bring us out of Egypt? To kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?

⁴Moses prayed earnestly to the LORD and said, What can I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.

⁵The LORD said to Moses, Take some of the leaders of Israel with you, and go on ahead of the people. Take along the stick with which you struck the Nile.

⁶I will stand before you on a rock at Mount Sinai. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink. Moses did so in the presence of the leaders of Israel.

⁷The place was named Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites complained and put the LORD to the test when they asked, Is the LORD with us or not?

⁸The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

⁹Moses said to Joshua, Pick out some men to go and fight the Amalekites tomorrow. I will stand on top of the hill holding the stick that God told me to carry.

¹⁰Joshua did as Moses commanded him and went out to fight the Amalekites, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

¹¹As long as Moses held up his arms, the Israelites won, but when he put his arms down, the Amalekites started winning.

¹²When Moses' arms grew tired, Aaron and Hur brought a stone for him to sit on, while they stood beside him and held

up his arms, holding them steady until the sun went down.

¹³In this way Joshua totally defeated the Amalekites.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, Write an account of this victory, so that it will be remembered. Tell Joshua that I will completely destroy the Amalekites.

¹⁵Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is my Banner.

¹⁶He said, Hold high the banner of the LORD! The LORD will continue to fight against the Amalekites forever!

18¹Moses' father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about everything that God had done for Moses and the people of Israel when he led them out of Egypt.

²So he came to Moses, bringing with him Moses' wife Zipporah, who had been left behind,

³and Gershom and Eliezer, her two sons. (Moses had said, I have been a foreigner in a strange land; so he had named one son Gershom.

⁴He had also said, The God of my father helped me and saved me from being

killed by the king of Egypt; so he had named the other son Eliezer.)

⁵Jethro came with Moses' wife and her two sons into the desert where Moses was camped at the holy mountain.

⁶He had sent word to Moses that they were coming,

⁷so Moses went out to meet him, bowed before him, and kissed him. They asked about each other's health and then went into Moses' tent.

⁸Moses told Jethro everything that the LORD had done to the king and the people of Egypt in order to rescue the Israelites. He also told him about the hardships the people had faced on the way and how the LORD had saved them.

⁹When Jethro heard all this, he was happy

¹⁰and said, Praise the LORD, who saved you from the king and the people of Egypt! Praise the LORD, who saved his people from slavery!

¹¹Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods, because he did this when the Egyptians treated the Israelites with such contempt.

¹²Then Jethro brought an offering to be burned whole and other sacrifices to be offered to God; and Aaron and all the leaders of Israel went with him to eat the sacred meal as an act of worship.

¹³The next day Moses was settling disputes among the people, and he was kept busy from morning till night.

¹⁴When Jethro saw everything that Moses had to do, he asked, What is all this that you are doing for the people? Why are you doing this all alone, with people standing here from morning till night to consult you?

¹⁵Moses answered, I must do this because the people come to me to learn God's will.

¹⁶When two people have a dispute, they come to me, and I decide which one of them is right, and I tell them God's commands and laws.

¹⁷Then Jethro said, You are not doing this right.

¹⁸You will wear yourself out and these people as well. This is too much for you to do alone.

¹⁹Now let me give you some good advice, and God will be with you. It is

right for you to represent the people before God and bring their disputes to him.

²⁰You should teach them God's commands and explain to them how they should live and what they should do.

²¹But in addition, you should choose some capable men and appoint them as leaders of the people: leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They must be God-fearing men who can be trusted and who cannot be bribed.

²²Let them serve as judges for the people on a permanent basis. They can bring all the difficult cases to you, but they themselves can decide all the smaller disputes. That will make it easier for you, as they share your burden.

²³If you do this, as God commands, you will not wear yourself out, and all these people can go home with their disputes settled.

²⁴Moses took Jethro's advice

²⁵and chose capable men from among all the Israelites. He appointed them as leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.

²⁶They served as judges for the people on a permanent basis, bringing the difficult cases to Moses but deciding the smaller disputes themselves.

²⁷Then Moses said good-bye to Jethro, and Jethro went back home.

19¹The people of Israel left Rephidim, and on the first day of the third month after they had left Egypt they came to the desert of Sinai. There they set up camp at the foot of Mount Sinai,

²(19: 1)

³and Moses went up the mountain to meet with God. The LORD called to him from the mountain and told him to say to the Israelites, Jacob's descendants:

⁴You saw what I, the LORD, did to the Egyptians and how I carried you as an eagle carries her young on her wings, and brought you here to me.

⁵Now, if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own people. The whole earth is mine, but you will be my chosen people,

⁶a people dedicated to me alone, and you will serve me as priests.

⁷ So Moses went down and called the leaders of the people together and told them everything that the LORD had commanded him.

⁸ Then all the people answered together, We will do everything that the LORD has said, and Moses reported this to the LORD.

⁹ The LORD said to Moses, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will believe you from now on. Moses told the LORD what the people had answered,

¹⁰ and the LORD said to him, Go to the people and tell them to spend today and tomorrow purifying themselves for worship. They must wash their clothes

¹¹ and be ready the day after tomorrow. On that day I will come down on Mount Sinai, where all the people can see me.

¹² Mark a boundary around the mountain that the people must not cross, and tell them not to go up the mountain or even get near it. If any of you set foot on it, you are to be put to death;

¹³ you must either be stoned or shot with arrows, without anyone touching

you. This applies to both people and animals; they must be put to death. But when the trumpet is blown, then the people are to go up to the mountain.

¹⁴Then Moses came down the mountain and told the people to get ready for worship. So they washed their clothes,

¹⁵and Moses told them, Be ready by the day after tomorrow and don't have sexual intercourse in the meantime.

¹⁶On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, a thick cloud appeared on the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast was heard. All the people in the camp trembled with fear.

¹⁷Moses led them out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

¹⁸All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD had come down on it in fire. The smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and all the people trembled violently.

¹⁹The sound of the trumpet became louder and louder. Moses spoke, and God answered him with thunder.

²⁰The LORD came down on the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. Moses went up

²¹and the LORD said to him, Go down and warn the people not to cross the boundary to come and look at me; if they do, many of them will die.

²²Even the priests who come near me must purify themselves, or I will punish them.

²³Moses said to the LORD, The people cannot come up, because you commanded us to consider the mountain sacred and to mark a boundary around it.

²⁴The LORD replied, Go down and bring Aaron back with you. But the priests and the people must not cross the boundary to come up to me, or I will punish them.

²⁵Moses then went down to the people and told them what the LORD had said.

20¹ God spoke, and these were his words:

²I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.

³Worship no god but me.

⁴ Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth.

⁵ Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the LORD your God and I tolerate no rivals. I bring punishment on those who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.

⁶ But I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.

⁷ Do not use my name for evil purposes, for I, the LORD your God, will punish anyone who misuses my name.

⁸ Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.

⁹ You have six days in which to do your work,

¹⁰ but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work -- neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country.

¹¹ In six days I, the LORD, made the earth, the sky, the seas, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That is why I, the LORD, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.

¹²Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.

¹³Do not commit murder.

¹⁴Do not commit adultery.

¹⁵Do not steal.

¹⁶Do not accuse anyone falsely.

¹⁷Do not desire another man's house; do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.

¹⁸When the people heard the thunder and the trumpet blast and saw the lightning and the smoking mountain, they trembled with fear and stood a long way off.

¹⁹They said to Moses, If you speak to us, we will listen; but we are afraid that if God speaks to us, we will die.

²⁰Moses replied, Don't be afraid; God has only come to test you and make you keep on obeying him, so that you will not sin.

²¹But the people continued to stand a long way off, and only Moses went near the dark cloud where God was.

²²The LORD commanded Moses to tell the Israelites: You have seen how I, the LORD, have spoken to you from heaven.

²³Do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gold to be worshiped in addition to me.

²⁴Make an altar of earth for me, and on it sacrifice your sheep and your cattle as offerings to be completely burned and as fellowship offerings. In every place that I set aside for you to worship me, I will come to you and bless you.

²⁵If you make an altar of stone for me, do not build it out of cut stones, because when you use a chisel on stones, you make them unfit for my use.

²⁶Do not build an altar for me with steps leading up to it; if you do, you will expose yourselves as you go up the steps.

21 ¹Give the Israelites the following laws:

²If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve you for six years. In the seventh year he is to be set free without having to pay anything.

³If he was unmarried when he became your slave, he is not to take a wife

with him when he leaves; but if he was married when he became your slave, he may take his wife with him.

⁴If his master gave him a wife and she bore him sons or daughters, the woman and her children belong to the master, and the man is to leave by himself.

⁵But if the slave declares that he loves his master, his wife, and his children and does not want to be set free,

⁶then his master shall take him to the place of worship. There he is to make him stand against the door or the doorpost and put a hole through his ear. Then he will be his slave for life.

⁷If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she is not to be set free, as male slaves are.

⁸If she is sold to someone who intends to make her his wife, but he doesn't like her, then she is to be sold back to her father; her master cannot sell her to foreigners, because he has treated her unfairly.

⁹If a man buys a female slave to give to his son, he is to treat her like a daughter.

¹⁰If a man takes a second wife, he must continue to give his first wife the

same amount of food and clothing and the same rights that she had before.

¹¹ If he does not fulfill these duties to her, he must set her free and not receive any payment.

¹² Whoever hits someone and kills him is to be put to death.

¹³ But if it was an accident and he did not mean to kill him, he can escape to a place which I will choose for you, and there he will be safe.

¹⁴ But when someone gets angry and deliberately kills someone else, he is to be put to death, even if he has run to my altar for safety.

¹⁵ Whoever hits his father or his mother is to be put to death.

¹⁶ Whoever kidnaps someone, either to sell him or to keep him as a slave, is to be put to death.

¹⁷ Whoever curses his father or his mother is to be put to death.

¹⁸ If there is a fight and someone hits someone else with a stone or with his fist, but does not kill him, he is not to be punished. If the one who was hit has to stay in bed, but later is able to get up and walk outside with the help of a cane,

the one who hit him is to pay for his lost time and take care of him until he gets well.

¹⁹(21:18)

²⁰If a slave owner takes a stick and beats his slave, whether male or female, and the slave dies on the spot, the owner is to be punished.

²¹But if the slave does not die for a day or two, the master is not to be punished. The loss of his property is punishment enough.

²²If some men are fighting and hurt a pregnant woman so that she loses her child, but she is not injured in any other way, the one who hurt her is to be fined whatever amount the woman's husband demands, subject to the approval of the judges.

²³But if the woman herself is injured, the punishment shall be life for life,

²⁴eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

²⁵burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

²⁶If someone hits his male or female slave in the eye and puts it out, he is to free the slave as payment for the eye.

²⁷ If he knocks out a tooth, he is to free the slave as payment for the tooth.

²⁸ If a bull gores someone to death, it is to be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but its owner is not to be punished.

²⁹ But if the bull had been in the habit of attacking people and its owner had been warned, but did not keep it penned up -- then if it gores someone to death, it is to be stoned, and its owner is to be put to death also.

³⁰ However, if the owner is allowed to pay a fine to save his life, he must pay the full amount required.

³¹ If the bull kills a boy or a girl, the same rule applies.

³² If the bull kills a male or female slave, its owner shall pay the owner of the slave thirty pieces of silver, and the bull shall be stoned to death.

³³ If someone takes the cover off a pit or if he digs one and does not cover it, and a bull or a donkey falls into it,

³⁴ he must pay for the animal. He is to pay the money to the owner and may keep the dead animal.

³⁵ If someone's bull kills someone else's bull, the two of them shall sell the live bull and divide the money; they shall also divide up the meat from the dead animal.

³⁶ But if it was known that the bull had been in the habit of attacking and its owner did not keep it penned up, he must make good the loss by giving the other man a live bull, but he may keep the dead animal.

22 ¹ If someone steals a cow or a sheep and kills it or sells it, he must pay five cows for one cow and four sheep for one sheep.

² He must pay for what he stole. If he owns nothing, he shall be sold as a slave to pay for what he has stolen. If the stolen animal, whether a cow, a donkey, or a sheep, is found alive in his possession, he shall pay two for one. If a thief is caught breaking into a house at night and is killed, the one who killed him is not guilty of murder. But if it happens during the day, he is guilty of murder.

³ (22: 2)

⁴ (22: 2)

⁵If someone lets his animals graze in a field or a vineyard and they stray away and eat up the crops growing in someone else's field, he must make good the loss with the crops from his own fields or vineyards.

⁶If someone starts a fire in his own field and it spreads through the weeds to someone else's field and burns up grain that is growing or that has been cut and stacked, the one who started the fire is to pay for the damage.

⁷If anyone agrees to keep someone else's money or other valuables for him and they are stolen from his house, the thief, if found, shall repay double.

⁸But if the thief is not found, the one who was keeping the valuables is to be brought to the place of worship and there he must take an oath that he has not stolen the other one's property.

⁹In every case of a dispute about property, whether it involves cattle, donkeys, sheep, clothing, or any other lost object, the two people claiming the property shall be taken to the place of worship. The one whom God declares to

be guilty shall pay double to the other one.

¹⁰If anyone agrees to keep someone else's donkey, cow, sheep, or other animal for him, and the animal dies or is injured or is carried off in a raid, and if there was no witness,

¹¹the man must go to the place of worship and take an oath that he has not stolen the other man's animal. If the animal was not stolen, the owner shall accept the loss, and the other man need not repay him;

¹²but if the animal was stolen, the man must repay the owner.

¹³If it was killed by wild animals, the man is to bring the remains as evidence; he need not pay for what has been killed by wild animals.

¹⁴If anyone borrows an animal from someone else and it is injured or dies when its owner is not present, he must pay for it.

¹⁵But if that happens when the owner is present, he need not repay. If it is a rented animal, the loss is covered by the rental price.

¹⁶If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, he must pay the bride price for her and marry her.

¹⁷But if her father refuses to let him marry her, he must pay the father a sum of money equal to the bride price for a virgin.

¹⁸Put to death any woman who practices magic.

¹⁹Put to death any man who has sexual relations with an animal.

²⁰Condemn to death anyone who offers sacrifices to any god except to me, the LORD.

²¹Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner; remember that you were foreigners in Egypt.

²²Do not mistreat any widow or orphan.

²³If you do, I, the LORD, will answer them when they cry out to me for help,

²⁴and I will become angry and kill you in war. Your wives will become widows, and your children will be fatherless.

²⁵If you lend money to any of my people who are poor, do not act like a moneylender and require him to pay interest.

²⁶If you take someone's cloak as a pledge that he will pay you, you must give it back to him before the sun sets,

²⁷because it is the only covering he has to keep him warm. What else can he sleep in? When he cries out to me for help, I will answer him because I am merciful.

²⁸Do not speak evil of God, and do not curse a leader of your people.

²⁹Give me the offerings from your grain, your wine, and your olive oil when they are due. Give me your first-born sons.

³⁰Give me the first-born of your cattle and your sheep. Let the first-born male stay with its mother for seven days, and on the eighth day offer it to me.

³¹You are my people, so you must not eat the meat of any animal that has been killed by wild animals; instead, give it to the dogs.

23¹Do not spread false rumors, and do not help a guilty person by giving false testimony.

²Do not follow the majority when they do wrong or when they give testimony that perverts justice.

³ Do not show partiality to a poor person at his trial.

⁴ If you happen to see your enemy's cow or donkey running loose, take it back to him.

⁵ If his donkey has fallen under its load, help him get the donkey to its feet again; don't just walk off.

⁶ Do not deny justice to a poor person when he appears in court.

⁷ Do not make false accusations, and do not put an innocent person to death, for I will condemn anyone who does such an evil thing.

⁸ Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe makes people blind to what is right and ruins the cause of those who are innocent.

⁹ Do not mistreat a foreigner; you know how it feels to be a foreigner, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

¹⁰ For six years plant your land and gather in what it produces.

¹¹ But in the seventh year let it rest, and do not harvest anything that grows on it. The poor may eat what grows there, and the wild animals can have what is left.

Do the same with your vineyards and your olive trees.

¹²Work six days a week, but do no work on the seventh day, so that your slaves and the foreigners who work for you and even your animals can rest.

¹³Listen to everything that I, the LORD, have said to you. Do not pray to other gods; do not even mention their names.

¹⁴Celebrate three festivals a year to honor me.

¹⁵In the month of Abib, the month in which you left Egypt, celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the way that I commanded you. Do not eat any bread made with yeast during the seven days of this festival. Never come to worship me without bringing an offering.

¹⁶Celebrate the Harvest Festival when you begin to harvest your crops. Celebrate the Festival of Shelters in the autumn, when you gather the fruit from your vineyards and orchards.

¹⁷Every year at these three festivals all your men must come to worship me, the Lord your God.

¹⁸Do not offer bread made with yeast when you sacrifice an animal to me. The

fat of animals sacrificed to me during these festivals is not to be left until the following morning.

¹⁹Each year bring to the house of the LORD your God the first grain that you harvest. Do not cook a young sheep or goat in its mother's milk.

²⁰I will send an angel ahead of you to protect you as you travel and to bring you to the place which I have prepared.

²¹Pay attention to him and obey him. Do not rebel against him, for I have sent him, and he will not pardon such rebellion.

²²But if you obey him and do everything I command, I will fight against all your enemies.

²³My angel will go ahead of you and take you into the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I will destroy them.

²⁴Do not bow down to their gods or worship them, and do not adopt their religious practices. Destroy their gods and break down their sacred stone pillars.

²⁵ If you worship me, the LORD your God, I will bless you with food and water and take away all your sicknesses.

²⁶ In your land no woman will have a miscarriage or be without children. I will give you long lives.

²⁷ I will make the people who oppose you afraid of me; I will bring confusion among the people against whom you fight, and I will make all your enemies turn and run from you.

²⁸ I will throw your enemies into panic; I will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites as you advance.

²⁹ I will not drive them out within a year's time; if I did, the land would become deserted, and the wild animals would be too many for you.

³⁰ Instead, I will drive them out little by little, until there are enough of you to take possession of the land.

³¹ I will make the borders of your land extend from the Gulf of Aqaba to the Mediterranean Sea and from the desert to the Euphrates River. I will give you power over the inhabitants of the land, and you will drive them out as you advance.

³²Do not make any agreement with them or with their gods.

³³Do not let those people live in your country; if you do, they will make you sin against me. If you worship their gods, it will be a fatal trap for you.

24¹The LORD said to Moses, Come up the mountain to me, you and Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the leaders of Israel; and while you are still some distance away, bow down in worship.

²You alone, and none of the others, are to come near me. The people are not even to come up the mountain.

³Moses went and told the people all the LORD's commands and all the ordinances, and all the people answered together, We will do everything that the LORD has said.

⁴Moses wrote down all the LORD's commands. Early the next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stones, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

⁵Then he sent young men, and they burned sacrifices to the LORD and

sacrificed some cattle as fellowship offerings.

⁶Moses took half of the blood of the animals and put it in bowls; and the other half he threw against the altar.

⁷Then he took the book of the covenant, in which the LORD's commands were written, and read it aloud to the people. They said, We will obey the LORD and do everything that he has commanded.

⁸Then Moses took the blood in the bowls and threw it on the people. He said, This is the blood that seals the covenant which the LORD made with you when he gave all these commands.

⁹Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the leaders of Israel went up the mountain

¹⁰and they saw the God of Israel. Beneath his feet was what looked like a pavement of sapphire, as blue as the sky.

¹¹God did not harm these leading men of Israel; they saw God, and then they ate and drank together.

¹²The LORD said to Moses, Come up the mountain to me, and while you are here, I will give you two stone tablets

which contain all the laws that I have written for the instruction of the people.

¹³ Moses and his helper Joshua got ready, and Moses began to go up the holy mountain.

¹⁴ Moses said to the leaders, Wait here in the camp for us until we come back. Aaron and Hur are here with you; and so whoever has a dispute to settle can go to them.

¹⁵ Moses went up Mount Sinai, and a cloud covered it.

¹⁶ The dazzling light of the LORD's presence came down on the mountain. To the Israelites the light looked like a fire burning on top of the mountain. The cloud covered the mountain for six days, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from the cloud.

¹⁷ (24: 16)

¹⁸ Moses went on up the mountain into the cloud. There he stayed for forty days and nights.

25 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² Tell the Israelites to make an offering to me. Receive whatever offerings anyone wishes to give.

³These offerings are to be: gold, silver, and bronze;

⁴fine linen; blue, purple, and red wool; cloth made of goats' hair;

⁵rams' skin dyed red; fine leather; acacia wood;

⁶oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet-smelling incense;

⁷carnelians and other jewels to be set in the ephod of the High Priest and in his breastpiece.

⁸The people must make a sacred Tent for me, so that I may live among them.

⁹Make it and all its furnishings according to the plan that I will show you.

¹⁰Make a Box out of acacia wood, 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

¹¹Cover it with pure gold inside and out and put a gold border all around it.

¹²Make four carrying rings of gold for it and attach them to its four legs, with two rings on each side.

¹³Make carrying poles of acacia wood and cover them with gold

¹⁴ and put them through the rings on each side of the Box.

¹⁵ The poles are to be left in the rings and must not be taken out.

¹⁶ Then put in the Box the two stone tablets that I will give you, on which the commandments are written.

¹⁷ Make a lid of pure gold, 45 inches long and 27 inches wide.

¹⁸ Make two winged creatures of hammered gold,

¹⁹ one for each end of the lid. Make them so that they form one piece with the lid.

²⁰ The winged creatures are to face each other across the lid, and their outspread wings are to cover it.

²¹ Put the two stone tablets inside the Box and put the lid on top of it.

²² I will meet you there, and from above the lid between the two winged creatures I will give you all my laws for the people of Israel.

²³ Make a table out of acacia wood, 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

²⁴ Cover it with pure gold and put a gold border around it.

²⁵ Make a rim 3 inches wide around it and a gold border around the rim.

²⁶ Make four carrying rings of gold for it and put them at the four corners, where the legs are.

²⁷ The rings to hold the poles for carrying the table are to be placed near the rim.

²⁸ Make the poles of acacia wood and cover them with gold.

²⁹ Make plates, cups, jars, and bowls to be used for the wine offerings. All of these are to be made of pure gold.

³⁰ The table is to be placed in front of the Covenant Box, and on the table there is always to be the sacred bread offered to me.

³¹ Make a lampstand of pure gold. Make its base and its shaft of hammered gold; its decorative flowers, including buds and petals, are to form one piece with it.

³² Six branches shall extend from its sides, three from each side.

³³ Each of the six branches is to have three decorative flowers shaped like almond blossoms with buds and petals.

³⁴The shaft of the lampstand is to have four decorative flowers shaped like almond blossoms with buds and petals.

³⁵There is to be one bud below each of the three pairs of branches.

³⁶The buds, the branches, and the lampstand are to be a single piece of pure hammered gold.

³⁷Make seven lamps for the lampstand and set them up so that they shine toward the front.

³⁸Make its tongs and trays of pure gold.

³⁹Use seventy-five pounds of pure gold to make the lampstand and all this equipment.

⁴⁰Take care to make them according to the plan that I showed you on the mountain.

26¹ Make the interior of the sacred Tent, the Tent of my presence, out of ten pieces of fine linen woven with blue, purple, and red wool. Embroider them with figures of winged creatures.

²Make each piece the same size, 14 yards long and 2 yards wide.

³Sew five of them together in one set, and do the same with the other five.

⁴ Make loops of blue cloth on the edge of the outside piece in each set.

⁵ Put fifty loops on the first piece of the first set and fifty loops matching them on the last piece of the second set.

⁶ Make fifty gold hooks with which to join the two sets into one piece.

⁷ Make a cover for the Tent out of eleven pieces of cloth made of goats' hair.

⁸ Make them all the same size, 15 yards long and 2 yards wide.

⁹ Sew five of them together in one set, and the other six in another set. Fold the sixth piece double over the front of the Tent.

¹⁰ Put fifty loops on the edge of the last piece of one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the other set.

¹¹ Make fifty bronze hooks and put them in the loops to join the two sets so as to form one cover.

¹² Hang the extra half piece over the back of the Tent.

¹³ The extra half yard on each side of the length is to hang over the sides of the Tent to cover it.

¹⁴ Make two more coverings, one of rams' skin dyed red and the other of fine leather, to serve as the outer cover.

¹⁵ Make upright frames for the Tent out of acacia wood.

¹⁶ Each frame is to be 15 feet long and 27 inches wide,

¹⁷ with two matching projections, so that the frames can be joined together. All the frames are to have these projections.

¹⁸ Make twenty frames for the south side

¹⁹ and forty silver bases to go under them, two bases under each frame to hold its two projections.

²⁰ Make twenty frames for the north side of the Tent

²¹ and forty silver bases, two under each frame.

²² For the back of the Tent on the west, make six frames,

²³ and two frames for the corners.

²⁴ These corner frames are to be joined at the bottom and connected all the way to the top. The two frames that form the two corners are to be made in this way.

²⁵ So there will be eight frames with their sixteen silver bases, two under each frame.

²⁶ Make fifteen crossbars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the Tent,

²⁷ five for the frames on the other side, and five for the frames on the west end, at the back.

²⁸ The middle crossbar, set halfway up the frames, is to extend from one end of the Tent to the other.

²⁹ Cover the frames with gold and fit them with gold rings to hold the crossbars, which are also to be covered with gold.

³⁰ Set up the Tent according to the plan that I showed you on the mountain.

³¹ Make a curtain of fine linen woven with blue, purple, and red wool. Embroider it with figures of winged creatures.

³² Hang it on four posts of acacia wood covered with gold, fitted with hooks, and set in four silver bases.

³³ Place the curtain under the row of hooks in the roof of the Tent, and put behind the curtain the Covenant Box

containing the two stone tablets. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

³⁴ Put the lid on the Covenant Box.

³⁵ Outside the Most Holy Place put the table against the north side of the Tent and the lampstand against the south side.

³⁶ For the entrance of the Tent make a curtain of fine linen woven with blue, purple, and red wool and decorated with embroidery.

³⁷ For this curtain make five posts of acacia wood covered with gold and fitted with gold hooks; make five bronze bases for these posts.

27 ¹ Make an altar out of acacia wood. It is to be square, 7 1/2 feet long and 7 1/2 feet wide, and it is to be 4 1/2 feet high.

² Make projections at the top of the four corners. They are to form one piece with the altar, and the whole is to be covered with bronze.

³ Make pans for the greasy ashes, and make shovels, bowls, hooks, and fire pans. All this equipment is to be made of bronze.

⁴ Make a bronze grating and put four bronze carrying rings on its corners.

⁵ Put the grating under the rim of the altar, so that it reaches halfway up the altar.

⁶ Make carrying poles of acacia wood, cover them with bronze,

⁷ and put them in the rings on each side of the altar when it is carried.

⁸ Make the altar out of boards and leave it hollow, according to the plan that I showed you on the mountain.

⁹ For the Tent of my presence make an enclosure out of fine linen curtains. On the south side the curtains are to be 50 yards long,

¹⁰ supported by twenty bronze posts in twenty bronze bases, with hooks and rods made of silver.

¹¹ Do the same on the north side of the enclosure.

¹² On the west side there are to be curtains 25 yards long, with ten posts and ten bases.

¹³ On the east side, where the entrance is, the enclosure is also to be 25 yards wide.

¹⁴ On each side of the entrance there are to be 7 1/2 yards of curtains, with three posts and three bases.

¹⁵ (27:14)

¹⁶ For the entrance itself there is to be a curtain 10 yards long made of fine linen woven with blue, purple, and red wool, and decorated with embroidery. It is to be supported by four posts in four bases.

¹⁷ All the posts around the enclosure are to be connected with silver rods, and their hooks are to be made of silver and their bases of bronze.

¹⁸ The enclosure is to be 50 yards long, 25 yards wide, and 2 1/2 yards high. The curtains are to be made of fine linen and the bases of bronze.

¹⁹ All the equipment that is used in the Tent and all the pegs for the Tent and for the enclosure are to be made of bronze.

²⁰ Command the people of Israel to bring you the best olive oil for the lamp, so that it can be lit each evening.

²¹ Aaron and his sons are to set up the lamp in the Tent of my presence outside the curtain which is in front of the Covenant Box. There in my presence it is to burn from evening until morning.

This command is to be kept forever by the Israelites and their descendants.

28¹ Summon your brother Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Separate them from the people of Israel, so that they may serve me as priests.

² Make priestly garments for your brother Aaron, to provide him with dignity and beauty.

³ Call all the skilled workers to whom I have given ability, and tell them to make Aaron's clothes, so that he may be dedicated as a priest in my service.

⁴ Tell them to make a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, an embroidered shirt, a turban, and a sash. They are to make these priestly garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so that they can serve me as priests.

⁵ The skilled workers are to use blue, purple, and red wool, gold thread, and fine linen.

⁶ They are to make the ephod of blue, purple, and red wool, gold thread, and fine linen, decorated with embroidery.

⁷Two shoulder straps, by which it can be fastened, are to be attached to the sides.

⁸A finely woven belt made of the same materials is to be attached to the ephod so as to form one piece with it.

⁹Take two carnelian stones and engrave on them the names of the twelve sons of Jacob,

¹⁰in the order of their birth, with six on one stone and six on the other.

¹¹Have a skillful jeweler engrave on the two stones the names of the sons of Jacob, and mount the stones in gold settings.

¹²Put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. In this way Aaron will carry their names on his shoulders, so that I, the LORD, will always remember my people.

¹³Make two gold settings

¹⁴and two chains of pure gold twisted like cords, and attach them to the settings.

¹⁵Make a breastpiece for the High Priest to use in determining God's will. It is to

be made of the same materials as the ephod and with similar embroidery.

¹⁶It is to be square and folded double, 9 inches long and 9 inches wide.

¹⁷Mount four rows of precious stones on it; in the first row mount a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet;

¹⁸in the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond;

¹⁹in the third row, a turquoise, an agate, and an amethyst;

²⁰and in the fourth row, a beryl, a carnelian, and a jasper. These are to be mounted in gold settings.

²¹Each of these twelve stones is to have engraved on it the name of one of the sons of Jacob, to represent the tribes of Israel.

²²For the breastpiece make chains of pure gold, twisted like cords.

²³Make two gold rings and attach them to the upper corners of the breastpiece,

²⁴and fasten the two gold cords to the two rings.

²⁵Fasten the other two ends of the cords to the two settings, and in this way attach them in front to the shoulder straps of the ephod.

²⁶Then make two rings of gold and attach them to the lower corners of the breastpiece on the inside edge next to the ephod.

²⁷Make two more gold rings and attach them to the lower part of the front of the two shoulder straps of the ephod, near the seam and above the finely woven belt.

²⁸Tie the rings of the breastpiece to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that the breastpiece rests above the belt and does not come loose.

²⁹When Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will wear this breastpiece engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel, so that I, the LORD, will always remember my people.

³⁰Put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece, so that Aaron will carry them when he comes into my holy presence. At such times he must always wear this breastpiece, so that he can determine my will for the people of Israel.

³¹The robe that goes under the ephod is to be made entirely of blue wool.

³²It is to have a hole for the head, and this hole is to be reinforced with a woven binding to keep it from tearing.

³³All around its lower hem put pomegranates of blue, purple, and red wool, alternating with gold bells.

³⁴(28: 33)

³⁵Aaron is to wear this robe when he serves as priest. When he comes into my presence in the Holy Place or when he leaves it, the sound of the bells will be heard, and he will not be killed.

³⁶Make an ornament of pure gold and engrave on it Dedicated to the LORD.

³⁷Tie it to the front of the turban with a blue cord.

³⁸Aaron is to wear it on his forehead, so that I, the LORD, will accept all the offerings that the Israelites dedicate to me, even if the people commit some error in offering them.

³⁹Weave Aaron's shirt of fine linen and make a turban of fine linen and also a sash decorated with embroidery.

⁴⁰Make shirts, sashes, and caps for Aaron's sons, to provide them with dignity and beauty.

⁴¹ Put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons. Then ordain them and dedicate them by anointing them with olive oil, so that they may serve me as priests.

⁴² Make linen shorts for them, reaching from the waist to the thighs, so that they will not expose themselves.

⁴³ Aaron and his sons must always wear them when they go into the Tent of my presence or approach the altar to serve as priests in the Holy Place, so that they will not be killed for exposing themselves. This is a permanent rule for Aaron and his descendants.

29 ¹ This is what you are to do to Aaron and his sons to dedicate them as priests in my service. Take one young bull and two rams without any defects.

² Use the best wheat flour, but no yeast, and make some bread with olive oil, some without it, and some in the form of thin cakes brushed with oil.

³ Put them in a basket and offer them to me when you sacrifice the bull and the two rams.

⁴Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Tent of my presence, and have them take a ritual bath.

⁵Then dress Aaron in the priestly garments -- the shirt, the robe that goes under the ephod, the ephod, the breastpiece, and the belt.

⁶Put the turban on him and tie on it the sacred sign of dedication engraved Dedicated to the LORD.

⁷Then take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him.

⁸Bring his sons and put shirts on them;

⁹put sashes around their waists and tie caps on their heads. That is how you are to ordain Aaron and his sons. They and their descendants are to serve me as priests forever.

¹⁰Bring the bull to the front of the Tent of my presence and tell Aaron and his sons to put their hands on its head.

¹¹Kill the bull there in my holy presence at the entrance of the Tent.

¹²Take some of the bull's blood and with your finger put it on the projections of the altar. Then pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar.

¹³Next, take all the fat which covers the internal organs, the best part of the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat on them, and burn them on the altar as an offering to me.

¹⁴But burn the bull's flesh, its skin, and its intestines outside the camp. This is an offering to take away the sins of the priests.

¹⁵Take one of the rams and tell Aaron and his sons to put their hands on its head.

¹⁶Kill it, and take its blood and throw it against all four sides of the altar.

¹⁷Cut the ram in pieces; wash its internal organs and its hind legs, and put them on top of the head and the other pieces.

¹⁸Burn the whole ram on the altar as a food offering. The odor of this offering pleases me.

¹⁹Take the other ram -- the ram used for dedication -- and tell Aaron and his sons to put their hands on its head.

²⁰Kill it, and take some of its blood and put it on the lobes of the right ears of Aaron and his sons, on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of

their right feet. Throw the rest of the blood against all four sides of the altar.

²¹ Take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his clothes and on his sons and their clothes. He, his sons, and their clothes will then be dedicated to me.

²² Cut away the ram's fat, the fat tail, the fat covering the internal organs, the best part of the liver, the two kidneys with the fat on them, and the right thigh.

²³ From the basket of bread which has been offered to me, take one loaf of each kind: one loaf made with olive oil and one made without it and one thin cake.

²⁴ Put all this food in the hands of Aaron and his sons and have them dedicate it to me as a special gift.

²⁵ Then take it from them and burn it on the altar, on top of the burnt offering, as a food offering to me. The odor of this offering pleases me.

²⁶ Take the breast of this ram and dedicate it to me as a special gift. This part of the animal will be yours.

²⁷ When a priest is ordained, the breast and the thigh of the ram being used for

the ordination are to be dedicated to me as a special gift and set aside for the priests.

²⁸It is my unchanging decision that when my people make their fellowship offerings, the breast and the thigh of the animal belong to the priests. This is the people's gift to me, the LORD.

²⁹Aaron's priestly garments are to be handed on to his sons after his death, for them to wear when they are ordained.

³⁰The son of Aaron who succeeds him as priest and who goes into the Tent of my presence to serve in the Holy Place is to wear these garments for seven days.

³¹Take the meat of the ram used for the ordination of Aaron and his sons and boil it in a holy place.

³²At the entrance of the Tent of my presence they are to eat it along with the bread left in the basket.

³³They shall eat what was used in the ritual of forgiveness at their ordination. Only priests may eat this food, because it is sacred.

³⁴If some of the meat or some of the bread is not eaten by morning, it is to

be burned; it is not to be eaten, for it is sacred.

³⁵ Perform the rites of ordination for Aaron and his sons for seven days exactly as I have commanded you.

³⁶ Each day you must offer a bull as a sacrifice, so that sin may be forgiven. This will purify the altar. Then anoint it with olive oil to make it holy.

³⁷ Do this every day for seven days. Then the altar will be completely holy, and anyone or anything that touches it will be harmed by the power of its holiness.

³⁸ Every day for all time to come, sacrifice on the altar two one-year-old lambs.

³⁹ Sacrifice one of the lambs in the morning and the other in the evening.

⁴⁰ With the first lamb offer two pounds of fine wheat flour mixed with one quart of pure olive oil. Pour out one quart of wine as an offering.

⁴¹ Sacrifice the second lamb in the evening, and offer with it the same amounts of flour, olive oil, and wine as in the morning. This is a food offering to me, the LORD, and its odor pleases me.

⁴²For all time to come, this burnt offering is to be offered in my presence at the entrance of the Tent of my presence. That is where I will meet my people and speak to you.

⁴³There I will meet the people of Israel, and the dazzling light of my presence will make the place holy.

⁴⁴I will make the Tent and the altar holy, and I will set Aaron and his sons apart to serve me as priests.

⁴⁵I will live among the people of Israel, and I will be their God.

⁴⁶They will know that I am the LORD their God who brought them out of Egypt so that I could live among them. I am the LORD their God.

30¹Make an altar out of acacia wood, for burning incense.

²It is to be square, 18 inches long and 18 inches wide, and it is to be 36 inches high. Its projections at the four corners are to form one piece with it.

³Cover its top, all four sides, and its projections with pure gold, and put a gold border around it.

⁴Make two gold carrying rings for it and attach them below the border on two

sides to hold the poles with which it is to be carried.

⁵ Make these poles of acacia wood and cover them with gold.

⁶ Put this altar outside the curtain which hangs in front of the Covenant Box. That is the place where I will meet you.

⁷ Every morning when Aaron comes to take care of the lamps, he is to burn sweet-smelling incense on it.

⁸ He must do the same when he lights the lamps in the evening. This offering of incense is to continue without interruption for all time to come.

⁹ Do not offer on this altar any forbidden incense, any animal offering, or any grain offering, and do not pour out any wine offering on it.

¹⁰ Once a year Aaron is to perform the ritual for purifying the altar by putting on its four projections the blood of the animal sacrificed for sin. This is to be done every year for all time to come. This altar is to be completely holy, dedicated to me, the LORD.

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses,

¹² When you take a census of the people of Israel, each man is to pay me a price

for his life, so that no disaster will come on him while the census is being taken.

¹³Everyone included in the census must pay the required amount of money, weighed according to the official standard. Everyone must pay this as an offering to me.

¹⁴Everyone being counted in the census, that is, every man twenty years old or older, is to pay me this amount.

¹⁵The rich man is not to pay more, nor the poor man less, when they pay this amount for their lives.

¹⁶Collect this money from the people of Israel and spend it for the upkeep of the Tent of my presence. This tax will be the payment for their lives, and I will remember to protect them.

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁸Make a bronze basin with a bronze base. Place it between the Tent and the altar, and put water in it.

¹⁹Aaron and his sons are to use the water to wash their hands and feet

²⁰before they go into the Tent or approach the altar to offer the food offering. Then they will not be killed.

²¹ They must wash their hands and feet, so that they will not die. This is a rule which they and their descendants are to observe forever.

²² The LORD said to Moses,

²³ Take the finest spices -- 12 pounds of liquid myrrh, 6 pounds of sweet-smelling cinnamon, 6 pounds of sweet-smelling cane,

²⁴ and 12 pounds of cassia (all weighed according to the official standard). Add one gallon of olive oil,

²⁵ and make a sacred anointing oil, mixed like perfume.

²⁶ Use it to anoint the Tent of my presence, the Covenant Box,

²⁷ the table and all its equipment, the lampstand and its equipment, the altar for burning incense,

²⁸ the altar for burning offerings, together with all its equipment, and the washbasin with its base.

²⁹ Dedicate these things in this way, and they will be completely holy, and anyone or anything that touches them will be harmed by the power of its holiness.

³⁰ Then anoint Aaron and his sons, and ordain them as priests in my service.

³¹ Say to the people of Israel, This holy anointing oil is to be used in my service for all time to come.

³² It must not be poured on ordinary men, and you must not use the same formula to make any mixture like it. It is holy, and you must treat it as holy.

³³ Whoever makes any like it or uses any of it on anyone who is not a priest will no longer be considered one of my people.

³⁴ The LORD said to Moses, Take an equal part of each of the following sweet spices -- stacte, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense.

³⁵ Use them to make incense, mixed like perfume. Add salt to keep it pure and holy.

³⁶ Beat part of it into a fine powder, take it into the Tent of my presence, and sprinkle it in front of the Covenant Box. Treat this incense as completely holy.

³⁷ Do not use the same formula to make any incense like it for yourselves. Treat it as a holy thing dedicated to me.

³⁸ If anyone makes any like it for use as perfume, he will no longer be considered one of my people.

31 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²I have chosen Bezalel, the son
of Uri and grandson of Hur, from the
tribe of Judah,
³and I have filled him with my power. I
have given him understanding, skill, and
ability for every kind of artistic work --
⁴for planning skillful designs and
working them in gold, silver, and bronze;
⁵for cutting jewels to be set; for carving
wood; and for every other kind of artistic
work.
⁶I have also selected Oholiab son of
Ahisamach, from the tribe of Dan, to
work with him. I have also given great
ability to all the other skilled workers,
so that they can make everything I have
commanded to be made:
⁷the Tent of my presence, the Covenant
Box and its lid, all the furnishings of the
Tent,
⁸the table and its equipment, the
lampstand of pure gold and all its
equipment, the altar for burning incense,
⁹the altar for burnt offerings and all its
equipment, the washbasin and its base,

¹⁰ the magnificent priestly garments for Aaron and his sons to use when they serve as priests,

¹¹ the anointing oil, and the sweet-smelling incense for the Holy Place. In making all these things, they are to do exactly as I have commanded you.

¹² The LORD commanded Moses

¹³ to tell the people of Israel, Keep the Sabbath, my day of rest, because it is a sign between you and me for all time to come, to show that I, the LORD, have made you my own people.

¹⁴ You must keep the day of rest, because it is sacred. Whoever does not keep it, but works on that day, is to be put to death.

¹⁵ You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is a solemn day of rest dedicated to me. Whoever does any work on that day is to be put to death.

¹⁶ The people of Israel are to keep this day as a sign of the covenant.

¹⁷ It is a permanent sign between the people of Israel and me, because I, the LORD, made heaven and earth in six

days, and on the seventh day I stopped working and rested.

¹⁸When God had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two stone tablets on which God himself had written the commandments.

32¹When the people saw that Moses had not come down from the mountain but was staying there a long time, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, We do not know what has happened to this man Moses, who led us out of Egypt; so make us a god to lead us.

²Aaron said to them, Take off the gold earrings which your wives, your sons, and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.

³So all the people took off their gold earrings and brought them to Aaron.

⁴He took the earrings, melted them, poured the gold into a mold, and made a gold bull-calf. The people said, Israel, this is our god, who led us out of Egypt!

⁵Then Aaron built an altar in front of the gold bull-calf and announced, Tomorrow there will be a festival to honor the LORD.

⁶Early the next morning they brought some animals to burn as sacrifices and others to eat as fellowship offerings. The people sat down to a feast, which turned into an orgy of drinking and sex.

⁷The LORD said to Moses, Hurry and go back down, because your people, whom you led out of Egypt, have sinned and rejected me.

⁸They have already left the way that I commanded them to follow; they have made a bull-calf out of melted gold and have worshiped it and offered sacrifices to it. They are saying that this is their god, who led them out of Egypt.

⁹I know how stubborn these people are.

¹⁰Now, don't try to stop me. I am angry with them, and I am going to destroy them. Then I will make you and your descendants into a great nation.

¹¹But Moses pleaded with the LORD his God and said, LORD, why should you be so angry with your people, whom you rescued from Egypt with great might and power?

¹²Why should the Egyptians be able to say that you led your people out

of Egypt, planning to kill them in the mountains and destroy them completely? Stop being angry; change your mind and do not bring this disaster on your people.

¹³Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remember the solemn promise you made to them to give them as many descendants as there are stars in the sky and to give their descendants all that land you promised would be their possession forever.

¹⁴So the LORD changed his mind and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

¹⁵Moses went back down the mountain, carrying the two stone tablets with the commandments written on both sides.

¹⁶God himself had made the tablets and had engraved the commandments on them.

¹⁷Joshua heard the people shouting and said to Moses, I hear the sound of battle in the camp.

¹⁸Moses said, That doesn't sound like a shout of victory or a cry of defeat; it's the sound of singing.

¹⁹When Moses came close enough to the camp to see the bull-calf and to see

the people dancing, he became furious. There at the foot of the mountain, he threw down the tablets he was carrying and broke them.

²⁰He took the bull-calf which they had made, melted it, ground it into fine powder, and mixed it with water. Then he made the people of Israel drink it.

²¹He said to Aaron, What did these people do to you, that you have made them commit such a terrible sin?

²²Aaron answered, Don't be angry with me; you know how determined these people are to do evil.

²³They said to me, We don't know what has happened to this man Moses, who brought us out of Egypt; so make us a god to lead us.

²⁴I asked them to bring me their gold ornaments, and those who had any took them off and gave them to me. I threw the ornaments into the fire and out came this bull-calf!

²⁵Moses saw that Aaron had let the people get out of control and make fools of themselves in front of their enemies.

²⁶So he stood at the gate of the camp and shouted, Everyone who is on the

LORD's side come over here! So all the Levites gathered around him,

²⁷ and he said to them, The LORD God of Israel commands every one of you to put on your sword and go through the camp from this gate to the other and kill your brothers, your friends, and your neighbors.

²⁸ The Levites obeyed, and killed about three thousand men that day.

²⁹ Moses said to the Levites, Today you have consecrated yourselves as priests in the service of the LORD by killing your sons and brothers, so the LORD has given you his blessing.

³⁰ The next day Moses said to the people, You have committed a terrible sin. But now I will again go up the mountain to the LORD; perhaps I can obtain forgiveness for your sin.

³¹ Moses then returned to the LORD and said, These people have committed a terrible sin. They have made a god out of gold and worshiped it.

³² Please forgive their sin; but if you won't, then remove my name from the book in which you have written the names of your people.

³³The LORD answered, It is those who have sinned against me whose names I will remove from my book.

³⁴Now go, lead the people to the place I told you about. Remember that my angel will guide you, but the time is coming when I will punish these people for their sin.

³⁵So the LORD sent a disease on the people, because they had caused Aaron to make the gold bull-calf.

33¹The LORD said to Moses, Leave this place, you and the people you brought out of Egypt, and go to the land that I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to their descendants.

²I will send an angel to guide you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

³You are going to a rich and fertile land. But I will not go with you myself, because you are a stubborn people, and I might destroy you on the way.

⁴When the people heard this, they began to mourn and did not wear jewelry any more.

⁵For the LORD had commanded Moses to tell them, You are a stubborn people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I would completely destroy you. Now take off your jewelry, and I will decide what to do with you.

⁶So after they left Mount Sinai, the people of Israel no longer wore jewelry.

⁷Whenever the people of Israel set up camp, Moses would take the sacred Tent and put it up some distance outside the camp. It was called the Tent of the LORD's presence, and anyone who wanted to consult the LORD would go out to it.

⁸Whenever Moses went out there, the people would stand at the door of their tents and watch Moses until he entered it.

⁹After Moses had gone in, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the door of the Tent, and the LORD would speak to Moses from the cloud.

¹⁰As soon as the people saw the pillar of cloud at the door of the Tent, they would bow down.

¹¹The LORD would speak with Moses face-to-face, just as someone speaks

with a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp. But the young man who was his helper, Joshua son of Nun, stayed in the Tent.

¹²Moses said to the LORD, It is true that you have told me to lead these people to that land, but you did not tell me whom you would send with me. You have said that you know me well and are pleased with me.

¹³Now if you are, tell me your plans, so that I may serve you and continue to please you. Remember also that you have chosen this nation to be your own.

¹⁴The LORD said, I will go with you, and I will give you victory.

¹⁵Moses replied, If you do not go with us, don't make us leave this place.

¹⁶How will anyone know that you are pleased with your people and with me if you do not go with us? Your presence with us will distinguish us from any other people on earth.

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses, I will do just as you have asked, because I know you very well and I am pleased with you.

¹⁸Then Moses requested, Please, let me see the dazzling light of your presence.

¹⁹The LORD answered, I will make all my splendor pass before you and in your presence I will pronounce my sacred name. I am the LORD, and I show compassion and pity on those I choose.

²⁰I will not let you see my face, because no one can see me and stay alive,

²¹but here is a place beside me where you can stand on a rock.

²²When the dazzling light of my presence passes by, I will put you in an opening in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

²³Then I will take my hand away, and you will see my back but not my face.

34¹The LORD said to Moses, Cut two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.

²Get ready tomorrow morning, and come up Mount Sinai to meet me there at the top.

³No one is to come up with you; no one is to be seen on any part of the mountain; and no sheep or cattle are to graze at the foot of the mountain.

⁴ So Moses cut two more stone tablets, and early the next morning he carried them up Mount Sinai, just as the LORD had commanded.

⁵ The LORD came down in a cloud, stood with him there, and pronounced his holy name, the LORD.

⁶ The LORD then passed in front of him and called out, I, the LORD, am a God who is full of compassion and pity, who is not easily angered and who shows great love and faithfulness.

⁷ I keep my promise for thousands of generations and forgive evil and sin; but I will not fail to punish children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation for the sins of their parents.

⁸ Moses quickly bowed down to the ground and worshiped.

⁹ He said, Lord, if you really are pleased with me, I ask you to go with us. These people are stubborn, but forgive our evil and our sin, and accept us as your own people.

¹⁰ The LORD said to Moses, I now make a covenant with the people of Israel. In their presence I will do great things such as have never been done anywhere on

earth among any of the nations. All the people will see what great things I, the LORD, can do, because I am going to do an awesome thing for you.

¹¹ Obey the laws that I am giving you today. I will drive out the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as you advance.

¹² Do not make any treaties with the people of the country into which you are going, because this could be a fatal trap for you.

¹³ Instead, tear down their altars, destroy their sacred pillars, and cut down their symbols of the goddess Asherah.

¹⁴ Do not worship any other god, because I, the LORD, tolerate no rivals.

¹⁵ Do not make any treaties with the people of the country, because when they worship their pagan gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you to join them, and you will be tempted to eat the food they offer to their gods.

¹⁶ Your sons might marry those foreign women, who would lead them to be unfaithful to me and to worship their pagan gods.

¹⁷ Do not make gods of metal and worship them.

¹⁸ Keep the Festival of Unleavened Bread. As I have commanded you, eat unleavened bread for seven days in the month of Abib, because it was in that month that you left Egypt.

¹⁹ Every first-born son and first-born male domestic animal belongs to me,

²⁰ but you are to buy back every first-born donkey by offering a lamb in its place. If you do not buy it back, break its neck. Buy back every first-born son. No one is to appear before me without an offering.

²¹ You have six days in which to do your work, but do not work on the seventh day, not even during plowing time or harvest.

²² Keep the Harvest Festival when you begin to harvest the first crop of your wheat, and keep the Festival of Shelters in the autumn when you gather your fruit.

²³ Three times a year all of your men must come to worship me, the LORD, the God of Israel.

²⁴ After I have driven out the nations before you and extended your territory, no one will try to conquer your country during the three festivals.

²⁵ Do not offer bread made with yeast when you sacrifice an animal to me. Do not keep until the following morning any part of the animal killed at the Passover Festival.

²⁶ Each year bring to the house of the LORD the first grain that you harvest. Do not cook a young sheep or goat in its mother's milk.

²⁷ The LORD said to Moses, Write these words down, because it is on the basis of these words that I am making a covenant with you and with Israel.

²⁸ Moses stayed there with the LORD forty days and nights, eating and drinking nothing. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant -- the Ten Commandments.

²⁹ When Moses went down from Mount Sinai carrying the Ten Commandments, his face was shining because he had been speaking with the LORD; but he did not know it.

³⁰ Aaron and all the people looked at Moses and saw that his face was shining, and they were afraid to go near him.

³¹ But Moses called them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the community went to him, and Moses spoke with them.

³² After that, all the people of Israel gathered around him, and Moses gave them all the laws that the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

³³ When Moses had finished speaking with them, he covered his face with a veil.

³⁴ Whenever Moses went into the Tent of the LORD's presence to speak to the LORD, he would take the veil off. When he came out, he would tell the people of Israel everything that he had been commanded to say,

³⁵ and they would see that his face was shining. Then he would put the veil back on until the next time he went to speak with the LORD.

35¹ Moses called together the whole community of the people of Israel and said to them, This is what the LORD has commanded you to do:

²You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is to be sacred, a solemn day of rest dedicated to me, the LORD. Anyone who does any work on that day is to be put to death.

³Do not even light a fire in your homes on the Sabbath.

⁴Moses said to all the people of Israel, This is what the LORD has commanded:

⁵Make an offering to the LORD.

Everyone who wishes to do so is to bring an offering of gold, silver, or bronze;

⁶fine linen; blue, purple, and red wool; cloth made of goats' hair;

⁷rams' skin dyed red; fine leather; acacia wood;

⁸oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet-smelling incense;

⁹carnelians and other jewels to be set in the High Priest's ephod and in his breastpiece.

¹⁰All the skilled workers among you are to come and make everything that the LORD commanded:

¹¹the Tent, its covering and its outer covering, its hooks and its frames, its crossbars, its posts, and its bases;

¹² the Covenant Box, its poles, its lid, and the curtain to screen it off;

¹³ the table, its poles, and all its equipment; the bread offered to God;

¹⁴ the lampstand for the light and its equipment; the lamps with their oil;

¹⁵ the altar for burning incense and its poles; the anointing oil; the sweet-smelling incense; the curtain for the entrance of the Tent;

¹⁶ the altar on which to burn offerings, with its bronze grating attached, its poles, and all its equipment; the washbasin and its base;

¹⁷ the curtains for the enclosure, its posts and bases; the curtain for the entrance of the enclosure;

¹⁸ the Tent pegs and ropes for the Tent and the enclosure;

¹⁹ and the magnificent garments the priests are to wear when they serve in the Holy Place -- the sacred clothes for Aaron the priest and for his sons.

²⁰ All the people of Israel left,

²¹ and everyone who wished to do so brought an offering to the LORD for making the Tent of the LORD's presence. They brought everything needed for use

in worship and for making the priestly garments.

²²All who wanted to, both men and women, brought decorative pins, earrings, rings, necklaces, and all kinds of gold jewelry and dedicated them to the LORD.

²³Everyone who had fine linen; blue, purple, or red wool; cloth of goats' hair; rams' skin dyed red; or fine leather, brought it.

²⁴All who were able to contribute silver or bronze brought their offering for the LORD, and all who had acacia wood which could be used for any of the work brought it.

²⁵All the skilled women brought fine linen thread and thread of blue, purple, and red wool, which they had made.

²⁶They also made thread of goats' hair.

²⁷The leaders brought carnelians and other jewels to be set in the ephod and the breastpiece

²⁸and spices and oil for the lamps, for the anointing oil, and for the sweet-smelling incense.

²⁹All the people of Israel who wanted to brought their offering to the LORD

for the work which he had commanded Moses to do.

³⁰ Moses said to the Israelites, The LORD has chosen Bezalel, the son of Uri and grandson of Hur from the tribe of Judah.

³¹ God has filled him with his power and given him skill, ability, and understanding for every kind of artistic work,

³² for planning skillful designs and working them in gold, silver, and bronze;

³³ for cutting jewels to be set; for carving wood; and for every other kind of artistic work.

³⁴ The LORD has given to him and to Oholiab son of Ahisamach, from the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach their crafts to others.

³⁵ He has given them skill in all kinds of work done by engravers, designers, and weavers of fine linen; blue, purple, and red wool; and other cloth. They are able to do all kinds of work and are skillful designers.

36¹ Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the other workers to whom the LORD has given skill and understanding, who know how to make everything

needed to build the sacred Tent, are to make everything just as the LORD has commanded.

²Moses called Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the other skilled men to whom the LORD had given ability and who were willing to help, and Moses told them to start working.

³They received from him all the offerings which the Israelites had brought for constructing the sacred Tent. But the people of Israel continued to bring Moses their offerings every morning.

⁴Then the skilled men who were doing the work went

⁵and told Moses, The people are bringing more than is needed for the work which the LORD commanded to be done.

⁶So Moses sent a command throughout the camp that no one was to make any further contribution for the sacred Tent; so the people did not bring any more.

⁷What had already been brought was more than enough to finish all the work.

⁸The most skilled men among those doing the work made the Tent of the

LORD's presence. They made it out of ten pieces of fine linen woven with blue, purple, and red wool and embroidered with figures of winged creatures.

⁹Each piece was the same size, 14 yards long and 2 yards wide.

¹⁰They sewed five of them together in one set and did the same with the other five.

¹¹They made loops of blue cloth on the edge of the outside piece in each set.

¹²They put fifty loops on the first piece of the first set and fifty loops matching them on the last piece of the second set.

¹³They made fifty gold hooks, with which to join the two sets into one piece.

¹⁴Then they made a cover for the Tent out of eleven pieces of cloth made of goats' hair.

¹⁵They made them all the same size, 15 yards long and 2 yards wide.

¹⁶They sewed five of them together in one set and the other six in another set.

¹⁷They put fifty loops on the edge of the last piece of one set and fifty loops on the edge of the other set.

¹⁸They made fifty bronze hooks to join the two sets, so as to form one cover.

¹⁹They made two more coverings, one of rams' skin dyed red and the other of fine leather, to serve as an outer cover.

²⁰They made upright frames of acacia wood for the Tent.

²¹Each frame was 15 feet tall and 27 inches wide,

²²with two matching projections, so that the frames could be joined together. All the frames had these projections.

²³They made twenty frames for the south side

²⁴and forty silver bases to go under them, two bases under each frame to hold its two projections.

²⁵They made twenty frames for the north side of the Tent

²⁶and forty silver bases, two under each frame.

²⁷For the back of the Tent, on the west, they made six frames

²⁸and two frames for the corners.

²⁹These corner frames were joined at the bottom and connected all the way to the top. The two frames that formed the two corners were made in this way.

³⁰ So there were eight frames and sixteen silver bases, two under each frame.

³¹ They made fifteen crossbars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the Tent,

³² five for the frames on the other side, and five for the frames on the west end, at the back.

³³ The middle crossbar, set halfway up the frames, extended from one end of the Tent to the other.

³⁴ They covered the frames with gold and fitted them with gold rings to hold the crossbars, which were also covered with gold.

³⁵ They made a curtain of fine linen, woven with blue, purple, and red wool and embroidered it with figures of winged creatures.

³⁶ They made four posts of acacia wood to hold the curtain, covered them with gold, and fitted them with gold hooks. Then they made four silver bases to hold the posts.

³⁷ For the entrance of the Tent they made a curtain of fine linen woven with

blue, purple, and red wool and decorated with embroidery.

³⁸For this curtain they made five posts fitted with hooks, covered their tops and their rods with gold, and made five bronze bases for the posts.

37 ¹Bezalel made the Covenant Box out of acacia wood, 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

²He covered it with pure gold inside and out and put a gold border all around it.

³He made four carrying rings of gold for it and attached them to its four feet, with two rings on each side.

⁴He made carrying poles of acacia wood, covered them with gold,

⁵and put them through the rings on each side of the Box.

⁶He made a lid of pure gold, 45 inches long and 27 inches wide.

⁷He made two winged creatures of hammered gold,

⁸one for each end of the lid. He made them so that they formed one piece with the lid.

⁹The winged creatures faced each other across the lid, and their outspread wings covered it.

¹⁰He made the table out of acacia wood, 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

¹¹He covered it with pure gold and put a gold border around it.

¹²He made a rim 3 inches wide around it and put a gold border around the rim.

¹³He made four carrying rings of gold for it and put them at the four corners, where the legs were.

¹⁴The rings to hold the poles for carrying the table were placed near the rim.

¹⁵He made the poles of acacia wood and covered them with gold.

¹⁶He made the dishes of pure gold for the table: the plates, the cups, the jars, and the bowls to be used for the wine offering.

¹⁷He made the lampstand of pure gold. He made its base and its shaft of hammered gold; its decorative flowers, including buds and petals, formed one piece with it.

¹⁸Six branches extended from its sides, three from each side.

¹⁹Each of the six branches had three decorative flowers shaped like almond blossoms with buds and petals.

²⁰The shaft of the lampstand had four decorative flowers shaped like almond blossoms with buds and petals.

²¹There was one bud below each of the three pairs of branches.

²²The buds, the branches, and the lampstand were a single piece of pure hammered gold.

²³He made seven lamps for the lampstand, and he made its tongs and trays of pure gold.

²⁴He used seventy-five pounds of pure gold to make the lampstand and all its equipment.

²⁵He made an altar out of acacia wood, for burning incense. It was square, 18 inches long and 18 inches wide, and it was 36 inches high. Its projections at the four corners formed one piece with it.

²⁶He covered its top, all four sides, and its projections with pure gold and put a gold border around it.

²⁷ He made two gold carrying rings for it and attached them below the border on the two sides, to hold the poles with which it was to be carried.

²⁸ He made the poles of acacia wood and covered them with gold.

²⁹ He also made the sacred anointing oil and the pure sweet-smelling incense, mixed like perfume.

38 ¹ For burning offerings, he made an altar out of acacia wood. It was square, 7 1/2 feet long and 7 1/2 feet wide, and it was 4 1/2 feet high.

² He made the projections at the top of the four corners, so that they formed one piece with the altar. He covered it all with bronze.

³ He also made all the equipment for the altar: the pans, the shovels, the bowls, the hooks, and the fire pans. All this equipment was made of bronze.

⁴ He made a bronze grating and put it under the rim of the altar, so that it reached halfway up the altar.

⁵ He made four carrying rings and put them on the four corners.

⁶ He made carrying poles of acacia wood, covered them with bronze,

⁷ and put them in the rings on each side of the altar. The altar was made of boards and was hollow.

⁸ He made the bronze basin and its bronze base out of the mirrors belonging to the women who served at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence.

⁹ For the Tent of the LORD's presence he made the enclosure out of fine linen curtains. On the south side the curtains were 50 yards long,

¹⁰ supported by twenty bronze posts in twenty bronze bases, with hooks and rods made of silver.

¹¹ The enclosure was the same on the north side.

¹² On the west side there were curtains 25 yards long, with ten posts and ten bases and with hooks and rods made of silver.

¹³ On the east side, where the entrance was, the enclosure was also 25 yards wide.

¹⁴ On each side of the entrance there were 7 1/2 yards of curtains, with three posts and three bases.

¹⁵ (38: 14)

¹⁶All the curtains around the enclosure were made of fine linen.

¹⁷The bases for the posts were made of bronze, and the hooks, the rods, and the covering of the tops of the posts were made of silver. All the posts around the enclosure were connected with silver rods.

¹⁸The curtain for the entrance of the enclosure was made of fine linen woven with blue, purple, and red wool and decorated with embroidery. It was 10 yards long and 2 1/2 yards high, like the curtains of the enclosure.

¹⁹It was supported by four posts in four bronze bases. Their hooks, the covering of their tops, and their rods were made of silver.

²⁰All the pegs for the Tent and for the surrounding enclosure were made of bronze.

²¹Here is a list of the amounts of the metals used in the Tent of the LORD's presence, where the two stone tablets were kept on which the Ten Commandments were written. The list was ordered by Moses and made by the

Levites who worked under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

²²Bezalel, the son of Uri and grandson of Hur from the tribe of Judah, made everything that the LORD had commanded.

²³His helper, Oholiab son of Ahisamach, from the tribe of Dan, was an engraver, a designer, and a weaver of fine linen and of blue, purple, and red wool.

²⁴All the gold that had been dedicated to the LORD for the sacred Tent weighed 2,195 pounds, weighed according to the official standard.

²⁵The silver from the census of the community weighed 7,550 pounds, weighed according to the official standard.

²⁶This amount equaled the total paid by all persons enrolled in the census, each one paying the required amount, weighed according to the official standard. There were 603,550 men twenty years old or older enrolled in the census.

²⁷Of the silver, 7,500 pounds were used to make the hundred bases for

the sacred Tent and for the curtain, 75 pounds for each base.

²⁸With the remaining 50 pounds of silver Bezalel made the rods, the hooks for the posts, and the covering for their tops.

²⁹The bronze which was dedicated to the LORD amounted to 5,310 pounds.

³⁰With it he made the bases for the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence, the bronze altar with its bronze grating, all the equipment for the altar,

³¹the bases for the surrounding enclosure and for the entrance of the enclosure, and all the pegs for the Tent and the surrounding enclosure.

39¹With the blue, purple, and red wool they made the magnificent garments which the priests were to wear when they served in the Holy Place. They made the priestly garments for Aaron, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²They made the ephod of fine linen; blue, purple, and red wool; and gold thread.

³They hammered out sheets of gold and cut them into thin strips to be

worked into the fine linen and into the blue, purple, and red wool.

⁴They made two shoulder straps for the ephod and attached them to its sides, so that it could be fastened.

⁵The finely woven belt, made of the same materials, was attached to the ephod so as to form one piece with it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁶They prepared the carnelians and mounted them in gold settings; they were skillfully engraved with the names of the twelve sons of Jacob.

⁷They put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod to represent the twelve tribes of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁸They made the breastpiece of the same materials as the ephod and with similar embroidery.

⁹It was square and folded double, 9 inches long and 9 inches wide.

¹⁰They mounted four rows of precious stones on it: in the first row they mounted a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet;

¹¹in the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond;

¹²in the third row, a turquoise, an agate, and an amethyst;

¹³and in the fourth row, a beryl, a carnelian, and a jasper. These were mounted in gold settings.

¹⁴Each of the twelve stones had engraved on it the name of one of the sons of Jacob, in order to represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

¹⁵For the breastpiece they made chains of pure gold, twisted like cords.

¹⁶They made two gold settings and two gold rings and attached the two rings to the upper corners of the breastpiece.

¹⁷They fastened the two gold cords to the two rings

¹⁸and fastened the other two ends of the cords to the two settings and in this way attached them in front to the shoulder straps of the ephod.

¹⁹They made two rings of gold and attached them to the lower corners of the breastpiece, on the inside edge next to the ephod.

²⁰They made two more gold rings and attached them to the lower part of the front of the two shoulder straps of the

ephod, near the seam and above the finely woven belt.

²¹ Just as the LORD had commanded Moses, they tied the rings of the breastpiece to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that the breastpiece rested above the belt and did not come loose.

²² The robe that goes under the ephod was made entirely of blue wool.

²³ The hole for the head was reinforced with a woven binding to keep it from tearing.

²⁴ All around its lower hem they put pomegranates of fine linen and of blue, purple, and red wool, alternating with bells of pure gold, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²⁵ (39: 24)

²⁶ (39: 24)

²⁷ They made the shirts for Aaron and his sons,

²⁸ and the turban, the caps, the linen shorts,

²⁹ and the sash of fine linen and of blue, purple, and red wool, decorated with embroidery, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

³⁰They made the ornament, the sacred sign of dedication, out of pure gold, and they engraved on it Dedicated to the LORD.

³¹They tied it to the front of the turban with a blue cord, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

³²All the work on the Tent of the LORD's presence was finally completed. The Israelites made everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

³³They brought to Moses the Tent and all its equipment, its hooks, its frames, its crossbars, its posts, and its bases;

³⁴the covering of rams' skin dyed red; the covering of fine leather; the curtain;

³⁵the Covenant Box containing the stone tablets, its poles, and its lid;

³⁶the table and all its equipment, and the bread offered to God;

³⁷the lampstand of pure gold, its lamps, all its equipment, and the oil for the lamps;

³⁸the gold altar; the anointing oil; the sweet-smelling incense; the curtain for the entrance of the Tent;

³⁹ the bronze altar with its bronze grating, its poles, and all its equipment; the washbasin and its base;

⁴⁰ the curtains for the enclosure and its posts and bases; the curtain for the entrance of the enclosure and its ropes; the Tent pegs; all the equipment to be used in the Tent;

⁴¹ and the magnificent garments the priests were to wear in the Holy Place -- the sacred clothes for Aaron the priest and for his sons.

⁴² The Israelites had done all the work just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁴³ Moses examined everything and saw that they had made it all just as the LORD had commanded. So Moses blessed them.

40¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² On the first day of the first month set up the Tent of the LORD's presence.

³ Place in it the Covenant Box containing the Ten Commandments and put the curtain in front of it.

⁴Bring in the table and place the equipment on it. Also bring in the lampstand and set up the lamps on it.

⁵Put the gold altar for burning incense in front of the Covenant Box and hang the curtain at the entrance of the Tent.

⁶Put in front of the Tent the altar for burning offerings.

⁷Put the washbasin between the Tent and the altar and fill it with water.

⁸Put up the surrounding enclosure and hang the curtain at its entrance.

⁹Then dedicate the Tent and all its equipment by anointing it with the sacred oil, and it will be holy.

¹⁰Next, dedicate the altar and all its equipment by anointing it, and it will be completely holy.

¹¹Also dedicate the washbasin and its base in the same way.

¹²Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Tent, and have them take a ritual bath.

¹³Dress Aaron in the priestly garments, anoint him, and in this way consecrate him, so that he can serve me as priest.

¹⁴Bring his sons and put the shirts on them.

¹⁵Then anoint them, just as you anointed their father, so that they can serve me as priests. This anointing will make them priests for all time to come.

¹⁶Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded.

¹⁷So on the first day of the first month of the second year after they left Egypt, the Tent of the LORD's presence was set up.

¹⁸Moses put down its bases, set up its frames, attached its crossbars, and put up its posts.

¹⁹He spread out the covering over the Tent and put the outer covering over it, just as the LORD had commanded.

²⁰Then he took the two stone tablets and put them in the Covenant Box. He put the poles in the rings of the Box and put the lid on it.

²¹Then he put the Box in the Tent and hung up the curtain. In this way he screened off the Covenant Box, just as the LORD had commanded.

²²He put the table in the Tent, on the north side outside the curtain,

²³ and placed on it the bread offered to the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded.

²⁴ He put the lampstand in the Tent, on the south side, opposite the table,

²⁵ and there in the LORD's presence he lit the lamps, just as the LORD had commanded.

²⁶ He put the gold altar in the Tent, in front of the curtain,

²⁷ and burned the sweet-smelling incense, just as the LORD had commanded.

²⁸ He hung the curtain at the entrance of the Tent,

²⁹ and there in front of the curtain he placed the altar for burning offerings. On it he sacrificed the burnt offering and the grain offering, just as the LORD had commanded.

³⁰ He put the washbasin between the Tent and the altar and filled it with water.

³¹ Moses, Aaron, and his sons washed their hands and their feet there

³² whenever they went into the Tent or to the altar, just as the LORD had commanded.

³³ Moses set up the enclosure around the Tent and the altar and hung the curtain at the entrance of the enclosure. So he finished all the work.

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the Tent and the dazzling light of the LORD's presence filled it.

³⁵ Because of this, Moses could not go into the Tent.

³⁶ The Israelites moved their camp to another place only when the cloud lifted from the Tent.

³⁷ As long as the cloud stayed there, they did not move their camp.

³⁸ During all their wanderings they could see the cloud of the LORD's presence over the Tent during the day and a fire burning above it during the night.

Leviticus

1 ¹The LORD called to Moses from the Tent of the LORD's presence and gave him the following rules

²for the Israelites to observe when they offer their sacrifices. When you offer an animal sacrifice, it may be one of your cattle or one of your sheep or goats.

³If you are offering one of your cattle as a burnt offering, you must bring a bull without any defects. You must present it at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence so that the LORD will accept you.

⁴You shall put your hand on its head, and it will be accepted as a sacrifice to take away your sins.

⁵You shall kill the bull there, and the Aaronite priests shall present the blood to the LORD and then throw it against all four sides of the altar located at the entrance of the Tent.

⁶Then you shall skin the animal and cut it up,

⁷ and the priests shall arrange firewood on the altar and light it.

⁸ They shall put on the fire the pieces of the animal, including the head and the fat.

⁹ You must wash the internal organs and the hind legs, and the officiating priest will burn the whole sacrifice on the altar. The odor of this food offering is pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁰ If you are offering one of your sheep or goats, it must be a male without any defects.

¹¹ You shall kill it on the north side of the altar, and the priests shall throw its blood on all four sides of the altar.

¹² After you cut it up, the officiating priest shall put on the fire all the parts, including the head and the fat.

¹³ You must wash the internal organs and the hind legs, and the priest will present the sacrifice to the LORD and burn all of it on the altar. The odor of this food offering is pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁴ If you are offering a bird as a burnt offering, it must be a dove or a pigeon.

¹⁵ The priest shall present it at the altar, wring its neck, and burn its head on

the altar. Its blood shall be drained out against the side of the altar.

¹⁶He shall remove the crop and its contents and throw them away on the east side of the altar where the ashes are put.

¹⁷He shall take hold of its wings and tear its body open, without tearing the wings off, and then burn it whole on the altar. The odor of this food offering is pleasing to the LORD.

2¹When any of you present an offering of grain to the LORD, you must first grind it into flour. You must put olive oil and incense on it

²and bring it to the Aaronite priests. The officiating priest shall take a handful of the flour and oil and all of the incense and burn it on the altar as a token that it has all been offered to the LORD. The odor of this food offering is pleasing to the LORD.

³The rest of the grain offering belongs to the priests; it is very holy, since it is taken from the food offered to the LORD.

⁴If the offering is bread baked in an oven, it must be made without yeast. It may be thick loaves made of flour mixed

with olive oil or thin cakes brushed with olive oil.

⁵If the offering is bread cooked on a griddle, it is to be made of flour mixed with olive oil but without yeast.

⁶Crumble it up and pour the oil on it when you present it as an offering.

⁷If the offering is bread cooked in a pan, it is to be made of flour and olive oil.

⁸Bring it as an offering to the LORD and present it to the priest, who will take it to the altar.

⁹The priest will take part of it as a token that it has all been offered to the LORD, and he will burn it on the altar. The odor of this food offering is pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁰The rest of the offering belongs to the priests; it is very holy, since it is taken from the food offered to the LORD.

¹¹None of the grain offerings which you present to the LORD may be made with yeast; you must never use yeast or honey in food offered to the LORD.

¹²An offering of the first grain that you harvest each year shall be brought to

the LORD, but it is not to be burned on the altar.

¹³Put salt on every grain offering, because salt represents the covenant between you and God. (You must put salt on all your offerings.)

¹⁴When you bring to the LORD an offering of the first grain harvested, offer roasted grain or ground meal.

¹⁵Add olive oil and put incense on it.

¹⁶The priest will burn that part of the meal and oil that is to serve as a token, and also all the incense, as a food offering to the LORD.

3¹When any of you offer one of your cattle as a fellowship offering, it is to be a bull or a cow without any defects.

²You shall put your hand on the head of the animal and kill it at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence. The Aaronite priests shall throw the blood against all four sides of the altar

³and present the following parts of the animal as a food offering to the LORD: all the fat on the internal organs,

⁴the kidneys and the fat on them, and the best part of the liver.

⁵The priests shall burn all this on the altar along with the burnt offerings. The odor of this food offering is pleasing to the LORD.

⁶If a sheep or goat is used as a fellowship offering, it may be male or female, but it must be without any defects.

⁷If you offer a sheep,

⁸you shall put your hand on its head and kill it in front of the Tent. The priests shall throw its blood against all four sides of the altar

⁹and present the following parts of the animal as a food offering to the LORD: the fat, the entire fat tail cut off near the backbone, all the fat covering the internal organs,

¹⁰the kidneys and the fat on them, and the best part of the liver.

¹¹The officiating priest shall burn all this on the altar as a food offering to the LORD.

¹²If you offer a goat,

¹³you shall put your hand on its head and kill it in front of the Tent. The priests shall throw its blood against all four sides of the altar

¹⁴ and present the following parts as a food offering to the LORD: all the fat on the internal organs,

¹⁵ the kidneys and the fat on them, and the best part of the liver.

¹⁶ The priest shall burn all this on the altar as a food offering pleasing to the LORD. All the fat belongs to the LORD.

¹⁷ No Israelite may eat any fat or any blood; this is a rule to be kept forever by all Israelites wherever they live.

4¹ The LORD commanded Moses ² to tell the people of Israel that anyone who sinned and broke any of the LORD's commands without intending to, would have to observe the following rules.

³ If it is the High Priest who sins and so brings guilt on the people, he shall present a young bull without any defects and sacrifice it to the LORD for his sin.

⁴ He shall bring the bull to the entrance of the Tent, put his hand on its head, and kill it there in the LORD's presence.

⁵ Then the High Priest shall take some of the bull's blood and carry it into the Tent.

⁶ He shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it in front of the sacred curtain seven times.

⁷ Then he shall put some of the blood on the projections at the corners of the incense altar in the Tent. He shall pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar used for burning sacrifices, which is at the entrance of the Tent.

⁸ From this bull he shall take all the fat, the fat on the internal organs,

⁹ the kidneys and the fat on them, and the best part of the liver.

¹⁰ The priest shall take this fat and burn it on the altar used for the burnt offerings, just as he does with the fat from the animal killed for the fellowship offering.

¹¹ But he shall take its skin, all its flesh, its head, its legs, and its internal organs, including the intestines,

¹² carry it all outside the camp to the ritually clean place where the ashes are poured out, and there he shall burn it on a wood fire.

¹³ If it is the whole community of Israel that sins and becomes guilty of breaking

one of the LORD's commands without intending to,

¹⁴ then as soon as the sin becomes known, the community shall bring a young bull as a sin offering. They shall bring it to the Tent of the LORD's presence;

¹⁵ the leaders of the community shall put their hands on its head, and it shall be killed there.

¹⁶ The High Priest shall take some of the bull's blood into the Tent,

¹⁷ dip his finger in it, and sprinkle it in front of the curtain seven times.

¹⁸ He shall put some of the blood on the projections at the corners of the incense altar inside the Tent and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar used for burning sacrifices, which is at the entrance of the Tent.

¹⁹ Then he shall take all its fat and burn it on the altar.

²⁰ He shall do the same thing with this bull as he does with the bull for the sin offering, and in this way he shall make the sacrifice for the people's sin, and they will be forgiven.

²¹ Then he shall take the bull outside the camp and burn it, just as he burns the bull offered for his own sin. This is an offering to take away the sin of the community.

²² If it is a ruler who sins and becomes guilty of breaking one of the LORD's commands without intending to,

²³ then as soon as the sin is called to his attention, he shall bring as his offering a male goat without any defects.

²⁴ He shall put his hand on its head and kill it on the north side of the altar, where the animals for the burnt offerings are killed. This is an offering to take away sin.

²⁵ The priest shall dip his finger in the blood of the animal, put it on the projections at the corners of the altar, and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar.

²⁶ Then he shall burn all of its fat on the altar, just as he burns the fat of the animals killed for the fellowship offerings. In this way the priest shall offer the sacrifice for the sin of the ruler, and he will be forgiven.

²⁷ If any of you people sin and become guilty of breaking one of the LORD's commands without intending to,

²⁸ then as soon as the sin is called to your attention, you shall bring as your offering a female goat without any defects.

²⁹ You shall put your hand on its head and kill it on the north side of the altar, where the animals for the burnt offerings are killed.

³⁰ The priest shall dip his finger in the blood of the animal, put it on the projections at the corners of the altar, and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar.

³¹ Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat is removed from the animals killed for the fellowship offerings, and he shall burn it on the altar as an odor pleasing to the LORD. In this way the priest shall offer the sacrifice for the man's sin, and he will be forgiven.

³² If you bring a sheep as a sin offering, it must be a female without any defects.

³³ You shall put your hand on its head and kill it on the north side of the altar,

where the animals for the burnt offerings are killed.

³⁴The priest shall dip his finger in the blood of the animal, put it on the projections at the corners of the altar, and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar.

³⁵Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat is removed from the sheep killed for the fellowship offerings, and he shall burn it on the altar along with the food offerings given to the LORD. In this way the priest shall offer the sacrifice for your sin, and you will be forgiven.

5¹Sin offerings are required in the following cases. If you are officially summoned to give evidence in court and do not give information about something you have seen or heard, you must suffer the consequences.

²If you unintentionally touch anything ritually unclean, such as a dead animal, you are unclean and guilty as soon as you realize what you have done.

³If you unintentionally touch anything of human origin that is unclean, whatever it may be, you are guilty as soon as you realize what you have done.

⁴If you make a careless vow, no matter what it is about, you are guilty as soon as you realize what you have done.

⁵When you are guilty, you must confess the sin,

⁶and as the penalty for your sin you must bring to the LORD a female sheep or goat as an offering. The priest shall offer the sacrifice for your sin.

⁷If you cannot afford a sheep or a goat, you shall bring to the LORD as the payment for your sin two doves or two pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.

⁸You shall bring them to the priest, who will first offer the bird for the sin offering. He will break its neck without pulling off its head

⁹and sprinkle some of its blood against the side of the altar. The rest of the blood will be drained out at the base of the altar. This is an offering to take away sin.

¹⁰Then he shall offer the second bird as a burnt offering, according to the regulations. In this way the priest shall offer the sacrifice for your sin, and you will be forgiven.

¹¹ If you cannot afford two doves or two pigeons, you shall bring two pounds of flour as a sin offering. You shall not put any olive oil or any incense on it, because it is a sin offering, not a grain offering.

¹² You shall bring it to the priest, who will take a handful of it as a token that it has all been offered to the LORD, and he will burn it on the altar as a food offering. It is an offering to take away sin.

¹³ In this way the priest shall offer the sacrifice for your sin, and you will be forgiven. The rest of the flour belongs to the priest, just as in the case of a grain offering.

¹⁴ The LORD gave the following regulations to Moses.

¹⁵ If any of you sin unintentionally by failing to hand over the payments that are sacred to the LORD, you shall bring as your repayment offering to the LORD a male sheep or goat without any defects. Its value is to be determined according to the official standard.

¹⁶ You must make the payments you have failed to hand over and must pay

an additional 20 percent. You shall give it to the priest, and the priest shall offer the animal as a sacrifice for your sin, and you will be forgiven.

¹⁷If any of you sin unintentionally by breaking any of the LORD's commands, you are guilty and must pay the penalty.

¹⁸You must bring to the priest as a repayment offering a male sheep or goat without any defects. Its value is to be determined according to the official standard. The priest shall offer the sacrifice for the sin which you committed unintentionally, and you will be forgiven.

¹⁹It is a repayment offering for the sin you committed against the LORD.

6¹The LORD gave the following regulations to Moses.

²An offering is to be made if any of you sin against the LORD by refusing to return what another Israelite has left as a deposit or by stealing something from him or by cheating him

³or by lying about something that has been lost and swearing that you did not find it.

⁴When you sin in any of these ways, you must repay whatever you got by

dishonest means. On the day you are found guilty, you must repay the owner in full, plus an additional 20 percent.

⁵ (6: 4)

⁶You shall bring to the priest as your repayment offering to the LORD a male sheep or goat without any defects. Its value is to be determined according to the official standard.

⁷The priest shall offer the sacrifice for your sin, and you will be forgiven.

⁸The LORD commanded Moses

⁹to give Aaron and his sons the following regulations for burnt offerings. A burnt offering is to be left on the altar all night long, and the fire is to be kept burning.

¹⁰Then the priest, wearing his linen robe and linen shorts, shall remove the greasy ashes left on the altar and put them at the side of the altar.

¹¹Then he shall change his clothes and take the ashes outside the camp to a ritually clean place.

¹²The fire on the altar must be kept burning and never allowed to go out. Every morning the priest shall put firewood on it, arrange the burnt offering

on it, and burn the fat of the fellowship offering.

¹³The fire must always be kept burning on the altar and never allowed to go out.

¹⁴The following are the regulations for grain offerings. An Aaronite priest shall present the grain offering to the LORD in front of the altar.

¹⁵Then he shall take a handful of the flour and oil, and the incense on it, and burn it on the altar as a token that all of it has been offered to the LORD. The odor of this offering is pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁶The priests shall eat the rest of it. It shall be made into bread baked without yeast and eaten in a holy place, the courtyard of the Tent of the LORD's presence. The LORD has given it to the priests as their part of the food offerings. It is very holy, like the sin offerings and the repayment offerings.

¹⁷ (6:16)

¹⁸For all time to come any of the male descendants of Aaron may eat it as their continuing share of the food offered to the LORD. Anyone else who touches

a food offering will be harmed by the power of its holiness.

¹⁹The LORD gave Moses the following regulations

²⁰for the ordination of an Aaronite priest. On the day he is ordained, he shall present as an offering to the LORD two pounds of flour (the same amount as the daily grain offering), half in the morning and half in the evening.

²¹It is to be mixed with oil and cooked on a griddle and then crumbled and presented as a grain offering, an odor pleasing to the LORD.

²²For all time to come this offering is to be made by every descendant of Aaron who is serving as High Priest. It shall be completely burned as a sacrifice to the LORD.

²³No part of a grain offering that a priest makes may be eaten; all of it must be burned.

²⁴The LORD commanded Moses

²⁵to give Aaron and his sons the following regulations for sin offerings. The animal for a sin offering shall be killed on the north side of the altar,

where the animals for the burnt offerings are killed. This is a very holy offering.

²⁶The priest who sacrifices the animal shall eat it in a holy place, the courtyard of the Tent of the LORD's presence.

²⁷Anyone or anything that touches the flesh of the animal will be harmed by the power of its holiness. If any article of clothing is spattered with the animal's blood, it must be washed in a holy place.

²⁸Any clay pot in which the meat is boiled must be broken, and if a metal pot is used, it must be scrubbed and rinsed with water.

²⁹Any male of the priestly families may eat this offering; it is very holy.

³⁰But if any of the blood is brought into the Tent and used in the ritual to take away sin, the animal must not be eaten; it must be burned.

7¹The following are the regulations for repayment offerings, which are very holy.

²The animal for this offering is to be killed on the north side of the altar, where the animals for the burnt offerings are killed, and its blood is to be thrown against all four sides of the altar.

³All of its fat shall be removed and offered on the altar: the fat tail, the fat covering the internal organs,

⁴the kidneys and the fat on them, and the best part of the liver.

⁵The priest shall burn all the fat on the altar as a food offering to the LORD. It is a repayment offering.

⁶Any male of the priestly families may eat it, but it must be eaten in a holy place, because it is very holy.

⁷There is one regulation that applies to both the sin offering and the repayment offering: the meat belongs to the priest who offers the sacrifice.

⁸The skin of an animal offered as a burnt offering belongs to the priest who offers the sacrifice.

⁹Every grain offering that has been baked in an oven or prepared in a pan or on a griddle belongs to the priest who has offered it to God.

¹⁰But all uncooked grain offerings, whether mixed with oil or dry, belong to all the Aaronite priests and must be shared equally among them.

¹¹ The following are the regulations for the fellowship offerings presented to the LORD.

¹² If you make this offering as a thanksgiving offering to God, you shall present, together with the animal to be sacrificed, an offering of bread made without yeast: either thick loaves made of flour mixed with olive oil or thin cakes brushed with olive oil or cakes made of flour mixed with olive oil.

¹³ In addition, you shall offer loaves of bread baked with yeast.

¹⁴ You shall present one part of each kind of bread as a special contribution to the LORD; it belongs to the priest who takes the blood of the animal and throws it against the altar.

¹⁵ The flesh of the animal must be eaten on the day it is sacrificed; none of it may be left until the next morning.

¹⁶ If you bring a fellowship offering as fulfillment of a vow or as your own freewill offering, not all of it has to be eaten on the day it is offered, but any that is left over may be eaten on the following day.

¹⁷ Any meat that still remains on the third day must be burned.

¹⁸ If any of it is eaten on the third day, God will not accept your offering. The offering will not be counted to your credit but will be considered unclean, and whoever eats it will suffer the consequences.

¹⁹ If the meat comes into contact with anything ritually unclean, it must not be eaten, but must be burned. Any of you that are ritually clean may eat the meat,

²⁰ but if any of you who are not clean eat it, you shall no longer be considered one of God's people.

²¹ Also, if you eat the meat of this offering after you have touched anything ritually unclean, whether from a person or an animal, you shall no longer be considered one of God's people.

²² The LORD gave Moses the following regulations

²³ for the people of Israel. No fat of cattle, sheep, or goats shall be eaten.

²⁴ The fat of an animal that has died a natural death or has been killed by a wild animal must not be eaten, but it may be used for any other purpose.

²⁵ Anyone who eats the fat of an animal that may be offered as a food offering to the LORD will no longer be considered one of God's people.

²⁶ No matter where the Israelites live, they must never use the blood of birds or animals for food.

²⁷ Anyone who breaks this law will no longer be considered one of God's people.

²⁸ The LORD gave Moses the following regulations

²⁹ for the people of Israel. When any of you offer a fellowship offering you must bring part of it as a special gift to the LORD,

³⁰ bringing it with your own hands as a food offering. You shall bring the fat of the animal with its breast and present it as a special gift to the LORD.

³¹ The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall belong to the priests.

³² The right hind leg of the animal shall be given as a special contribution

³³ to the priest who offers the blood and the fat of the fellowship offering.

³⁴ The breast of the animal is a special gift, and the right hind leg is a special contribution that the LORD has taken from the people of Israel and given to the priests. This is what the people of Israel must give to the priests for all time to come.

³⁵ This is the part of the food offered to the LORD that was given to Aaron and his sons on the day they were ordained as priests.

³⁶ On that day the LORD commanded the people of Israel to give them this part of the offering. It is a regulation that the people of Israel must obey for all time to come.

³⁷ These, then, are the regulations for the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, the sin offerings, the repayment offerings, the ordination offerings, and the fellowship offerings.

³⁸ There on Mount Sinai in the desert, the LORD gave these commands to Moses on the day he told the people of Israel to make their offerings.

8¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² Take Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Tent of my presence

and bring the priestly garments, the anointing oil, the young bull for the sin offering, the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread.

³Then call the whole community together there.

⁴Moses did as the LORD had commanded, and when the community had assembled,

⁵he said to them, What I am now about to do is what the LORD has commanded.

⁶Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and had them take a ritual bath.

⁷He put the shirt and the robe on Aaron and the sash around his waist. He put the ephod on him and fastened it by putting its finely woven belt around his waist.

⁸He put the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in it.

⁹He placed the turban on his head, and on the front of it he put the gold ornament, the sacred sign of dedication, just as the LORD had commanded him.

¹⁰Then Moses took the anointing oil and put it on the Tent of the LORD's presence and everything that was in it, and in this way he dedicated it all to the LORD.

¹¹ He took some of the oil and sprinkled it seven times on the altar and its equipment and on the basin and its base, in order to dedicate them to the LORD.

¹² He ordained Aaron by pouring some of the anointing oil on his head.

¹³ Next, Moses brought the sons of Aaron forward and put shirts on them, put sashes around their waists, and tied caps on their heads, just as the LORD had commanded.

¹⁴ Then Moses brought the young bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons put their hands on its head.

¹⁵ Moses killed it and took some of the blood, and with his finger put it on the projections at the corners of the altar, in order to dedicate it. He then poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. In this way he dedicated it and purified it.

¹⁶ Moses took all the fat on the internal organs, the best part of the liver, and the kidneys with the fat on them, and burned it all on the altar.

¹⁷ He took the rest of the bull, including its skin, flesh, and intestines, and burned

it outside the camp, just as the LORD had commanded.

¹⁸Next, Moses brought the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons put their hands on its head.

¹⁹Moses killed it and threw the blood on all four sides of the altar.

²⁰He cut the ram in pieces, washed the internal organs and the hind legs with water, and burned the head, the fat, and all the rest of the ram on the altar, just as the LORD had commanded. This burnt offering was a food offering, and its odor was pleasing to the LORD.

²¹ (8: 20)

²²Then Moses brought the second ram, which was for the ordination of priests, and Aaron and his sons put their hands on its head.

²³Moses killed it and took some of the blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

²⁴Then he brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their

right feet. Moses then threw the rest of the blood on all four sides of the altar.

²⁵ He took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat covering the internal organs, the best part of the liver, the kidneys with the fat on them, and the right hind leg.

²⁶ Then he took one loaf of bread from the basket of unleavened bread dedicated to the LORD, one loaf made with oil, and one thin cake, and he put them on top of the fat and the right hind leg.

²⁷ He put all of this food in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and they presented it as a special gift to the LORD.

²⁸ Then Moses took the food from them and burned it on the altar, on top of the burnt offering, as an ordination offering. This was a food offering, and its odor was pleasing to the LORD.

²⁹ Then Moses took the breast and presented it as a special gift to the LORD. It was Moses' part of the ordination ram. Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded.

³⁰ Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and

his sons and on their clothes. In this way he consecrated them and their clothes to the LORD.

³¹ Moses said to Aaron and his sons, Take the meat to the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence, boil it, and eat it there with the bread that is in the basket of ordination offerings, just as the LORD commanded.

³² Burn up any meat or bread that is left over.

³³ You shall not leave the entrance of the Tent for seven days, until your ordination rites are completed.

³⁴ The LORD commanded us to do what we have done today, in order to take away your sin.

³⁵ You must stay at the entrance of the Tent day and night for seven days, doing what the LORD has commanded. If you don't, you will die. This is what the LORD has commanded me.

³⁶ So Aaron and his sons did everything that the LORD had commanded through Moses.

9¹ The day after the ordination rites were completed, Moses called Aaron and his sons and the leaders of Israel.

² He said to Aaron, Take a young bull and a ram without any defects and offer them to the LORD, the bull for a sin offering and the ram for a burnt offering.

³ Then tell the people of Israel to take a male goat for a sin offering, a one-year-old calf, and a one-year-old lamb without any defects for a burnt offering,

⁴ and a bull and a ram for a fellowship offering. They are to sacrifice them to the LORD with the grain offering mixed with oil. They must do this because the LORD will appear to them today.

⁵ They brought to the front of the Tent everything that Moses had commanded, and the whole community assembled there to worship the LORD.

⁶ Moses said, The LORD has commanded you to do all this, so that the dazzling light of his presence can appear to you.

⁷ Then he said to Aaron, Go to the altar and offer the sin offering and the burnt offering to take away your sins and the sins of the people. Present this offering to take away the sins of the people, just as the LORD commanded.

⁸ Aaron went to the altar and killed the young bull which was for his own sin offering.

⁹ His sons brought him the blood, and he dipped his finger in it, put some of it on the projections at the corners of the altar, and poured out the rest of it at the base of the altar.

¹⁰ Then he burned on the altar the fat, the kidneys, and the best part of the liver, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹¹ But he burned the meat and the skin outside the camp.

¹² He killed the animal which was for his own burnt offering. His sons brought him the blood, and he threw it on all four sides of the altar.

¹³ They handed him the head and the other pieces of the animal, and he burned them on the altar.

¹⁴ Then he washed the internal organs and the hind legs and burned them on the altar on top of the rest of the burnt offering.

¹⁵ After that, he presented the people's offerings. He took the goat that was to be offered for the people's sins, killed it,

and offered it, as he had done with his own sin offering.

¹⁶He also brought the animal for the burnt offering and offered it according to the regulations.

¹⁷He presented the grain offering and took a handful of flour and burned it on the altar. (This was in addition to the daily burnt offering.)

¹⁸He killed the bull and the ram as a fellowship offering for the people. His sons brought him the blood, and he threw it on all four sides of the altar.

¹⁹Aaron put the fat parts of the bull and the ram

²⁰on top of the breasts of the animals and carried it all to the altar. He burned the fat on the altar

²¹and presented the breasts and the right hind legs as the special gift to the LORD for the priests, as Moses had commanded.

²²When Aaron had finished all the sacrifices, he raised his hands over the people and blessed them, and then stepped down.

²³Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of the LORD's presence, and when they

came out, they blessed the people, and the dazzling light of the LORD's presence appeared to all the people.

²⁴Suddenly the LORD sent a fire, and it consumed the burnt offering and the fat parts on the altar. When the people saw it, they all shouted and bowed down with their faces to the ground.

10¹ Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his fire pan, put live coals in it, added incense, and presented it to the LORD. But this fire was not holy, because the LORD had not commanded them to present it.

²Suddenly the LORD sent fire, and it burned them to death there in the presence of the LORD.

³Then Moses said to Aaron, This is what the LORD was speaking about when he said, All who serve me must respect my holiness; I will reveal my glory to my people. But Aaron remained silent.

⁴Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, Aaron's uncle, and said to them, Come here and carry your cousins' bodies away from the sacred Tent and put them outside the camp.

⁵So they came and took hold of the clothing on the corpses and carried them outside the camp, just as Moses had commanded.

⁶Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, Do not leave your hair uncombed or tear your clothes to show that you are in mourning. If you do, you will die, and the LORD will be angry with the whole community. But all other Israelites are allowed to mourn this death caused by the fire which the LORD sent.

⁷Do not leave the entrance of the Tent or you will die, because you have been consecrated by the anointing oil of the LORD. So they did as Moses said.

⁸The LORD said to Aaron,

⁹You and your sons are not to enter the Tent of my presence after drinking wine or beer; if you do, you will die. This is a law to be kept by all your descendants.

¹⁰You must distinguish between what belongs to God and what is for general use, between what is ritually clean and what is unclean.

¹¹ You must teach the people of Israel all the laws which I have given to you through Moses.

¹² Moses said to Aaron and his two remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, Take the grain offering that is left over from the food offered to the LORD, make unleavened bread with it and eat it beside the altar, because this offering is very holy.

¹³ Eat it in a holy place; it is the part that belongs to you and your sons from the food offered to the LORD. That is what the LORD commanded me.

¹⁴ But you and your families may eat the breast and the hind leg that are presented as the special gift and the special contribution to the LORD for the priests. You may eat them in any ritually clean place. These offerings have been given to you and your children as the part that belongs to you from the fellowship offerings of the people of Israel.

¹⁵ They shall bring the hind leg and the breast at the time the fat is presented as a food offering to the LORD. These parts

belong to you and your children forever, just as the LORD commanded.

¹⁶Moses asked about the goat for the sin offering and learned that it had already been burned. This made him angry at Eleazar and Ithamar, and he demanded,

¹⁷Why didn't you eat the sin offering in a sacred place? It is very holy, and the LORD has given it to you in order to take away the sin of the community.

¹⁸Since its blood was not brought into the sacred Tent, you should have eaten the sacrifice there, as I commanded.

¹⁹Aaron answered, If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the LORD have approved? The people presented their sin offering to the LORD today, and they brought their burnt offering, but still these terrible things have happened to me.

²⁰When Moses heard this, he was satisfied.

11 ¹The LORD gave Moses and Aaron the following regulations

²for the people of Israel. You may eat any land animal

³ that has divided hoofs and that also chews the cud,

⁴ but you must not eat camels, rock badgers, or rabbits. These must be considered unclean; they chew the cud, but do not have divided hoofs.

⁵ (11: 4)

⁶ (11: 4)

⁷ Do not eat pigs. They must be considered unclean; they have divided hoofs, but do not chew the cud.

⁸ Do not eat these animals or even touch their dead bodies; they are unclean.

⁹ You may eat any kind of fish that has fins and scales,

¹⁰ but anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales must not be eaten.

¹¹ Such creatures must be considered unclean. You must not eat them or even touch their dead bodies.

¹² You must not eat anything that lives in the water and does not have fins and scales.

¹³ You must not eat any of the following birds: eagles, owls, hawks, falcons; buzzards, vultures, crows; ostriches;

seagulls, storks, herons, pelicans, cormorants; hoopoes; or bats.

¹⁴ (11:13)

¹⁵ (11:13)

¹⁶ (11:13)

¹⁷ (11:13)

¹⁸ (11:13)

¹⁹ (11:13)

²⁰ All winged insects are unclean,

²¹ except those that hop.

²² You may eat locusts, crickets, or grasshoppers.

²³ But all other small things that have wings and also crawl must be considered unclean.

²⁴ If you touch the dead bodies of the following animals, you will be unclean until evening: all animals with hoofs, unless their hoofs are divided and they chew the cud, and all four-footed animals with paws. If you carry their dead bodies, you must wash your clothes, but you will still be unclean until evening.

²⁵ (11:24)

²⁶ (11:24)

²⁷ (11:24)

²⁸ (11:24)

²⁹ Moles, rats, mice, and lizards must be considered unclean.

³⁰ (11: 29)

³¹ Whoever touches them or their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

³² And if their dead bodies fall on anything, it will be unclean. This applies to any article of wood, cloth, leather, or sacking, no matter what it is used for. It shall be dipped in water, but it will remain unclean until evening.

³³ And if their bodies fall into a clay pot, everything that is in it shall be unclean, and you must break the pot.

³⁴ Any food which could normally be eaten, but on which water from such a pot has been poured, will be unclean, and anything drinkable in such a pot is unclean.

³⁵ Anything on which the dead bodies fall is unclean; a clay stove or oven shall be broken,

³⁶ but a spring or a cistern remains clean, although anything else that touches their dead bodies is unclean.

³⁷ If one of them falls on seed that is going to be planted, the seed remains clean.

³⁸ But if the seed is soaking in water and one of them falls on it, the seed is unclean.

³⁹ If any animal that may be eaten dies, anyone who touches it will be unclean until evening.

⁴⁰ And if any of you eat any part of the animal, you must wash your clothes, but you will still be unclean until evening; any of you who carry the dead body must wash your clothes, but you will still be unclean until evening.

⁴¹ You must not eat any of the small animals that move on the ground,

⁴² whether they crawl, or walk on four legs, or have many legs.

⁴³ Do not make yourselves unclean by eating any of these.

⁴⁴ I am the LORD your God, and you must keep yourselves holy, because I am holy.

⁴⁵ I am the LORD who brought you out of Egypt so that I could be your God. You must be holy, because I am holy.

⁴⁶ This, then, is the law about animals and birds, about everything that lives in the water, and everything that moves on the ground.

⁴⁷ You must be careful to distinguish between what is ritually clean and unclean, between animals that may be eaten and those that may not.

12¹ The LORD gave Moses the following regulations

² for the people of Israel. For seven days after a woman gives birth to a son, she is ritually unclean, as she is during her monthly period.

³ On the eighth day, the child shall be circumcised.

⁴ Then it will be thirty-three more days until she is ritually clean from her loss of blood; she must not touch anything that is holy or enter the sacred Tent until the time of her purification is completed.

⁵ For fourteen days after a woman gives birth to a daughter, she is ritually unclean, as she is during her monthly period. Then it will be sixty-six more days until she is ritually clean from her loss of blood.

⁶ When the time of her purification is completed, whether for a son or daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence a one-year-old lamb for a burnt

offering and a pigeon or a dove for a sin offering.

⁷The priest shall present her offering to the LORD and perform the ritual to take away her impurity, and she will be ritually clean. This, then, is what a woman must do after giving birth.

⁸If the woman cannot afford a lamb, she shall bring two doves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering, and the priest shall perform the ritual to take away her impurity, and she will be ritually clean.

13¹The LORD gave Moses and Aaron these regulations.

²If any of you have a sore on your skin or a boil or an inflammation which could develop into a dreaded skin disease, you shall be brought to the Aaronite priest.

³The priest shall examine the sore, and if the hairs in it have turned white and the sore appears to be deeper than the surrounding skin, it is a dreaded skin disease, and the priest shall pronounce you unclean.

⁴But if the sore is white and does not appear to be deeper than the skin around it and the hairs have not turned

white, the priest shall isolate you for seven days.

⁵The priest shall examine you again on the seventh day, and if in his opinion the sore looks the same and has not spread, he shall isolate you for another seven days.

⁶The priest shall examine you again on the seventh day, and if the sore has faded and has not spread, he shall pronounce you ritually clean; it is only a sore. You shall wash your clothes and be ritually clean.

⁷But if the sore spreads after the priest has examined you and pronounced you clean, you must appear before the priest again.

⁸The priest will examine you again, and if it has spread, he shall pronounce you unclean; it is a dreaded skin disease.

⁹If any of you have a dreaded skin disease, you shall be brought to the priest,

¹⁰who will examine you. If there is a white sore on your skin which turns the hairs white and is full of pus,

¹¹it is a chronic skin disease. The priest shall pronounce you unclean; there is

no need to isolate you, because you are obviously unclean.

¹²If the skin disease spreads and covers you from head to foot,

¹³the priest shall examine you again. If he finds that it actually has covered the whole body, he shall pronounce you ritually clean. If your whole skin has turned white, you are ritually clean.

¹⁴But from the moment an open sore appears, you are unclean.

¹⁵The priest shall examine you again, and if he sees an open sore, he shall pronounce you unclean. An open sore means a dreaded skin disease, and you are unclean.

¹⁶But when the sore heals and becomes white again, you shall go to the priest,

¹⁷who will examine you again. If the sore has turned white, you are ritually clean, and the priest shall pronounce you clean.

¹⁸If any of you have a boil that has healed

¹⁹and if afterward a white swelling or a reddish-white spot appears where the boil was, you shall go to the priest.

²⁰The priest shall examine you, and if the spot seems to be deeper than the surrounding skin and the hairs in it have turned white, he shall pronounce you unclean. It is a dreaded skin disease that has started in the boil.

²¹But if the priest examines it and finds that the hairs in it have not turned white and that it is not deeper than the surrounding skin, but is light in color, the priest shall isolate you for seven days.

²²If the spot spreads, the priest shall pronounce you unclean; you are diseased.

²³But if it remains unchanged and does not spread, it is only the scar left from the boil, and the priest shall pronounce you ritually clean.

²⁴In case any of you have been burned, if the raw flesh becomes white or reddish-white,

²⁵the priest shall examine you. If the hairs in the spot have turned white and it appears deeper than the surrounding skin, it is a dreaded skin disease that has started in the burn, and the priest shall pronounce you unclean.

²⁶ But if the hairs in it have not turned white and it is not deeper than the surrounding skin, but is light in color, the priest shall isolate you for seven days.

²⁷ The priest shall examine you again on the seventh day, and if it is spreading, it is a dreaded skin disease, and the priest shall pronounce you unclean.

²⁸ But if the spot remains unchanged and does not spread and is light in color, it is not a dreaded skin disease. The priest shall pronounce you ritually clean, because it is only a scar from the burn.

²⁹ When any of you, male or female, have a sore on your head or chin,

³⁰ the priest shall examine it. If it seems to be deeper than the surrounding skin and the hairs in it are yellowish and thin, it is a dreaded skin disease, and he shall pronounce you unclean.

³¹ If, when the priest examines you, the sore does not appear to be deeper than the surrounding skin, but there are still no healthy hairs in it, he shall isolate you for seven days.

³² The priest shall examine the sore again on the seventh day, and if it has not spread and there are no yellowish

hairs in it and it does not seem to be deeper than the surrounding skin,

³³ you shall shave the head except the area around the sore. The priest shall then isolate you for another seven days.

³⁴ On the seventh day the priest shall again examine the sore, and if it has not spread and does not seem to be deeper than the surrounding skin, he shall pronounce you ritually clean. You shall wash your clothes, and you will be clean.

³⁵ But if the sore spreads after you have been pronounced clean,

³⁶ the priest shall examine you again. If the sore has spread, he need not look for yellowish hairs; you are obviously unclean.

³⁷ But if in the priest's opinion the sore has not spread and healthy hairs are growing in it, the sore has healed, and the priest shall pronounce you ritually clean.

³⁸ When any of you, male or female, have white spots on the skin,

³⁹ the priest shall examine you. If the spots are dull white, it is only a blemish

that has broken out on the skin; you are ritually clean.

⁴⁰If you lose your hair at the back or the front of your head, this does not make you unclean.

⁴¹ (13: 40)

⁴²But if a reddish-white sore appears on the bald spot, it is a dreaded skin disease.

⁴³The priest shall examine you, and if there is a reddish-white sore,

⁴⁴the priest shall pronounce you unclean, because of the dreaded skin disease on your head.

⁴⁵If you have a dreaded skin disease, you must wear torn clothes, leave your hair uncombed, cover the lower part of your face, and call out, Unclean, unclean!

⁴⁶You remain unclean as long as you have the disease, and you must live outside the camp, away from others.

⁴⁷When there is mildew on clothing, whether wool or linen,

⁴⁸or on any piece of linen or wool cloth or on leather or anything made of leather,

⁴⁹if it is greenish or reddish, it is a spreading mildew and must be shown to the priest.

⁵⁰The priest shall examine it and put the object away for seven days.

⁵¹He shall examine it again on the seventh day, and if the mildew has spread, the object is unclean.

⁵²The priest shall burn it, because it is a spreading mildew which must be destroyed by fire.

⁵³But if, when he examines it, the priest finds that the mildew has not spread on the object,

⁵⁴he shall order that it be washed and put away for another seven days.

⁵⁵Then he shall examine it, and if the mildew has not changed color, even though it has not spread, it is still unclean; you must burn the object, whether the rot is on the front or the back.

⁵⁶But if, when the priest examines it again, the mildew has faded, he shall tear it out of the clothing or leather.

⁵⁷Then, if the mildew reappears, it is spreading again, and the owner shall burn the object.

⁵⁸If he washes the object and the spot disappears, he shall wash it again, and it will be ritually clean.

⁵⁹This, then, is the law about mildew on clothing, whether it is wool or linen, or on linen or wool cloth or on anything made of leather; this is how the decision is made as to whether it is ritually clean or unclean.

14 ¹The LORD gave Moses ²the following regulations about the ritual purification of those of you cured of a dreaded skin disease. On the day you are to be pronounced clean, you shall be brought to the priest,

³and the priest shall take you outside the camp and examine you. If the disease is healed,

⁴the priest shall order that two ritually clean birds be brought, along with a piece of cedar wood, a red cord, and a sprig of hyssop.

⁵Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over a clay bowl containing fresh spring water.

⁶He shall take the other bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the red

cord, and the hyssop, in the blood of the bird that was killed.

⁷ He shall sprinkle the blood seven times on the one of you who is to be purified from your skin disease, and then he shall pronounce you clean. He shall let the live bird fly away over the open fields.

⁸ You shall wash your clothes, shave off all your hair, and take a bath; you will then be ritually clean. You may enter the camp, but you must live outside your tent for seven days.

⁹ On the seventh day you shall again shave your head, your beard, your eyebrows, and all the rest of the hair on your body; you shall wash your clothes and take a bath, and then you will be ritually clean.

¹⁰ On the eighth day you shall bring two male lambs and one female lamb a year old that are without any defects, five pounds of flour mixed with olive oil, and half a pint of olive oil.

¹¹ The priest shall take you and these offerings to the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence.

¹²Then the priest shall take one of the male lambs and together with the half pint of oil he shall offer it as a repayment offering. He shall present them as a special gift to the LORD for the priest.

¹³He shall kill the lamb in the holy place where the animals for the sin offerings and the burnt offerings are killed. He must do this because the repayment offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest and is very holy.

¹⁴The priest shall take some of the blood of the lamb and put it on the lobe of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the right foot of the one of you to be declared ritually clean.

¹⁵The priest shall take some of the olive oil and pour it in the palm of his own left hand,

¹⁶dip a finger of his right hand in it, and sprinkle some of it seven times there in the LORD's presence.

¹⁷He shall take some of the oil that is in the palm of his hand and some of the blood of the lamb and put them on the lobe of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of

the right foot of the one of you to be declared ritually clean.

¹⁸He shall put the rest of the oil that is in the palm of his hand on your head. In this way he shall perform the ritual of purification.

¹⁹Then the priest shall offer the sin offering and perform the ritual of purification. After that, he shall kill the animal for the burnt offering

²⁰and offer it with the grain offering on the altar. In this way the priest shall perform the ritual of purification, and you will be ritually clean.

²¹If you are poor and cannot afford any more, you shall bring for your purification only one male lamb as your repayment offering, a special gift to the LORD for the priest. You shall bring only two pounds of flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering and half a pint of olive oil.

²²You shall also bring two doves or two pigeons, one for the sin offering and one for the burnt offering.

²³On the eighth day of your purification you shall bring them to the priest at the entrance of the Tent.

²⁴ The priest shall take the lamb and the olive oil and present them as a special gift to the LORD for the priest.

²⁵ He shall kill the lamb and take some of the blood and put it on the lobe of your right ear, on the thumb of your right hand, and on the big toe of your right foot.

²⁶ The priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand

²⁷ and with a finger of his right hand sprinkle some of it seven times there in the LORD's presence.

²⁸ He shall put some of the oil on the same places he put the blood: on the lobe of your right ear, on the thumb of your right hand, and on the big toe of your right foot.

²⁹ The rest of the oil that is in his palm he shall put on your head and in this way perform the ritual of purification.

³⁰ Then he shall offer one of the doves or pigeons

³¹ as the sin offering and the other as the burnt offering with the grain offering. In this way the priest shall perform the ritual of purification.

³²This is the law for those who have a dreaded skin disease but who cannot afford the normal offerings required for his purification.

³³The LORD gave Moses and Aaron

³⁴the following regulations about houses affected by spreading mildew. (These were to apply after the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan, which the LORD was going to give them as their possession.) If any of you find that the LORD has sent mildew on your house, then you must go and tell the priest about it.

³⁵(14: 34)

³⁶The priest shall order everything to be moved out of the house before he goes to examine the mildew; otherwise everything in the house will be declared unclean. Then he shall go to the house

³⁷and examine the mildew. If there are greenish or reddish spots that appear to be eating into the wall,

³⁸he shall leave the house and lock it up for seven days.

³⁹On the seventh day he shall return and examine it again. If the mildew has spread,

⁴⁰ he shall order that the stones on which the mildew is found be removed and thrown into some unclean place outside the city.

⁴¹ After that he must have all the interior walls scraped and the plaster dumped in an unclean place outside the city.

⁴² Then other stones are to be used to replace the stones that were removed, and new plaster will be used to cover the walls.

⁴³ If the mildew breaks out again in the house after the stones have been removed and the house has been scraped and plastered,

⁴⁴ the priest shall go and look. If it has spread, the house is unclean.

⁴⁵ It must be torn down, and its stones, its wood, and all its plaster must be carried out of the city to an unclean place.

⁴⁶ Any who enter the house while it is locked up will be unclean until evening.

⁴⁷ Any who lie down or eat in the house must wash their clothes.

⁴⁸ If, when the priest comes to look, the mildew has not reappeared after

the house has been replastered, he shall pronounce the house ritually clean, because the mildew has been completely removed.

⁴⁹To purify the house, he shall take two birds, some cedar wood, a red cord, and a sprig of hyssop.

⁵⁰He shall kill one of the birds over a clay bowl containing fresh spring water.

⁵¹Then he shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the red cord, and the live bird and shall dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed and in the fresh water. And he shall sprinkle the house seven times.

⁵²In this way he shall purify the house with the bird's blood, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the red cord.

⁵³Then he shall let the live bird fly away outside the city over the open fields. In this way he shall perform the ritual of purification for the house, and it will be ritually clean.

⁵⁴These are the laws about dreaded skin diseases;

⁵⁵sores, boils, or inflammations; and about mildew in clothes or houses.

⁵⁶ (14: 55)

⁵⁷ These laws determine when something is unclean and when it is clean.

15 ¹ The LORD gave Moses and Aaron the following regulations

² for the people of Israel. When any man has a discharge from his penis, the discharge is unclean,

³ whether the penis runs with it or is stopped up by it.

⁴ Any bed on which he sits or lies is unclean.

⁵ Anyone who touches his bed

⁶ or sits on anything the man has sat on must wash his clothes and take a bath, and he remains unclean until evening.

⁷ Anyone who touches the man with the discharge must wash his clothes and take a bath, and he remains unclean until evening.

⁸ If the man with the discharge spits on anyone who is ritually clean, that person must wash his clothes and take a bath, and he remains unclean until evening.

⁹ Any saddle or seat on which the man with the discharge sits is unclean.

¹⁰ Anyone who touches anything on which the man sat is unclean until evening. Anyone who carries anything on which the man sat must wash his clothes and take a bath, and he remains unclean until evening.

¹¹ If a man who has a discharge touches one of you without first having washed his hands, you must wash your clothes and take a bath, and you remain unclean until evening.

¹² Any clay pot that the man touches must be broken, and any wooden bowl that he touches must be washed.

¹³ After the man is cured of his discharge, he must wait seven days and then wash his clothes and take a bath in fresh spring water, and he will be ritually clean.

¹⁴ On the eighth day he shall take two doves or two pigeons to the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence and give them to the priest.

¹⁵ The priest shall offer one of them as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. In this way he will perform the ritual of purification for the man.

¹⁶When a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body, and he remains unclean until evening.

¹⁷Anything made of cloth or leather on which the semen falls must be washed, and it remains unclean until evening.

¹⁸After sexual intercourse both the man and the woman must take a bath, and they remain unclean until evening.

¹⁹When a woman has her monthly period, she remains unclean for seven days. Anyone who touches her is unclean until evening.

²⁰Anything on which she sits or lies during her monthly period is unclean.

²¹Any who touch her bed or anything on which she has sat must wash their clothes and take a bath, and they remain unclean until evening.

²²(15: 21)

²³(15: 21)

²⁴If a man has sexual intercourse with her during her period, he is contaminated by her impurity and remains unclean for seven days, and any bed on which he lies is unclean.

²⁵If a woman has a flow of blood for several days outside her monthly period

or if her flow continues beyond her regular period, she remains unclean as long as the flow continues, just as she is during her monthly period.

²⁶ Any bed on which she lies and anything on which she sits during this time is unclean.

²⁷ Any who touch them are unclean and must wash their clothes and take a bath; they remain unclean until evening.

²⁸ After her flow stops, she must wait seven days, and then she will be ritually clean.

²⁹ On the eighth day she shall take two doves or two pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence.

³⁰ The priest shall offer one of them as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and in this way he will perform the ritual of purification for her.

³¹ The LORD told Moses to warn the people of Israel about their uncleanness, so that they would not defile the Tent of his presence, which was in the middle of the camp. If they did, they would be killed.

³²These are the regulations about a man who has a discharge or an emission of semen,

³³a woman during her monthly period, or a man who has sexual intercourse with a woman who is ritually unclean.

16¹The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who were killed when they offered unholy fire to the LORD.

²He said, Tell your brother Aaron that only at the proper time is he to go behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place, because that is where I appear in a cloud above the lid on the Covenant Box. If he disobeys, he will be killed.

³He may enter the Most Holy Place only after he has brought a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

⁴Then the LORD gave the following instructions. Before Aaron goes into the Most Holy Place, he must take a bath and put on the priestly garments: the linen robe and shorts, the belt, and the turban.

⁵The community of Israel shall give Aaron two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

⁶He shall offer a bull as a sacrifice to take away his own sins and those of his family.

⁷Then he shall take the two goats to the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence.

⁸There he shall draw lots, using two stones, one marked for the LORD and the other for Azazel.

⁹Aaron shall sacrifice the goat chosen by lot for the LORD and offer it as a sin offering.

¹⁰The goat chosen for Azazel shall be presented alive to the LORD and sent off into the desert to Azazel, in order to take away the sins of the people.

¹¹When Aaron sacrifices the bull as the sin offering for himself and his family,

¹²he shall take a fire pan full of burning coals from the altar and two handfuls of fine incense and bring them into the Most Holy Place.

¹³There in the LORD's presence he shall put the incense on the fire, and the smoke of the incense will hide the lid of

the Covenant Box so that he will not see it and die.

¹⁴He shall take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the lid and then sprinkle some of it seven times in front of the Covenant Box.

¹⁵After that, he shall kill the goat for the sin offering for the people, bring its blood into the Most Holy Place, and sprinkle it on the lid and then in front of the Covenant Box, as he did with the bull's blood.

¹⁶In this way he will perform the ritual to purify the Most Holy Place from the uncleanness of the people of Israel and from all their sins. He must do this to the Tent, because it stands in the middle of the camp, which is ritually unclean.

¹⁷From the time Aaron enters the Most Holy Place to perform the ritual of purification until he comes out, there must be no one in the Tent. When he has performed the ritual for himself, his family, and the whole community,

¹⁸he must then go out to the altar for burnt offerings and purify it. He must take some of the bull's blood and some

of the goat's blood and put it all over the projections at the corners of the altar.

¹⁹With his finger he must sprinkle some of the blood on the altar seven times. In this way he is to purify it from the sins of the people of Israel and make it holy.

²⁰When Aaron has finished performing the ritual to purify the Most Holy Place, the rest of the Tent of the LORD's presence, and the altar, he shall present to the LORD the live goat chosen for Azazel.

²¹He shall put both of his hands on the goat's head and confess over it all the evils, sins, and rebellions of the people of Israel, and so transfer them to the goat's head. Then the goat is to be driven off into the desert by someone appointed to do it.

²²The goat will carry all their sins away with him into some uninhabited land.

²³Then Aaron shall go into the Tent, take off the priestly garments that he had put on before entering the Most Holy Place, and leave them there.

²⁴He must take a bath in a holy place and put on his own clothes. After that, he shall go out and offer the burnt offering

to remove his own sins and those of the people.

²⁵ He shall burn on the altar the fat of the animal for the sin offering.

²⁶ The man who drove the goat into the desert to Azazel must wash his clothes and take a bath before he comes back into camp.

²⁷ The bull and the goat used for the sin offering, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to take away sin, shall be carried outside the camp and burned. Skin, meat, and intestines shall all be burned.

²⁸ The one who burns them must wash his clothes and take a bath before he returns to camp.

²⁹ The following regulations are to be observed for all time to come. On the tenth day of the seventh month the Israelites and the foreigners living among them must fast and must not do any work.

³⁰ On that day the ritual is to be performed to purify them from all their sins, so that they will be ritually clean.

³¹ That day is to be a very holy day, one on which they fast and do no work at all.

These regulations are to be observed for all time to come.

³²The High Priest, properly ordained and consecrated to succeed his father, is to perform the ritual of purification. He shall put on the priestly garments

³³and perform the ritual to purify the Most Holy Place, the rest of the Tent of the LORD's presence, the altar, the priests, and all the people of the community.

³⁴These regulations are to be observed for all time to come. This ritual must be performed once a year to purify the people of Israel from all their sins. So Moses did as the LORD had commanded.

17 ¹The LORD commanded Moses ²to give Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel the following regulations.

³Any Israelites who kill a cow or a sheep or a goat as an offering to the LORD anywhere except at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence have broken the Law. They have shed blood and shall no longer be considered God's people.

⁴(17: 3)

⁵The meaning of this command is that the people of Israel shall now bring to the LORD the animals which they used to kill in the open country. They shall now bring them to the priest at the entrance of the Tent and kill them as fellowship offerings.

⁶The priest shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar at the entrance of the Tent and burn the fat to produce an odor that is pleasing to the LORD.

⁷The people of Israel must no longer be unfaithful to the LORD by killing their animals in the fields as sacrifices to the goat demons. The people of Israel must keep this regulation for all time to come.

⁸Any Israelites or any foreigners living in the community who offer a burnt offering or any other sacrifice

⁹as an offering to the LORD anywhere except at the entrance of the Tent shall no longer be considered God's people.

¹⁰If any Israelites or any foreigners living in the community eat meat with blood still in it, the LORD will turn against them and no longer consider them his people.

¹¹ The life of every living thing is in the blood, and that is why the LORD has commanded that all blood be poured out on the altar to take away the people's sins. Blood, which is life, takes away sins.

¹² That is why the LORD has told the people of Israel that neither they nor any foreigner living among them shall eat any meat with blood still in it.

¹³ If any Israelites or any foreigners living in the community catch an animal or a bird which is ritually clean, they must pour its blood out on the ground and cover it with dirt.

¹⁴ The life of every living thing is in the blood, and that is why the LORD has told the people of Israel that they shall not eat any meat with blood still in it and that anyone who does so will no longer be considered one of his people.

¹⁵ Any people, Israelites or foreigners, who eat meat from an animal that has died a natural death or has been killed by wild animals must wash their clothes, take a bath, and wait until evening before they are ritually clean.

¹⁶If they do not, they must suffer the consequences.

18¹The LORD told Moses
²to say to the people of Israel, I
am the LORD your God.

³Do not follow the practices of the
people of Egypt, where you once lived,
or of the people in the land of Canaan,
where I am now taking you.

⁴Obey my laws and do what I
command. I am the LORD your God.

⁵Follow the practices and the laws that
I give you; you will save your life by
doing so. I am the LORD.

⁶The LORD gave the following
regulations. Do not have sexual
intercourse with any of your relatives.

⁷Do not disgrace your father by having
intercourse with your mother. You must
not disgrace your own mother.

⁸Do not disgrace your father by having
intercourse with any of his other wives.

⁹Do not have intercourse with your
sister or your stepsister, whether or not
she was brought up in the same house
with you.

¹⁰Do not have intercourse with your granddaughter; that would be a disgrace to you.

¹¹Do not have intercourse with a half sister; she, too, is your sister.

¹²Do not have intercourse with an aunt, whether she is your father's sister or your mother's sister.

¹³(18: 12)

¹⁴Do not have intercourse with your uncle's wife; she, too, is your aunt.

¹⁵Do not have intercourse with your daughter-in-law

¹⁶or with your brother's wife.

¹⁷Do not have intercourse with the daughter or granddaughter of a woman with whom you have had intercourse; they may be related to you, and that would be incest.

¹⁸Do not take your wife's sister as one of your wives, as long as your wife is living.

¹⁹Do not have intercourse with a woman during her monthly period, because she is ritually unclean.

²⁰Do not have intercourse with another man's wife; that would make you ritually unclean.

²¹ Do not hand over any of your children to be used in the worship of the god Molech, because that would bring disgrace on the name of God, the LORD.

²² No man is to have sexual relations with another man; God hates that.

²³ No man or woman is to have sexual relations with an animal; that perversion makes you ritually unclean.

²⁴ Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these acts, for that is how the pagans made themselves unclean, those pagans who lived in the land before you and whom the LORD is driving out so that you can go in.

²⁵ Their actions made the land unclean, and so the LORD is punishing the land and making it reject the people who lived there.

²⁶ They did all these disgusting things and made the land unclean, but you must not do them. All of you, whether Israelites or foreigners living with you, must keep the LORD's laws and commands,

²⁷ (18: 26)

²⁸and then the land will not reject you, as it rejected the pagans who lived there before you.

²⁹You know that whoever does any of these disgusting things will no longer be considered one of God's people.

³⁰And the LORD said, Obey the commands I give and do not follow the practices of the people who lived in the land before you, and do not make yourselves unclean by doing any of these things. I am the LORD your God.

19¹The LORD told Moses² to say to the community of Israel, Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

³Each of you must respect your mother and your father, and must keep the Sabbath, as I have commanded. I am the LORD your God.

⁴Do not abandon me and worship idols; do not make gods of metal and worship them. I am the LORD your God.

⁵When you kill an animal for a fellowship offering, keep the regulations that I have given you, and I will accept the offering.

⁶The meat must be eaten on the day the animal is killed or on the next day. Any meat left on the third day must be burned,

⁷because it is ritually unclean, and if anyone eats it, I will not accept the offering.

⁸Any who eat it will be guilty of treating as ordinary what is dedicated to me, and they will no longer be considered my people.

⁹When you harvest your fields, do not cut the grain at the edges of the fields, and do not go back to cut the heads of grain that were left.

¹⁰Do not go back through your vineyard to gather the grapes that were missed or to pick up the grapes that have fallen; leave them for poor people and foreigners. I am the LORD your God.

¹¹Do not steal or cheat or lie.

¹²Do not make a promise in my name if you do not intend to keep it; that brings disgrace on my name. I am the LORD your God.

¹³Do not rob or take advantage of anyone. Do not hold back the wages of

someone you have hired, not even for one night.

¹⁴Do not curse the deaf or put something in front of the blind so as to make them stumble over it. Obey me; I am the LORD your God.

¹⁵Be honest and just when you make decisions in legal cases; do not show favoritism to the poor or fear the rich.

¹⁶Do not spread lies about anyone, and when someone is on trial for his life, speak out if your testimony can help him. I am the LORD.

¹⁷Do not bear a grudge against others, but settle your differences with them, so that you will not commit a sin because of them.

¹⁸Do not take revenge on others or continue to hate them, but love your neighbors as you love yourself. I am the LORD.

¹⁹Obey my commands. Do not crossbreed domestic animals. Do not plant two kinds of seed in the same field. Do not wear clothes made of two kinds of material.

²⁰If a slave woman is the recognized concubine of a man and she has not

been paid for and freed, then if another man has sexual relations with her, they will be punished, but not put to death, since she is a slave.

²¹ The man shall bring a ram to the entrance of the Tent of my presence as his repayment offering,

²² and with it the priest shall perform the ritual of purification to remove the man's sin, and God will forgive him.

²³ When you come into the land of Canaan and plant any kind of fruit tree, consider the fruit ritually unclean for the first three years. During that time you must not eat it.

²⁴ In the fourth year all the fruit shall be dedicated as an offering to show your gratitude to me, the LORD.

²⁵ But in the fifth year you may eat the fruit. If you do all this, your trees will bear more fruit. I am the LORD your God.

²⁶ Do not eat any meat with blood still in it. Do not practice any kind of magic.

²⁷ Do not cut the hair on the sides of your head or trim your beard

²⁸ or tattoo yourselves or cut gashes in your body to mourn for the dead. I am the LORD.

²⁹ Do not disgrace your daughters by making them temple prostitutes; if you do, you will turn to other gods and the land will be full of immorality.

³⁰ Keep the Sabbath, and honor the place where I am worshiped. I am the LORD.

³¹ Do not go for advice to people who consult the spirits of the dead. If you do, you will be ritually unclean. I am the LORD your God.

³² Show respect for old people and honor them. Reverently obey me; I am the LORD.

³³ Do not mistreat foreigners who are living in your land.

³⁴ Treat them as you would an Israelite, and love them as you love yourselves. Remember that you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

³⁵ Do not cheat anyone by using false measures of length, weight, or quantity.

³⁶ Use honest scales, honest weights, and honest measures. I am the LORD

your God, and I brought you out of Egypt.

³⁷ Obey all my laws and commands. I am the LORD.

20¹ The LORD told Moses² to say to the people of Israel, Any of you or any foreigner living among you who gives any children to be used in the worship of the god Molech shall be stoned to death by the whole community.

³ If any of you give one of your children to Molech and make my sacred Tent unclean and disgrace my holy name, I will turn against you and will no longer consider you my people.

⁴ But if the community ignores what you have done and does not put you to death,

⁵ I myself will turn against you and your whole family and against all who join you in being unfaithful to me and worshiping Molech. I will no longer consider any of you my people.

⁶ If any of you go for advice to people who consult the spirits of the dead, I will turn against you and will no longer consider you one of my people.

⁷ Keep yourselves holy, because I am the LORD your God.

⁸ Obey my laws, because I am the LORD and I make you holy.

⁹ The LORD gave the following regulations. Any of you that curse your father or mother shall be put to death; you are responsible for your own death.

¹⁰ If a man commits adultery with the wife of an Israelite, both he and the woman shall be put to death.

¹¹ A man who has intercourse with one of his father's wives disgraces his father, and both he and the woman shall be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.

¹² If a man has intercourse with his daughter-in-law, they shall both be put to death. They have committed incest and are responsible for their own death.

¹³ If a man has sexual relations with another man, they have done a disgusting thing, and both shall be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.

¹⁴ If a man marries a woman and her mother, all three shall be burned to death because of the disgraceful thing

they have done; such a thing must not be permitted among you.

¹⁵If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he and the animal shall be put to death.

¹⁶If a woman tries to have sexual relations with an animal, she and the animal shall be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.

¹⁷If a man marries his sister or half sister, they shall be publicly disgraced and driven out of the community. He has had intercourse with his sister and must suffer the consequences.

¹⁸If a man has intercourse with a woman during her monthly period, both of them are to be driven out of the community, because they have broken the regulations about ritual uncleanness.

¹⁹If a man has intercourse with his aunt, both of them must suffer the consequences for incest.

²⁰If a man has intercourse with his uncle's wife, he disgraces his uncle, and he and the woman will pay the penalty; neither one will have children.

²¹If a man takes his brother's wife, they will die childless. He has done a

ritually unclean thing and has disgraced his brother.

²²The LORD said, Keep all my laws and commands, so that you will not be rejected by the land of Canaan, into which I am bringing you.

²³Do not adopt the customs of the people who live there; I am driving out those pagans so that you can enter the land. They have disgusted me with all their evil practices.

²⁴But I have promised you this rich and fertile land as your possession, and I will give it to you. I am the LORD your God, and I have set you apart from the other nations.

²⁵So then, you must make a clear distinction between animals and birds that are ritually clean and those that are not. Do not eat unclean animals or birds. I have declared them unclean, and eating them would make you unclean.

²⁶You shall be holy and belong only to me, because I am the LORD and I am holy. I have set you apart from the other nations so that you would belong to me alone.

²⁷ Any man or woman who consults the spirits of the dead shall be stoned to death; any of you that do this are responsible for your own death.

21 ¹ The LORD commanded Moses to tell the Aaronite priests, No priest is to make himself ritually unclean by taking part in the funeral ceremonies when a relative dies,

² unless it is his mother, father, son, daughter, brother,

³ or unmarried sister living in his house.

⁴ He shall not make himself unclean at the death of those related to him by marriage.

⁵ No priest shall shave any part of his head or trim his beard or cut gashes on his body to show that he is in mourning.

⁶ He must be holy and must not disgrace my name. He offers food offerings to me, and he must be holy.

⁷ A priest shall not marry a woman who has been a prostitute or a woman who is not a virgin or who is divorced; he is holy.

⁸ The people must consider the priest holy, because he presents the food

offerings to me. I am the LORD; I am holy and I make my people holy.

⁹If a priest's daughter becomes a prostitute, she disgraces her father; she shall be burned to death.

¹⁰The High Priest has had the anointing oil poured on his head and has been consecrated to wear the priestly garments, so he must not leave his hair uncombed or tear his clothes to show that he is in mourning.

¹¹He has been dedicated to me and is not to make himself ritually unclean nor is he to defile my sacred Tent by leaving it and entering a house where there is a dead person, even if it is his own father or mother.

¹²(21:11)

¹³He shall marry a virgin,

¹⁴not a widow or a divorced woman or a woman who has been a prostitute. He shall marry only a virgin from his own clan.

¹⁵Otherwise, his children, who ought to be holy, will be ritually unclean. I am the LORD and I have set him apart as the High Priest.

¹⁶The LORD commanded Moses

¹⁷ to tell Aaron, None of your descendants who has any physical defects may present the food offering to me. This applies for all time to come.

¹⁸ No man with any physical defects may make the offering: no one who is blind, lame, disfigured, or deformed;

¹⁹ no one with a crippled hand or foot;

²⁰ no one who is a hunchback or a dwarf; no one with any eye or skin disease; and no eunuch.

²¹ No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any physical defects may present the food offering to me.

²² Such a man may eat the food offered to me, both the holy food offering and the very holy food offering,

²³ but because he has a physical defect, he shall not come near the sacred curtain or approach the altar. He must not profane these holy things, because I am the LORD and I make them holy.

²⁴ This, then, is what Moses said to Aaron, the sons of Aaron, and to all the people of Israel.

22 ¹ The LORD commanded Moses ² to tell Aaron and his sons, You must not bring disgrace on my

holy name, so treat with respect the sacred offerings that the people of Israel dedicate to me. I am the LORD.

³If any of your descendants, while he is ritually unclean, comes near the sacred offerings which the people of Israel have dedicated to me, he can never again serve at the altar. This applies for all time to come. I am the LORD.

⁴None of the descendants of Aaron who has a dreaded skin disease or a discharge may eat any of the sacred offerings until he is ritually clean. Any priest is unclean if he touches anything which is unclean through contact with a corpse or if he has an emission of semen

⁵or if he has touched an unclean animal or person.

⁶Any priest who becomes unclean remains unclean until evening, and even then he may not eat any of the sacred offerings until he has taken a bath.

⁷After the sun sets he is clean, and then he may eat the sacred offerings, which are his food.

⁸He shall not eat the meat of any animal that has died a natural death or

has been killed by wild animals; it will make him unclean. I am the LORD.

⁹All priests shall observe the regulations that I have given. Otherwise, they will become guilty and die, because they have disobeyed the sacred regulations. I am the LORD and I make them holy.

¹⁰Only a member of a priestly family may eat any of the sacred offerings; no one else may eat them -- not even someone staying with a priest or hired by him.

¹¹But a priest's slaves, bought with his own money or born in his home, may eat the food the priest receives.

¹²A priest's daughter who marries someone who is not a priest may not eat any of the sacred offerings.

¹³But a widowed or divorced daughter who has no children and who has returned to live in her father's house as a dependent may eat the food her father receives as a priest. Only a member of a priestly family may eat any of it.

¹⁴If any people who are not members of a priestly family eat any of the sacred offerings without intending to, they must

repay the priest its full value plus an additional 20 percent.

¹⁵The priests shall not profane the sacred offerings

¹⁶by letting any unauthorized people eat them; this would bring guilt and punishment on such people. I am the LORD and I make the offerings holy.

¹⁷The LORD commanded Moses

¹⁸to give Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel the following regulations. When any Israelite or any foreigner living in Israel presents a burnt offering, whether as fulfillment of a vow or as a freewill offering, the animal must not have any defects.

¹⁹To be accepted, it must be a male without any defects.

²⁰If you offer any animal that has any defects, the LORD will not accept it.

²¹When anyone presents a fellowship offering to the LORD, whether as fulfillment of a vow or as a freewill offering, the animal must be without any defects if it is to be accepted.

²²Do not offer to the LORD any animal that is blind or crippled or mutilated, or that has a running sore or a skin

eruption or scabs. Do not offer any such animals on the altar as a food offering.

²³As a freewill offering you may offer an animal that is stunted or not perfectly formed, but it is not acceptable in fulfillment of a vow.

²⁴Do not offer to the LORD any animal whose testicles have been crushed, cut, bruised, or torn off. This is not permitted in your land.

²⁵Do not offer as a food offering any animal obtained from a foreigner. Such animals are considered defective and are not acceptable.

²⁶When a calf or a lamb or a kid is born, it must not be taken from its mother for seven days, but after that it is acceptable as a food offering.

²⁷ (22: 26)

²⁸Do not sacrifice a cow and its calf or a sheep and its lamb or a goat and its kid on the same day.

²⁹When you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, follow the rules so that you will be accepted;

³⁰eat it the same day and leave none of it until the next morning.

³¹ The LORD said, Obey my commands; I am the LORD.

³² Do not bring disgrace on my holy name; all the people of Israel must acknowledge me to be holy. I am the LORD and I make you holy;

³³ and I brought you out of Egypt to become your God. I am the LORD.

23 ¹ The LORD gave Moses ² the following regulations for the religious festivals, when the people of Israel are to gather for worship.

³ You have six days in which to do your work, but remember that the seventh day, the Sabbath, is a day of rest. On that day do not work, but gather for worship. The Sabbath belongs to the LORD, no matter where you live.

⁴ Proclaim the following festivals at the appointed times.

⁵ The Passover, celebrated to honor the LORD, begins at sunset on the fourteenth day of the first month.

⁶ On the fifteenth day the Festival of Unleavened Bread begins, and for seven days you must not eat any bread made with yeast.

⁷ On the first of these days you shall gather for worship and do none of your daily work.

⁸ Offer your food offerings to the LORD for seven days. On the seventh day you shall again gather for worship, but you shall do none of your daily work.

⁹ When you come into the land that the LORD is giving you and you harvest your grain, take the first sheaf to the priest.

¹⁰ (23: 9)

¹¹ He shall present it as a special offering to the LORD, so that you may be accepted. The priest shall present it the day after the Sabbath.

¹² On the day you present the offering of grain, also sacrifice as a burnt offering a one-year-old male lamb that has no defects.

¹³ With it you shall present four pounds of flour mixed with olive oil as a food offering. The odor of this offering is pleasing to the LORD. You shall also present with it an offering of one quart of wine.

¹⁴ Do not eat any of the new grain, whether raw, roasted, or baked into bread, until you have brought this

offering to God. This regulation is to be observed by all your descendants for all time to come.

¹⁵Count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath on which you bring your sheaf of grain to present to the LORD.

¹⁶On the fiftieth day, the day after the seventh Sabbath, present to the LORD another new offering of grain.

¹⁷Each family is to bring two loaves of bread and present them to the LORD as a special gift. Each loaf shall be made of four pounds of flour baked with yeast and shall be presented to the LORD as an offering of the first grain to be harvested.

¹⁸And with the bread the community is to present seven one-year-old lambs, one bull, and two rams, none of which may have any defects. They shall be offered as a burnt offering to the LORD, along with a grain offering and a wine offering. The odor of this offering is pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁹Also offer one male goat as a sin offering and two one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering.

²⁰The priest shall present the bread with the two lambs as a special gift to the LORD for the priests. These offerings are holy.

²¹On that day do none of your daily work, but gather for worship. Your descendants are to observe this regulation for all time to come, no matter where they live.

²²When you harvest your fields, do not cut the grain at the edges of the fields, and do not go back to cut the heads of grain that were left; leave them for poor people and foreigners. The LORD is your God.

²³On the first day of the seventh month observe a special day of rest, and come together for worship when the trumpets sound.

²⁴ (23: 23)

²⁵Present a food offering to the LORD and do none of your daily work.

²⁶The tenth day of the seventh month is the day when the annual ritual is to be performed to take away the sins of the people. On that day do not eat anything at all; come together for worship, and present a food offering to the LORD.

²⁷ (23: 26)

²⁸ Do no work on that day, because it is the day for performing the ritual to take away sin.

²⁹ Any who eat anything on that day will no longer be considered God's people.

³⁰ And if any do any work on that day, the LORD himself will put them to death.

³¹ This regulation applies to all your descendants, no matter where they live.

³² From sunset on the ninth day of the month to sunset on the tenth observe this day as a special day of rest, during which nothing may be eaten.

³³ The Festival of Shelters begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and continues for seven days.

³⁴ (23: 33)

³⁵ On the first of these days come together for worship and do none of your daily work.

³⁶ Each day for seven days you shall present a food offering. On the eighth day come together again for worship and present a food offering. It is a day for worship, and you shall do no work.

³⁷ (These are the religious festivals on which you honor the LORD by gathering

together for worship and presenting food offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings, sacrifices, and wine offerings, as required day by day.

³⁸These festivals are in addition to the regular Sabbaths, and these offerings are in addition to your regular gifts, your offerings as fulfillment of vows, and your freewill offerings that you give to the LORD.)

³⁹When you have harvested your fields, celebrate this festival for seven days, beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. The first day shall be a special day of rest.

⁴⁰On that day take some of the best fruit from your trees, take palm branches and limbs from leafy trees, and begin a religious festival to honor the LORD your God.

⁴¹Celebrate it for seven days. This regulation is to be kept by your descendants for all time to come.

⁴²All the people of Israel shall live in shelters for seven days,

⁴³so that your descendants may know that the LORD made the people of Israel

live in simple shelters when he led them out of Egypt. He is the LORD your God.

⁴⁴ So in this way Moses gave the people of Israel the regulations for observing the religious festivals to honor the LORD.

24 ¹ The LORD told Moses ² to give the following orders to the people of Israel: Bring pure olive oil of the finest quality for the lamps in the Tent, so that a light might be kept burning regularly.

³ Each evening Aaron shall light them and keep them burning until morning, there in the LORD's presence outside the curtain in front of the Covenant Box, which is in the Most Holy Place. This regulation is to be observed for all time to come.

⁴ Aaron shall take care of the lamps on the lampstand of pure gold and must see that they burn regularly in the LORD's presence.

⁵ Take twenty-four pounds of flour and bake twelve loaves of bread.

⁶ Put the loaves in two rows, six in each row, on the table covered with pure gold, which is in the LORD's presence.

⁷ Put some pure incense on each row, as a token food offering to the LORD to take the place of the bread.

⁸ Every Sabbath, for all time to come, the bread must be placed in the presence of the LORD. This is Israel's duty forever.

⁹ The bread belongs to Aaron and his descendants, and they shall eat it in a holy place, because this is a very holy part of the food offered to the LORD for the priests.

¹⁰ There was a man whose father was an Egyptian and whose mother was an Israelite named Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri from the tribe of Dan. There in the camp this man quarreled with an Israelite. During the quarrel he cursed the LORD, so they took him to Moses,

¹¹ (24: 10)

¹² put him under guard, and waited for the LORD to tell them what to do with him.

¹³ The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁴ Take that man out of the camp. Everyone who heard him curse shall put his hands on the man's head to testify that he is guilty, and then the whole community shall stone him to death.

¹⁵Then tell the people of Israel that anyone who curses God must suffer the consequences

¹⁶and be put to death. Any Israelite or any foreigner living in Israel who curses the LORD shall be stoned to death by the whole community.

¹⁷Any who commit murder shall be put to death,

¹⁸and any who kill an animal belonging to someone else must replace it. The principle is a life for a life.

¹⁹If any of you injure another person, whatever you have done shall be done to you.

²⁰If you break a bone, one of your bones shall be broken; if you put out an eye, one of your eyes shall be put out; if you knock out a tooth, one of your teeth shall be knocked out. Whatever injury you cause another person shall be done to you in return.

²¹Whoever kills an animal shall replace it, but whoever kills a human being shall be put to death.

²²This law applies to all of you, to Israelites and to foreigners living among you, because I am the LORD your God.

²³When Moses had said this to the people of Israel, they took the man outside the camp and stoned him to death. In this way the people of Israel did what the LORD had commanded Moses.

25¹The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai and commanded him ²to give the following regulations to the people of Israel. When you enter the land that the LORD is giving you, you shall honor the LORD by not cultivating the land every seventh year.

³You shall plant your fields, prune your vineyards, and gather your crops for six years.

⁴But the seventh year is to be a year of complete rest for the land, a year dedicated to the LORD. Do not plant your fields or prune your vineyards.

⁵Do not even harvest the grain that grows by itself without being planted, and do not gather the grapes from your unpruned vines; it is a year of complete rest for the land.

⁶Although the land has not been cultivated during that year, it will provide

food for you, your slaves, your hired men, the foreigners living with you,
⁷ your domestic animals, and the wild animals in your fields. Everything that it produces may be eaten.

⁸ Count seven times seven years, a total of forty-nine years.

⁹ Then, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, send someone to blow a trumpet throughout the whole land.

¹⁰ In this way you shall set the fiftieth year apart and proclaim freedom to all the inhabitants of the land. During this year all property that has been sold shall be restored to the original owner or the descendants, and any who have been sold as slaves shall return to their families.

¹¹ You shall not plant your fields or harvest the grain that grows by itself or gather the grapes in your unpruned vineyards.

¹² The whole year shall be sacred for you; you shall eat only what the fields produce of themselves.

¹³In this year all property that has been sold shall be restored to its original owner.

¹⁴So when you sell land to an Israelite or buy land, do not deal unfairly.

¹⁵The price is to be set according to the number of years the land can produce crops before the next Year of Restoration.

¹⁶If there are many years, the price shall be higher, but if there are only a few years, the price shall be lower, because what is being sold is the number of crops the land can produce.

¹⁷Do not cheat an Israelite, but obey the LORD your God.

¹⁸Obey all the LORD's laws and commands, so that you may live in safety in the land.

¹⁹The land will produce its crops, and you will have all you want to eat and will live in safety.

²⁰But someone may ask what there will be to eat during the seventh year, when no fields are planted and no crops gathered.

²¹ The LORD will bless the land in the sixth year so that it will produce enough food for two years.

²² When you plant your fields in the eighth year, you will still be eating what you harvested during the sixth year, and you will have enough to eat until the crops you plant that year are harvested.

²³ Your land must not be sold on a permanent basis, because you do not own it; it belongs to God, and you are like foreigners who are allowed to make use of it.

²⁴ When land is sold, the right of the original owner to buy it back must be recognized.

²⁵ If any of you Israelites become poor and are forced to sell your land, your closest relative is to buy it back.

²⁶ If you have no relative to buy it back, you may later become prosperous and have enough to buy it back yourself.

²⁷ In that case you must pay to the one who bought it a sum that will make up for the years remaining until the next Year of Restoration, when you would in any event recover your land.

²⁸ But if you do not have enough money to buy the land back, it remains under the control of the one who bought it until the next Year of Restoration. In that year it will be returned to its original owner.

²⁹ If you sell a house in a walled city, you have the right to buy it back during the first full year from the date of sale.

³⁰ But if you do not buy it back within the year, you lose the right of repurchase, and the house becomes the permanent property of the purchasers and their descendants; it will not be returned in the Year of Restoration.

³¹ But houses in unwalled villages are to be treated like fields; the original owner has the right to buy them back, and they are to be returned in the Year of Restoration.

³² However, Levites have the right to buy back at any time their property in the cities assigned to them.

³³ If a house in one of these cities is sold by a Levite and is not bought back, it must be returned in the Year of Restoration, because the houses which the Levites own in their cities are their

permanent property among the people of Israel.

³⁴ But the pasture land around the Levite cities shall never be sold; it is their property forever.

³⁵ If any Israelites living near you become poor and cannot support themselves, you must provide for them as you would for a hired worker, so that they can continue to live near you.

³⁶ Do not charge Israelites any interest, but obey God and let them live near you.

³⁷ Do not make them pay interest on the money you lend them, and do not make a profit on the food you sell them.

³⁸ This is the command of the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt in order to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

³⁹ If any Israelites living near you become so poor that they sell themselves to you as a slave, you shall not make them do the work of a slave.

⁴⁰ They shall stay with you as hired workers and serve you until the next Year of Restoration.

⁴¹ At that time they and their children shall leave you and return to their family and to the property of their ancestors.

⁴² The people of Israel are the LORD's slaves, and he brought them out of Egypt; they must not be sold into slavery.

⁴³ Do not treat them harshly, but obey your God.

⁴⁴ If you need slaves, you may buy them from the nations around you.

⁴⁵ You may also buy the children of the foreigners who are living among you. Such children born in your land may become your property,

⁴⁶ and you may leave them as an inheritance to your children, whom they must serve as long as they live. But you must not treat any Israelites harshly.

⁴⁷ Suppose a foreigner living with you becomes rich, while some Israelites become poor and sell themselves as slaves to that foreigner or to a member of that foreigner's family.

⁴⁸ After they are sold, they still have the right to be bought back. A brother

⁴⁹ or an uncle or a cousin or another close relative may buy them back; or if

they themselves earn enough, they may buy their own freedom.

⁵⁰They must consult the one who bought them, and they must count the years from the time they sold themselves until the next Year of Restoration and must set the price for their release on the basis of the wages paid hired workers.

⁵¹They must refund a part of the purchase price according to the number of years left,

⁵²(25: 51)

⁵³as if they had been hired on an annual basis. Their master must not treat them harshly.

⁵⁴If they are not set free in any of these ways, they and their children must be set free in the next Year of Restoration.

⁵⁵Israelites cannot be permanent slaves, because the people of Israel are the LORD's slaves. He brought them out of Egypt; he is the LORD their God.

26¹The LORD said, Do not make idols or set up statues, stone pillars, or carved stones to worship. I am the LORD your God.

² Keep the religious festivals and honor the place where I am worshiped. I am the LORD.

³ If you live according to my laws and obey my commands,

⁴ I will send you rain at the right time, so that the land will produce crops and the trees will bear fruit.

⁵ Your crops will be so plentiful that you will still be harvesting grain when it is time to pick grapes, and you will still be picking grapes when it is time to plant grain. You will have all that you want to eat, and you can live in safety in your land.

⁶ I will give you peace in your land, and you can sleep without being afraid of anyone. I will get rid of the dangerous animals in the land, and there will be no more war there.

⁷ You will be victorious over your enemies;

⁸ five of you will be able to defeat a hundred, and a hundred will be able to defeat ten thousand.

⁹ I will bless you and give you many children; I will keep my part of the covenant that I made with you.

¹⁰Your harvests will be so plentiful that they will last for a year, and even then you will have to throw away what is left of the old harvest to make room for the new.

¹¹I will live among you in my sacred Tent, and I will never turn away from you.

¹²I will be with you; I will be your God, and you will be my people.

¹³I, the LORD your God, brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves. I broke the power that held you down and I let you walk with your head held high.

¹⁴The LORD said, If you will not obey my commands, you will be punished.

¹⁵If you refuse to obey my laws and commands and break the covenant I have made with you,

¹⁶I will punish you. I will bring disaster on you -- incurable diseases and fevers that will make you blind and cause your life to waste away. You will plant your crops, but it will do you no good, because your enemies will conquer you and eat what you have grown.

¹⁷ I will turn against you, so that you will be defeated, and those who hate you will rule over you; you will be so terrified that you will run when no one is chasing you.

¹⁸ If even after all of this you still do not obey me, I will increase your punishment seven times.

¹⁹ I will break your stubborn pride; there will be no rain, and your land will be dry and as hard as iron.

²⁰ All your hard work will do you no good, because your land will not produce crops and the trees will not bear fruit.

²¹ If you still continue to resist me and refuse to obey me, I will again increase your punishment seven times.

²² I will send dangerous animals among you, and they will kill your children, destroy your livestock, and leave so few of you that your roads will be deserted.

²³ If after all of this punishment you still do not listen to me, but continue to defy me,

²⁴ then I will turn on you and punish you seven times harder than before.

²⁵ I will bring war on you to punish you for breaking our covenant, and if you

gather in your cities for safety, I will send incurable diseases among you, and you will be forced to surrender to your enemies.

²⁶I will cut off your food supply, so that ten women will need only one oven to bake all the bread they have. They will ration it out, and when you have eaten it all, you will still be hungry.

²⁷If after all of this you still continue to defy me and refuse to obey me,

²⁸then in my anger I will turn on you and again make your punishment seven times worse than before.

²⁹Your hunger will be so great that you will eat your own children.

³⁰I will destroy your places of worship on the hills, tear down your incense altars, and throw your dead bodies on your fallen idols. In utter disgust

³¹I will turn your cities into ruins, destroy your places of worship, and refuse to accept your sacrifices.

³²I will destroy your land so completely that the enemies who occupy it will be shocked at the destruction.

³³I will bring war on you and scatter you in foreign lands. Your land will be deserted, and your cities left in ruins.

³⁴Then the land will enjoy the years of complete rest that you would not give it; it will lie abandoned and get its rest while you are in exile in the land of your enemies.

³⁵(26: 34)

³⁶I will make those of you who are in exile so terrified that the sound of a leaf blowing in the wind will make you run. You will run as if you were being pursued in battle, and you will fall when there is no enemy near you.

³⁷You will stumble over one another when no one is chasing you, and you will be unable to fight against any enemy.

³⁸You will die in exile, swallowed up by the land of your enemies.

³⁹The few of you who survive in the land of your enemies will waste away because of your own sin and the sin of your ancestors.

⁴⁰But your descendants will confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors, who resisted me and rebelled against me,

⁴¹ and caused me to turn against them and send them into exile in the land of their enemies. At last, when your descendants are humbled and they have paid the penalty for their sin and rebellion,

⁴² I will remember my covenant with Jacob and with Isaac and with Abraham, and I will renew my promise to give my people the land.

⁴³ First, however, the land must be rid of its people, so that it can enjoy its complete rest, and they must pay the full penalty for having rejected my laws and my commands.

⁴⁴ But even then, when they are still in the land of their enemies, I will not completely abandon them or destroy them. That would put an end to my covenant with them, and I am the LORD their God.

⁴⁵ I will renew the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I showed all the nations my power by bringing my people out of Egypt, in order that I, the LORD, might be their God.

⁴⁶All these are the laws and commands that the LORD gave to Moses on Mount Sinai for the people of Israel.

27 ¹The LORD gave Moses ²the following regulations for the people of Israel. When any of you have been given to the LORD in fulfillment of a special vow, you may be set free by the payment of the following sums of money,

³according to the official standard:
--adult male, twenty to sixty years old: 50 pieces of silver --adult female: 30 pieces of silver --young male, five to twenty years old: 20 pieces of silver --young female: 10 pieces of silver --infant male under five: 5 pieces of silver --infant female: 3 pieces of silver --male above sixty years of age: 15 pieces of silver --female above sixty: 10 pieces of silver

⁴(27: 3)

⁵(27: 3)

⁶(27: 3)

⁷(27: 3)

⁸If any of you make a vow and are too poor to pay the standard price, you shall bring the person to the priest, and the

priest will set a lower price, according to your ability to pay.

⁹If your vow concerns an animal that is acceptable as an offering to the LORD, then every gift made to the LORD is sacred,

¹⁰and you may not substitute another animal for it. If you do, both animals belong to the LORD.

¹¹But if your vow concerns a ritually unclean animal, which is not acceptable as an offering to the LORD, you shall take the animal to the priest.

¹²The priest shall set a price for it, according to its good or bad qualities, and the price will be final.

¹³If you wish to buy it back, you must pay the price plus an additional 20 percent.

¹⁴When any of you dedicate your house to the LORD, the priest shall set the price according to its good or bad points, and the price will be final.

¹⁵If you wish to buy your house back, you must pay the price plus an additional 20 percent.

¹⁶If any of you dedicate part of your land to the LORD, the price shall be set

according to the amount of seed it takes to sow it, at the rate of ten pieces of silver per bushel of barley.

¹⁷If you dedicate the land immediately after a Year of Restoration, the full price applies.

¹⁸If you dedicate it any time later, the priest shall estimate the cash value according to the number of years left until the next Year of Restoration, and set a reduced price.

¹⁹If you wish to buy your field back, you must pay the price plus an additional 20 percent.

²⁰If you sell the field to someone else without first buying it back from the LORD, you lose the right to buy it back.

²¹At the next Year of Restoration the field will become the LORD's permanent property; it shall belong to the priests.

²²If you dedicate to the LORD a field that you have bought,

²³the priest shall estimate its value according to the number of years until the next Year of Restoration, and you must pay the price that very day; the money belongs to the LORD.

²⁴At the Year of Restoration the field shall be returned to the original owner or to the descendants.

²⁵All prices shall be set according to the official standard.

²⁶The first-born of an animal already belongs to the LORD, so no one may dedicate it to him as a freewill offering. A calf, a lamb, or a kid belongs to the LORD,

²⁷but the first-born of an unclean animal may be bought back at the standard price plus an additional 20 percent. If it is not bought back, it may be sold to someone else at the standard price.

²⁸None of you may sell or buy back what you have unconditionally dedicated to the LORD, whether it is a human being, an animal, or land. It belongs permanently to the LORD.

²⁹Not even human beings who have been unconditionally dedicated may be bought back; they must be put to death.

³⁰One tenth of all the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, belongs to the LORD.

³¹ If you wish to buy any of it back, you must pay the standard price plus an additional 20 percent.

³² One of every ten domestic animals belongs to the LORD. When the animals are counted, every tenth one belongs to the LORD.

³³ You may not arrange the animals so that the poor animals are chosen, and you may not make any substitutions. If you do substitute one animal for another, then both animals will belong to the LORD and may not be bought back.

³⁴ These are the commands that the LORD gave Moses on Mount Sinai for the people of Israel.

Numbers

1 ¹ On the first day of the second month in the second year after the people of Israel left Egypt, the LORD spoke to Moses there in the Tent of his presence in the Sinai Desert. He said,

² You and Aaron are to take a census of the people of Israel by clans and families. List the names of all the men

³ twenty years old or older who are fit for military service.

⁴ Ask one clan chief from each tribe to help you.

⁵ These are the men, leaders within their tribes, who were chosen from the community for this work: Tribe ~ ~ Clan chief; Reuben ~ ~ Elizur son of Shedeur; Simeon ~ ~ Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai; Judah ~ ~ Nahshon son of Amminadab; Issachar ~ ~ Nethanel son of Zuar; Zebulun ~ ~ Eliab son of Helon; Ephraim ~ ~ Elishama son of Ammihud; Manasseh ~ ~ Gamaliel son of Pedahzur; Benjamin ~ ~ Abidan son of Gideoni; Dan ~ ~ Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;

Asher ~ ~ Pagiel son of Ochrán; Gad ~ ~
Eliasaph son of Deuel; Naphtali ~ ~ Ahira
son of Enan

⁶ (1: 5)

⁷ (1: 5)

⁸ (1: 5)

⁹ (1: 5)

¹⁰ (1: 5)

¹¹ (1: 5)

¹² (1: 5)

¹³ (1: 5)

¹⁴ (1: 5)

¹⁵ (1: 5)

¹⁶ (1: 5)

¹⁷ With the help of these twelve men
Moses and Aaron

¹⁸ called together the whole community
on the first day of the second month
and registered all the people by clans
and families. The names of all the men
twenty years old or older were recorded
and counted,

¹⁹ as the LORD had commanded. In
the Sinai Desert, Moses registered the
people.

²⁰ The men twenty years old or older
who were fit for military service were
registered by name according to clan

and family, beginning with the tribe of Reuben, Jacob's oldest son. The totals were as follows: Tribe ~ ~ Number;
Reuben ~ ~ 46,500; Simeon ~ ~ 59,300;
Gad ~ ~ 45,650; Judah ~ ~ 74,600;
Issachar ~ ~ 54,400; Zebulun ~ ~
57,400; Ephraim ~ ~ 40,500; Manasseh
~ ~ 32,200; Benjamin ~ ~ 35,400; Dan
~ ~ 62,700; Asher ~ ~ 41,500; Naphtali
~ ~ 53,400; Total: ~ ~ 603,550

21 (1: 20)

22 (1: 20)

23 (1: 20)

24 (1: 20)

25 (1: 20)

26 (1: 20)

27 (1: 20)

28 (1: 20)

29 (1: 20)

30 (1: 20)

31 (1: 20)

32 (1: 20)

33 (1: 20)

34 (1: 20)

35 (1: 20)

36 (1: 20)

37 (1: 20)

38 (1: 20)

³⁹ (1: 20)

⁴⁰ (1: 20)

⁴¹ (1: 20)

⁴² (1: 20)

⁴³ (1: 20)

⁴⁴ (1: 20)

⁴⁵ (1: 20)

⁴⁶ (1: 20)

⁴⁷ The Levites were not registered with the other tribes,

⁴⁸ because the LORD had said to Moses,

⁴⁹ When you take a census of the men fit for military service, do not include the tribe of Levi.

⁵⁰ Instead, put the Levites in charge of the Tent of my presence and all its equipment. They shall carry it and its equipment, serve in it, and set up their camp around it.

⁵¹ Whenever you move your camp, the Levites shall take the Tent down and set it up again at each new campsite. Anyone else who comes near the Tent shall be put to death.

⁵² The rest of the Israelites shall set up camp, company by company, each man with his own group and under his own banner.

⁵³ But the Levites shall camp around the Tent to guard it, so that no one may come near and cause my anger to strike the community of Israel.

⁵⁴ So the people of Israel did everything that the LORD had commanded Moses.

2¹ The LORD gave Moses and Aaron the following instructions.

² When the Israelites set up camp, each man will camp under the banner of his division and the flag of his own clan. The camp is to be set up all around the Tent.

³ On the east side, those under the banner of the division of Judah shall camp in their groups, under their leaders, as follows: Tribe ~ ~ Leader ~ ~ Number; Judah ~ ~ Nahshon son of Amminadab ~ ~ 74,600; Issachar ~ ~ Nethanel son of Zuar ~ ~ 54,400; Zebulun ~ ~ Eliab son of Helon ~ ~ 57,400; ~ ~ Total: ~ ~ 186,400 The division of Judah shall march first.

⁴ (2: 3)

⁵ (2: 3)

⁶ (2: 3)

⁷ (2: 3)

⁸ (2: 3)

⁹ (2: 3)

¹⁰On the south, those under the banner of the division of Reuben shall camp in their groups, under their leaders, as follows: Tribe ~ ~ Leader ~ ~ Number; Reuben ~ ~ Elizur son of Shedeur ~ ~ 46,500; Simeon ~ ~ Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai ~ ~ 59,300; Gad ~ ~ Eliasaph son of Deuel ~ ~ 45,650; ~ ~ Total: ~ ~ 151,450 The division of Reuben shall march second.

¹¹ (2: 10)

¹² (2: 10)

¹³ (2: 10)

¹⁴ (2: 10)

¹⁵ (2: 10)

¹⁶ (2: 10)

¹⁷Then, between the first two divisions and the last two the Levites are to march carrying the Tent. Each division shall march in the same order as they camp, each in position under its banner.

¹⁸On the west, those under the banner of the division of Ephraim shall camp in their groups, under their leaders, as follows: Tribe ~ ~ Leader ~ ~ Number; Ephraim ~ ~ Elishama son of Ammihud ~ ~ 40,500; Manasseh ~ ~ Gamaliel son of Pedahzur ~ ~ 32,200; Benjamin

~ ~ Abidan son of Gideoni ~ ~ 35,400;
 ~ ~ Total: ~ ~ 108,100 The division of
 Ephraim shall march third.

¹⁹ (2: 18)

²⁰ (2: 18)

²¹ (2: 18)

²² (2: 18)

²³ (2: 18)

²⁴ (2: 18)

²⁵ On the north, those under the banner
 of the division of Dan shall camp in
 their groups, under their leaders, as
 follows: Tribe ~ ~ Leader ~ ~ Number;
 Dan ~ ~ Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai ~ ~
 62,700; Asher ~ ~ Pagiel son of Ochran
 ~ ~ 41,500; Naphtali ~ ~ Ahira son of En
 ~ ~ 53,400; ~ ~ Total: ~ ~ 157,600 The
 division of Dan shall march last.

²⁶ (2: 25)

²⁷ (2: 25)

²⁸ (2: 25)

²⁹ (2: 25)

³⁰ (2: 25)

³¹ (2: 25)

³² The total number of the people of
 Israel enrolled in the divisions, group by
 group, was 603,550.

³³As the LORD had commanded Moses, the Levites were not registered with the rest of the Israelites.

³⁴So the people of Israel did everything the LORD had commanded Moses. They camped, each under his own banner, and they marched, each with his own clan.

3¹This is the family of Aaron and Moses at the time the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai.

²Aaron had four sons: Nadab, the oldest, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

³They were anointed and ordained as priests,

⁴but Nadab and Abihu were killed when they offered unholy fire to the LORD in the Sinai Desert. They had no children, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests during Aaron's lifetime.

⁵The LORD said to Moses,

⁶Bring forward the tribe of Levi and appoint them as servants of Aaron the priest.

⁷They shall do the work required for the Tent of my presence and perform duties for the priests and for the whole community.

⁸They shall take charge of all the equipment of the Tent and perform the duties for the rest of the Israelites.

⁹The only responsibility the Levites have is to serve Aaron and his sons.

¹⁰You shall appoint Aaron and his sons to carry out the duties of the priesthood; anyone else who tries to do so shall be put to death.

¹¹The LORD said to Moses,

¹²The Levites are now to be mine. When I killed all the first-born of the Egyptians, I consecrated as my own the oldest son of each Israelite family and the first-born of every animal. Now, instead of having the first-born sons of Israel as my own, I have the Levites; they will belong to me. I am the LORD.

¹³(3: 12)

¹⁴In the Sinai Desert the LORD commanded Moses

¹⁵to register the Levites by clans and families, enrolling every male a month old or older,

¹⁶and Moses did so.

¹⁷Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, who were the ancestors of the clans that bear their

names. Gershon had two sons: Libni and Shimei; Kohath had four sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and Merari had two sons: Mahli and Mushi. They were the ancestors of the families that bear their names.

¹⁸ (3: 17)

¹⁹ (3: 17)

²⁰ (3: 17)

²¹ The clan of Gershon was composed of the families of Libni and Shimei.

²² The total number of males one month old or older that were enrolled was 7,500.

²³ This clan was to camp on the west behind the Tent,

²⁴ with Eliasaph son of Lael as chief of the clan.

²⁵ They were responsible for the Tent, its inner cover, its outer cover, the curtain for the entrance,

²⁶ the curtains for the court which is around the Tent and the altar, and the curtain for the entrance of the court. They were responsible for all the service connected with these items.

²⁷ The clan of Kohath was composed of the families of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

²⁸ The total number of males one month old or older that were enrolled was 8,600.

²⁹ This clan was to camp on the south side of the Tent,

³⁰ with Elizaphan son of Uzziel as chief of the clan.

³¹ They were responsible for the Covenant Box, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils the priests use in the Holy Place, and the curtain at the entrance to the Most Holy Place. They were responsible for all the service connected with these items.

³² The chief of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. He was in charge of those who carried out the duties in the Holy Place.

³³ The clan of Merari was composed of the families of Mahli and Mushi.

³⁴ The total number of males one month old or older that were enrolled was 6,200.

³⁵This clan was to camp on the north side of the Tent, with Zuriel son of Abihail as chief of the clan.

³⁶They were assigned responsibility for the frames for the Tent, its bars, posts, bases, and all its fittings. They were responsible for all the service connected with these items.

³⁷They were also responsible for the posts, bases, pegs, and ropes for the outer court.

³⁸Moses and Aaron and his sons were to camp in front of the Tent on the east. They were responsible for carrying out the services performed in the Holy Place for the people of Israel. Anyone else who tried to do so was to be put to death.

³⁹The total number of all the Levite males one month old or older that Moses enrolled by clans at the command of the LORD, was 22,000.

⁴⁰The LORD said to Moses, All of Israel's first-born sons belong to me. So register by name every first-born male Israelite, one month old or older. But in place of them I claim all the Levites as mine! I am the LORD! I also claim the

livestock of the Levites in place of all the first-born of the livestock.

⁴¹ (3: 40)

⁴² Moses obeyed, and registered all the first-born males

⁴³ one month old or older; the total was 22,273.

⁴⁴ The LORD said to Moses,

⁴⁵ Now dedicate the Levites as mine in place of all the first-born Israelite sons, and dedicate the livestock of the Levites in place of the first-born of the Israelites' livestock.

⁴⁶ Since the first-born Israelite sons outnumber the Levites by 273, you must buy back the extra sons.

⁴⁷ For each one pay five pieces of silver, according to the official standard,

⁴⁸ and give this money to Aaron and his sons.

⁴⁹ Moses obeyed and took

⁵⁰ the 1,365 pieces of silver

⁵¹ and gave them to Aaron and his sons.

4 ¹ The LORD told Moses ² to take a census of the Levite clan of Kohath by subclans and families, ³ and to register all the men between the ages of thirty and fifty who were

qualified to work in the Tent of the LORD's presence.

⁴Their service involves the most holy things.

⁵The LORD gave Moses the following instructions. When it is time to break camp, Aaron and his sons shall enter the Tent, take down the curtain in front of the Covenant Box, and cover the Box with it.

⁶They shall put a fine leather cover over it, spread a cloth of solid blue on top, and then insert the carrying poles.

⁷They shall spread a blue cloth over the table for the bread offered to the LORD and put on it the dishes, the incense bowls, the offering bowls, and the jars for the wine offering. There shall always be bread on the table.

⁸They shall spread a red cloth over all of this, put a fine leather cover over it, and then insert the carrying poles.

⁹They shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand, with its lamps, tongs, trays, and all the olive oil containers.

¹⁰They shall wrap it and all its equipment in a fine leather cover and place it on a carrying frame.

¹¹ Next they shall spread a blue cloth over the gold altar, put a fine leather cover over it, and then insert the carrying poles.

¹² They shall take all the utensils used in the Holy Place, wrap them in a blue cloth, put a fine leather cover over them, and place them on a carrying frame.

¹³ They shall remove the greasy ashes from the altar and spread a purple cloth over it.

¹⁴ They shall put on it all the equipment used in the service at the altar: fire pans, hooks, shovels, and basins. Then they shall put a fine leather cover over it and insert the carrying poles.

¹⁵ When it is time to break camp, the clan of Kohath shall come to carry the sacred objects only after Aaron and his sons have finished covering them and all their equipment. The Kohath clan must not touch the sacred objects, or they will die. These are the responsibilities of the Kohath clan whenever the Tent is moved.

¹⁶ Eleazar son of Aaron the priest shall be responsible for the whole Tent and for the oil for the lamps, the incense, the grain offerings, the anointing oil, and

everything else in the Tent that has been consecrated to the LORD.

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

¹⁸Do not let the clan of Kohath

¹⁹be killed by coming near these most sacred objects. To prevent this from happening, Aaron and his sons shall go in and assign each man his task and tell him what to carry.

²⁰But if the Kohathites enter the Tent and see the priests preparing the sacred objects for moving, they will die.

²¹The LORD told Moses

²²to take a census of the Levite clan of Gershon by subclans and families,

²³and to register all the men between the ages of thirty and fifty who were qualified to work in the Tent of the LORD's presence.

²⁴They shall be responsible for carrying the following objects:

²⁵the Tent, its inner cover, its outer cover, the fine leather cover on top of it, the curtain for the entrance,

²⁶the curtains and ropes for the court that is around the Tent and the altar, the curtains for the entrance of the court, and all the fittings used in setting up

these objects. They shall perform all the tasks required for these things.

²⁷ Moses and Aaron shall see to it that the Gershonites perform all the duties and carry everything that Aaron and his sons assign to them.

²⁸ These are the responsibilities of the Gershon clan in the Tent; they shall carry them out under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

²⁹ The LORD told Moses to take a census of the Levite clan of Merari by subclans and families,

³⁰ and to register all the men between the ages of thirty and fifty who were qualified to work in the Tent of the LORD's presence.

³¹ They shall be responsible for carrying the frames, bars, posts, and bases of the Tent,

³² and the posts, bases, pegs, and ropes of the court around the Tent, with all the fittings used in setting them up. Each man will be responsible for carrying specific items.

³³ These are the responsibilities of the Merari clan in their service in the Tent; they shall carry them out under the

direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

³⁴ Following the LORD's command, Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the community took a census of the three Levite clans, Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. They did this by subclans and families and registered all the men between the ages of thirty and fifty who were qualified to work in the Tent of the LORD's presence, as follows: Clan ~ ~ Number; Kohath ~ ~ 2,750; Gershon ~ ~ 2,630; Merari ~ ~ 3,200; Total: ~ ~ 8,580

³⁵ (4: 34)

³⁶ (4: 34)

³⁷ (4: 34)

³⁸ (4: 34)

³⁹ (4: 34)

⁴⁰ (4: 34)

⁴¹ (4: 34)

⁴² (4: 34)

⁴³ (4: 34)

⁴⁴ (4: 34)

⁴⁵ (4: 34)

⁴⁶ (4: 34)

⁴⁷ (4: 34)

⁴⁸ (4: 34)

⁴⁹Each man was registered as the LORD had commanded Moses; and at the command of the LORD given through Moses, each man was assigned responsibility for his task of serving or carrying.

5¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Command the people of Israel to expel from the camp everyone with a dreaded skin disease or a bodily discharge and everyone who is unclean by contact with a corpse.

³Send all these ritually unclean people out, so that they will not defile the camp, where I live among my people.

⁴The Israelites obeyed and expelled them all from the camp.

⁵The LORD gave Moses

⁶the following instructions for the people of Israel. When any of you are unfaithful to the LORD and commit a wrong against someone,

⁷you must confess your sin and make full repayment, plus an additional 20 percent, to the person you have wronged.

⁸But if that person has died and has no near relative to whom payment can be

made, it shall be given to the LORD for the priest. This payment is in addition to the ram used to perform the ritual of purification for the guilty person.

⁹Also every special contribution which the Israelites offer to the LORD belongs to the priest to whom they present it.

¹⁰Each priest shall keep the offerings presented to him.

¹¹The LORD commanded Moses

¹²to give the Israelites the following instructions. It may happen that a man becomes suspicious that his wife is unfaithful to him and has defiled herself by having intercourse with another man. But the husband may not be certain, for his wife may have kept it secret -- there was no witness, and she was not caught in the act. Or it may happen that a husband becomes suspicious of his wife, even though she has not been unfaithful.

¹³(5: 12)

¹⁴(5: 12)

¹⁵In either case the man shall take his wife to the priest. He shall also take the required offering of two pounds of barley flour, but he shall not pour any olive oil on it or put any incense on it, because it

is an offering from a suspicious husband, made to bring the truth to light.

¹⁶The priest shall bring the woman forward and have her stand in front of the altar.

¹⁷He shall pour some holy water into a clay bowl and take some of the earth that is on the floor of the Tent of the LORD's presence and put it in the water to make it bitter.

¹⁸Then he shall loosen the woman's hair and put the offering of flour in her hands. In his hands the priest shall hold the bowl containing the bitter water that brings a curse.

¹⁹Then the priest shall make the woman agree to this oath spoken by the priest: If you have not committed adultery, you will not be harmed by the curse that this water brings.

²⁰But if you have committed adultery,

²¹may the LORD make your name a curse among your people. May he cause your genital organs to shrink and your stomach to swell up.

²²May this water enter your stomach and cause it to swell up and your genital

organs to shrink. The woman shall respond, I agree; may the LORD do so.

²³Then the priest shall write this curse down and wash the writing off into the bowl of bitter water.

²⁴Before he makes the woman drink the water, which may then cause her bitter pain,

²⁵the priest shall take the offering of flour out of the woman's hands, hold it out in dedication to the LORD, and present it on the altar.

²⁶Then he shall take a handful of it as a token offering and burn it on the altar. Finally, he shall make the woman drink the water.

²⁷If she has committed adultery, the water will cause bitter pain; her stomach will swell up and her genital organs will shrink. Her name will become a curse among her people.

²⁸But if she is innocent, she will not be harmed and will be able to bear children.

²⁹This is the law in cases where a man is jealous and becomes suspicious that his wife has committed adultery. The woman shall be made to stand in front

of the altar, and the priest shall perform this ritual.

³⁰ (5: 29)

³¹ The husband shall be free of guilt, but the woman, if guilty, must suffer the consequences.

6 ¹ The LORD commanded Moses ² to give the following instructions to the people of Israel. Any of you, male or female, who make a special vow to become a nazirite and dedicate yourself to the LORD

³ shall abstain from wine and beer. You shall not drink any kind of drink made from grapes or eat any grapes or raisins.

⁴ As long as you are a nazirite, you shall not eat anything that comes from a grapevine, not even the seeds or skins of grapes.

⁵ As long as you are under the nazirite vow, you must not cut your hair or shave. You are bound by the vow for the full time that you are dedicated to the LORD, and you shall let your hair grow.

⁶ Your hair is the sign of your dedication to God, and so you must not defile yourself by going near a corpse, not

even that of your father, mother, brother, or sister.

⁷ (6: 6)

⁸As long as you are a nazirite, you are consecrated to the LORD.

⁹If your consecrated hair is defiled because you are right beside someone who suddenly dies, you must wait seven days and then shave your head; and so you become ritually clean.

¹⁰On the eighth day you shall bring two doves or two pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence.

¹¹The priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, to perform the ritual of purification for you because of your contact with a corpse. On the same day you shall reconsecrate your hair

¹²and rededicate to the LORD your time as a nazirite. The previous period of time doesn't count, because your consecrated hair was defiled. As a repayment offering you shall bring a one-year-old lamb.

¹³When you complete your nazirite vow, you shall perform this ritual. You shall go to the entrance of the Tent

¹⁴and present to the LORD three animals without any defects: a one-year-old male lamb for a burnt offering, a one-year-old ewe lamb for a sin offering, and a ram for a fellowship offering.

¹⁵You shall also offer a basket of bread made without yeast: thick loaves made of flour mixed with olive oil and thin cakes brushed with olive oil, and in addition the required offerings of grain and wine.

¹⁶The priest shall present all these to the LORD and offer the sin offering and the burnt offering.

¹⁷He shall sacrifice the ram to the LORD as a fellowship offering, and offer it with the basket of bread; he shall also present the offerings of grain and wine.

¹⁸At the entrance of the Tent you nazirites shall shave off your hair and put it on the fire on which the fellowship offering is being burned.

¹⁹Then, when the shoulder of the ram is boiled, the priest shall take it and put it, together with one thick loaf of bread and one thin cake from the basket, into the hands of the nazirite.

²⁰Next, the priest shall present them as a special gift to the LORD; they are a sacred offering for the priest, in addition to the breast and the leg of the ram which by law belong to the priest. After that, the nazirite may drink wine.

²¹These are the regulations for you nazirites; but if you promise an offering beyond what your vow requires you to give, you must fulfill exactly the promise you made.

²²The LORD commanded Moses

²³to tell Aaron and his sons to use the following words in blessing the people of Israel:

²⁴May the LORD bless you and take care of you;

²⁵May the LORD be kind and gracious to you;

²⁶May the LORD look on you with favor and give you peace.

²⁷And the LORD said, If they pronounce my name as a blessing upon the people of Israel, I will bless them.

7¹On the day Moses finished setting up the Tent of the LORD's presence, he anointed and dedicated the Tent and

all its equipment, and the altar and all its equipment.

²Then the clan chiefs who were leaders in the tribes of Israel, the same men who were in charge of the census,

³brought their offerings to the LORD: six wagons and twelve oxen, a wagon for every two leaders and an ox for each leader. After they had presented them,

⁴the LORD said to Moses,

⁵Accept these gifts for use in the work to be done for the Tent; give them to the Levites according to the work they have to do.

⁶So Moses gave the wagons and the oxen to the Levites.

⁷He gave two wagons and four oxen to the Gershonites,

⁸and four wagons and eight oxen to the Merarites. All their work was to be done under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron.

⁹But Moses gave no wagons or oxen to the Kohathites, because the sacred objects they took care of had to be carried on their shoulders.

¹⁰The leaders also brought offerings to celebrate the dedication of the altar.

When they were ready to present their gifts at the altar,

¹¹ the LORD said to Moses, Tell them that each day for a period of twelve days one of the leaders is to present his gifts for the dedication of the altar.

¹² They presented their offerings in the following order: Day ~ ~ Tribe ~ ~ Leader; 1st ~ ~ Judah ~ ~ Nahshon son of Amminadab; 2nd ~ ~ Issachar ~ ~ Nethanel son of Zuar; 3rd ~ ~ Zebulun ~ ~ Eliab son of Helon; 4th ~ ~ Reuben ~ ~ Elizur son of Shedeur; 5th ~ ~ Simeon ~ ~ Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai; 6th ~ ~ Gad ~ ~ Eliasaph son of Deuel; 7th ~ ~ Ephraim ~ ~ Elishama son of Ammihud; 8th ~ ~ Manasseh ~ ~ Gamaliel son of Pedahzur; 9th ~ ~ Benjamin ~ ~ Abidan son of Gideoni; 10th ~ ~ Dan ~ ~ Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai; 11th ~ ~ Asher ~ ~ Pagiel son of Ocran; 12th ~ ~ Naphtali ~ ~ Ahira son of Enan The offerings each one brought were identical: one silver bowl weighing 50 ounces and one silver basin weighing 30 ounces, by the official standard, both of them full of flour mixed with oil for the grain offering;

one gold dish weighing 4 ounces, full of incense; one young bull, one ram, and a one-year-old lamb, for the burnt offering; one goat for the sin offering; and two bulls, five rams, five goats, and five one-year-old lambs, for the fellowship offering.

¹³ (7: 12)

¹⁴ (7: 12)

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84 The totals of the offerings brought by the twelve leaders for the dedication of the altar were as follows: --twelve silver bowls and twelve silver basins weighing a total of 60 pounds --twelve gold dishes weighing a total of 48 ounces, filled with

incense --twelve bulls, twelve rams, and twelve one-year-old lambs, plus the grain offerings that go with them, for the burnt offerings --twelve goats for the sin offerings --twenty-four bulls, sixty rams, sixty goats, sixty one-year-old lambs, for the fellowship offerings

⁸⁵ (7: 84)

⁸⁶ (7: 84)

⁸⁷ (7: 84)

⁸⁸ (7: 84)

⁸⁹When Moses went into the Tent to talk with the LORD, he heard the LORD speaking to him from above the lid on the Covenant Box, between the two winged creatures.

8¹ The LORD said to Moses,
²Tell Aaron that when he puts the seven lamps on the lampstand, he should place them so that the light shines toward the front.

³Aaron obeyed and placed the lamps facing the front of the lampstand.

⁴From top to bottom the lampstand was made of hammered gold, according to the pattern that the LORD had shown Moses.

⁵The LORD said to Moses,

⁶Separate the Levites from the rest of the people of Israel and purify them

⁷in the following way: sprinkle them with the water of purification and have them shave their whole bodies and have them wash their clothes. Then they will be ritually clean.

⁸Then they are to take a young bull and the required grain offering of flour mixed with olive oil; and you are to take another bull for the sin offering.

⁹Then assemble the whole community of Israel and have the Levites stand in front of the Tent of my presence.

¹⁰The people of Israel are to place their hands on the heads of the Levites,

¹¹and then Aaron shall dedicate the Levites to me as a special gift from the Israelites, so that they may do my work.

¹²The Levites shall then put their hands on the heads of the two bulls; one is to be offered as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, in order to perform the ritual of purification for the Levites.

¹³Dedicate the Levites as a special gift to me, and put Aaron and his sons in charge of them.

¹⁴ Separate the Levites in this way from the rest of the Israelites, so that they will belong to me.

¹⁵ After you have purified and dedicated the Levites, they will be qualified to work in the Tent.

¹⁶ I have claimed them in the place of all the first-born sons of the Israelites, and they belong to me alone.

¹⁷ When I killed all the first-born in Egypt, I consecrated as my own the oldest son of each Israelite family and the first-born of every animal.

¹⁸ I am now taking the Levites instead of all the first-born of the Israelites,

¹⁹ and I assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons, as a gift from the Israelites, to work in the Tent for the people of Israel and to protect the Israelites from the disaster that would strike them if they came too near the Holy Place.

²⁰ So Moses, Aaron, and all the people of Israel dedicated the Levites, as the LORD commanded Moses.

²¹ The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes, and Aaron dedicated them as a special gift to the

LORD. He also performed the ritual of purification for them.

²²The people did everything the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites. And so the Levites were qualified to work in the Tent under Aaron and his sons.

²³The LORD said to Moses,

²⁴From the age of twenty-five each Levite shall perform his duties in the Tent of my presence,

²⁵and at the age of fifty he shall retire.

²⁶After that, he may help his fellow Levites in performing their duties in the Tent, but he must not perform any service by himself. This is how you are to regulate the duties of the Levites.

9¹The LORD spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert in the first month of the second year after the people of Israel had left Egypt. He said,

²On the fourteenth day of this month, beginning at sunset, the people of Israel are to observe the Passover according to all the rules and regulations for it.

³(9: 2)

⁴So Moses told the people to observe the Passover,

⁵and on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month they did so in the Sinai Desert. The people did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁶But there were some people who were ritually unclean because they had touched a corpse, and they were not able to keep the Passover on that day. They went to Moses and Aaron

⁷and said, We are unclean because we have touched a corpse, but why should we be excluded from presenting the LORD's offering with the rest of the Israelites?

⁸Moses answered, Wait until I receive instructions from the LORD.

⁹The LORD told Moses

¹⁰to say to the people of Israel, When any of you or your descendants are unclean from touching a corpse or are far away on a journey, but still want to keep the Passover,

¹¹you are permitted to observe it one month later instead, on the evening of the fourteenth day of the second month. Celebrate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

¹²Do not leave any of the food until the following morning and do not break any of the animal's bones. Observe the Passover according to all the regulations.

¹³But if any of you are ritually clean and not away on a journey and do not observe the Passover, you shall no longer be considered my people, because you did not present the offering to me at the appointed time. You must suffer the consequences of your sin.

¹⁴If foreigners living among you want to keep the Passover, they must observe it according to all the rules and regulations. The same law applies to everyone, whether native or foreigner.

¹⁵On the day the Tent of the LORD's presence was set up, a cloud came and covered it. At night the cloud looked like fire.

¹⁶(9:15)

¹⁷Whenever the cloud lifted, the people of Israel broke camp, and they set up camp again in the place where the cloud came down.

¹⁸The people broke camp at the command of the LORD, and at his command they set up camp. As long

as the cloud stayed over the Tent, they stayed in the same camp.

¹⁹When the cloud stayed over the Tent for a long time, they obeyed the LORD and did not move on.

²⁰Sometimes the cloud remained over the Tent for only a few days; in any case, they remained in camp or moved, according to the command of the LORD.

²¹Sometimes the cloud remained only from evening until morning, and they moved on as soon as the cloud lifted. Whenever the cloud lifted, they moved on.

²²Whether it was two days, a month, a year, or longer, as long as the cloud remained over the Tent, they did not move on; but when it lifted, they moved.

²³They set up camp and broke camp in obedience to the commands which the LORD gave through Moses.

10¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Make two trumpets of hammered silver to use for calling the people together and for breaking camp.

³When long blasts are sounded on both trumpets, the whole community is to

gather around you at the entrance to the Tent of my presence.

⁴But when only one trumpet is sounded, then only the leaders of the clans are to gather around you.

⁵When short blasts are sounded, the tribes camped on the east will move out.

⁶When short blasts are sounded a second time, the tribes on the south will move out. So short blasts are to be sounded to break camp,

⁷but in order to call the community together, long blasts are to be sounded.

⁸The trumpets are to be blown by Aaron's sons, the priests. The following rule is to be observed for all time to come.

⁹When you are at war in your land, defending yourselves against an enemy who has attacked you, sound the signal for battle on these trumpets. I, the LORD your God, will help you and save you from your enemies.

¹⁰Also on joyful occasions -- at your New Moon Festivals and your other religious festivals -- you are to blow the trumpets when you present your burnt offerings and your fellowship offerings.

Then I will help you. I am the LORD your God.

¹¹ On the twentieth day of the second month in the second year after the people left Egypt, the cloud over the Tent of the LORD's presence lifted,

¹² and the Israelites started on their journey out of the Sinai Desert. The cloud came to rest in the wilderness of Paran.

¹³ They began to march at the command of the LORD through Moses,

¹⁴ and each time they moved, they were in the same order. Those under the banner of the division led by the tribe of Judah started out first, company by company, with Nahshon son of Amminadab in command.

¹⁵ Nethanel son of Zuar was in command of the tribe of Issachar,

¹⁶ and Eliab son of Helon was in command of the tribe of Zebulun.

¹⁷ Then the Tent would be taken down, and the clans of Gershon and Merari, who carried it, would start out.

¹⁸ Next, those under the banner of the division led by the tribe of Reuben would

start out, company by company, with Elizur son of Shedeur in command.

¹⁹Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was in command of the tribe of Simeon,

²⁰and Eliasaph son of Deuel was in command of the tribe of Gad.

²¹Then the Levite clan of Kohath would start out, carrying the sacred objects. By the time they arrived at the next camp, the Tent had been set up again.

²²Next, those under the banner of the division led by the tribe of Ephraim would start out, company by company, with Elishama son of Ammihud in command.

²³Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was in command of the tribe of Manasseh,

²⁴and Abidan son of Gideoni was in command of the tribe of Benjamin.

²⁵Finally, those under the banner of the division led by the tribe of Dan, serving as the rear guard of all the divisions, would start out, company by company, with Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai in command.

²⁶Pagiel son of Ochran was in command of the tribe of Asher,

²⁷and Ahira son of Enan was in command of the tribe of Naphtali.

²⁸This, then, was the order of march, company by company, whenever the Israelites broke camp and set out.

²⁹Moses said to his brother-in-law Hobab son of Jethro the Midianite, We are about to start out for the place which the LORD said he would give us. He has promised to make Israel prosperous, so come with us, and we will share our prosperity with you.

³⁰Hobab answered, No, I am going back to my native land.

³¹Please don't leave us, Moses said. You know where we can camp in the wilderness, and you can be our guide.

³²If you come with us, we will share with you all the blessings that the LORD gives us.

³³When the people left Sinai, the holy mountain, they traveled three days. The LORD's Covenant Box always went ahead of them to find a place for them to camp.

³⁴As they moved on from each camp, the cloud of the LORD was over them by day.

³⁵Whenever the Covenant Box started out, Moses would say, Arise, LORD;

scatter your enemies and put to flight those who hate you!

³⁶And whenever it stopped, he would say, Return, LORD, to the thousands of families of Israel.

11 ¹The people began to complain to the LORD about their troubles. When the LORD heard them, he became angry and sent fire on the people. It burned among them and destroyed one end of the camp.

²The people cried out to Moses for help; he prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down.

³So the place was named Taberah, because there the fire of the LORD burned among them.

⁴There were foreigners traveling with the Israelites. They had a strong craving for meat, and even the Israelites themselves began to complain: If only we could have some meat!

⁵In Egypt we used to eat all the fish we wanted, and it cost us nothing. Remember the cucumbers, the watermelons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic we had?

⁶But now our strength is gone. There is nothing at all to eat -- nothing but this manna day after day!

⁷(Manna was like small seeds, whitish yellow in color.)

⁸It fell on the camp at night along with the dew. The next morning the people would go around and gather it, grind it or pound it into flour, and then boil it and make it into flat cakes. It tasted like bread baked with olive oil.)

⁹(11:8)

¹⁰Moses heard all the people complaining as they stood around in groups at the entrances of their tents. He was distressed because the LORD had become angry with them,

¹¹and he said to the LORD, Why have you treated me so badly? Why are you displeased with me? Why have you given me the responsibility for all these people?

¹²I didn't create them or bring them to birth! Why should you ask me to act like a nurse and carry them in my arms like babies all the way to the land you promised to their ancestors?

¹³Where could I get enough meat for all these people? They keep whining and asking for meat.

¹⁴I can't be responsible for all these people by myself; it's too much for me!

¹⁵If you are going to treat me like this, have pity on me and kill me, so that I won't have to endure your cruelty any longer.

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses, Assemble seventy respected men who are recognized as leaders of the people, bring them to me at the Tent of my presence, and tell them to stand there beside you.

¹⁷I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the spirit I have given you and give it to them. Then they can help you bear the responsibility for these people, and you will not have to bear it alone.

¹⁸Now tell the people, Purify yourselves for tomorrow; you will have meat to eat. The LORD has heard you whining and saying that you wished you had some meat and that you were better off in Egypt. Now the LORD will give you meat, and you will have to eat it.

¹⁹You will have to eat it not just for one or two days, or five, or ten, or even twenty days,

²⁰but for a whole month, until it comes out of your ears, until you are sick of it. This will happen because you have rejected the LORD who is here among you and have complained to him that you should never have left Egypt.

²¹Moses said to the LORD, Here I am leading 600,000 people, and you say that you will give them enough meat for a month?

²²Could enough cattle and sheep be killed to satisfy them? Are all the fish in the sea enough for them?

²³Is there a limit to my power? the LORD answered. You will soon see whether what I have said will happen or not!

²⁴So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He assembled seventy of the leaders and placed them around the Tent.

²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him. He took some of the spirit he had given to Moses and gave it to the seventy leaders. When

the spirit came on them, they began to shout like prophets, but not for long.

²⁶Two of the seventy leaders, Eldad and Medad, had stayed in the camp and had not gone out to the Tent. There in the camp the spirit came on them, and they too began to shout like prophets.

²⁷A young man ran out to tell Moses what Eldad and Medad were doing.

²⁸Then Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' helper since he was a young man, spoke up and said to Moses, Stop them, sir!

²⁹Moses answered, Are you concerned about my interests? I wish that the LORD would give his spirit to all his people and make all of them shout like prophets!

³⁰Then Moses and the seventy leaders of Israel went back to camp.

³¹Suddenly the LORD sent a wind that brought quails from the sea, flying three feet above the ground. They settled on the camp and all around it for miles and miles in every direction.

³²So all that day, all night, and all the next day, the people worked catching quails; no one gathered less than fifty

bushels. They spread them out to dry all around the camp.

³³While there was still plenty of meat for them to eat, the LORD became angry with the people and caused an epidemic to break out among them.

³⁴That place was named Kibroth Hattaavah (which means Graves of Craving), because there they buried the people who had craved meat.

³⁵From there the people moved to Hazeroth, where they made camp.

12¹Moses had married a Cushite woman, and Miriam and Aaron criticized him for it.

²They said, Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Hasn't he also spoken through us? The LORD heard what they said.

³(Moses was a humble man, more humble than anyone else on earth.)

⁴Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, I want the three of you to come out to the Tent of my presence. They went,

⁵and the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, stood at the entrance of the Tent,

and called out, Aaron! Miriam! The two of them stepped forward,

⁶and the LORD said, Now hear what I have to say! When there are prophets among you, I reveal myself to them in visions and speak to them in dreams.

⁷It is different when I speak with my servant Moses; I have put him in charge of all my people Israel.

⁸So I speak to him face-to-face, clearly and not in riddles; he has even seen my form! How dare you speak against my servant Moses?

⁹The LORD was angry with them; and so as he departed

¹⁰and the cloud left the Tent, Miriam's skin was suddenly covered with a dreaded disease and turned as white as snow. When Aaron looked at her and saw that she was covered with the disease,

¹¹he said to Moses, Please, sir, do not make us suffer this punishment for our foolish sin.

¹²Don't let her become like something born dead with half its flesh eaten away.

¹³So Moses cried out to the LORD, O God, heal her!

¹⁴The LORD answered, If her father had spit in her face, she would have to bear her disgrace for seven days. So let her be shut out of the camp for a week, and after that she can be brought back in.

¹⁵Miriam was shut out of the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until she was brought back in.

¹⁶Then they left Hazeroth and set up camp in the wilderness of Paran.

13 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Choose one of the leaders from each of the twelve tribes and send them as spies to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites.

³Moses obeyed and from the wilderness of Paran he sent out leaders, as follows:
Tribe ~ ~ Leader; Reuben ~ ~ Shammua son of Zaccur; Simeon ~ ~ Shaphat son of Hori; Judah ~ ~ Caleb son of Jephunneh; Issachar ~ ~ Igal son of Joseph; Ephraim ~ ~ Hoshea son of Nun; Benjamin ~ ~ Palti son of Raphu; Zebulun ~ ~ Gaddiel son of Sodi; Manasseh ~ ~ Gaddi son of Susi; Dan ~ ~ Ammiel son of Gemalli; Asher ~ ~ Sethur son

of Michael; Naphtali ~ ~ Nahbi son of
Vophsi; Gad ~ ~ Geuel son of Machi

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¹⁶ These are the spies Moses sent to explore the land. He changed the name of Hoshea son of Nun to Joshua.

¹⁷ When Moses sent them out, he said to them, Go north from here into the southern part of the land of Canaan and then on into the hill country.

¹⁸ Find out what kind of country it is, how many people live there, and how strong they are.

¹⁹ Find out whether the land is good or bad and whether the people live in open towns or in fortified cities.

²⁰ Find out whether the soil is fertile and whether the land is wooded. And be sure to bring back some of the fruit that grows there. (It was the season when grapes were beginning to ripen.)

²¹ So the men went north and explored the land from the wilderness of Zin in the south all the way to Rehob, near Hamath Pass in the north.

²² They went first into the southern part of the land and came to Hebron, where the clans of Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of a race of giants called the Anakim, lived. (Hebron was founded seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

²³ They came to Eshcol Valley, and there they cut off a branch which had one bunch of grapes on it so heavy that it took two men to carry it on a pole between them. They also brought back some pomegranates and figs.

²⁴ (That place was named Eshcol Valley because of the bunch of grapes the Israelites cut off there.)

²⁵ After exploring the land for forty days, the spies returned

²⁶to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had brought.

²⁷They told Moses, We explored the land and found it to be rich and fertile; and here is some of its fruit.

²⁸But the people who live there are powerful, and their cities are very large and well fortified. Even worse, we saw the descendants of the giants there.

²⁹Amalekites live in the southern part of the land; Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and Canaanites live by the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan River.

³⁰Caleb silenced the people who were complaining against Moses, and said, We should attack now and take the land; we are strong enough to conquer it.

³¹But the men who had gone with Caleb said, No, we are not strong enough to attack them; the people there are more powerful than we are.

³²So they spread a false report among the Israelites about the land they had explored. They said, That land doesn't

even produce enough to feed the people who live there. Everyone we saw was very tall,

³³and we even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. We felt as small as grasshoppers, and that is how we must have looked to them.

14¹ All night long the people cried out in distress.

²They complained against Moses and Aaron, and said, It would have been better to die in Egypt or even here in the wilderness!

³Why is the LORD taking us into that land? We will be killed in battle, and our wives and children will be captured. Wouldn't it be better to go back to Egypt?

⁴So they said to one another, Let's choose a leader and go back to Egypt!

⁵Then Moses and Aaron bowed to the ground in front of all the people.

⁶And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, two of the spies, tore their clothes in sorrow

⁷and said to the people, The land we explored is an excellent land.

⁸If the LORD is pleased with us, he will take us there and give us that rich and fertile land.

⁹Do not rebel against the LORD and don't be afraid of the people who live there. We will conquer them easily. The LORD is with us and has defeated the gods who protected them; so don't be afraid.

¹⁰The whole community was threatening to stone them to death, but suddenly the people saw the dazzling light of the LORD's presence appear over the Tent.

¹¹The LORD said to Moses, How much longer will these people reject me? How much longer will they refuse to trust in me, even though I have performed so many miracles among them?

¹²I will send an epidemic and destroy them, but I will make you the father of a nation that is larger and more powerful than they are!

¹³But Moses said to the LORD, You brought these people out of Egypt by your power. When the Egyptians hear what you have done to your people,

¹⁴ they will tell it to the people who live in this land. These people have already heard that you, LORD, are with us, that you appear in plain sight when your cloud stops over us, and that you go before us in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

¹⁵ Now if you kill all your people, the nations who have heard of your fame will say

¹⁶ that you killed your people in the wilderness because you were not able to bring them into the land you promised to give them.

¹⁷ So now, LORD, I pray, show us your power and do what you promised when you said,

¹⁸ I, the LORD, am not easily angered, and I show great love and faithfulness and forgive sin and rebellion. Yet I will not fail to punish children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation for the sins of their parents.

¹⁹ And now, LORD, according to the greatness of your unchanging love, forgive, I pray, the sin of these people, just as you have forgiven them ever since they left Egypt.

²⁰The LORD answered, I will forgive them, as you have asked.

²¹But I promise that as surely as I live and as surely as my presence fills the earth,

²²none of these people will live to enter that land. They have seen the dazzling light of my presence and the miracles that I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, but they have tried my patience over and over again and have refused to obey me.

²³They will never enter the land which I promised to their ancestors. None of those who have rejected me will ever enter it.

²⁴But because my servant Caleb has a different attitude and has remained loyal to me, I will bring him into the land which he explored, and his descendants will possess the land

²⁵in whose valleys the Amalekites and the Canaanites now live. Turn back tomorrow and go into the wilderness in the direction of the Gulf of Aqaba.

²⁶The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²⁷ How much longer are these wicked people going to complain against me? I have heard enough of these complaints!

²⁸ Now give them this answer: I swear that as surely as I live, I will do to you just what you have asked. I, the LORD, have spoken.

²⁹ You will die and your corpses will be scattered across this wilderness. Because you have complained against me, none of you over twenty years of age will enter that land.

³⁰ I promised to let you live there, but not one of you will, except Caleb and Joshua.

³¹ You said that your children would be captured, but I will bring them into the land that you rejected, and it will be their home.

³² You will die here in this wilderness.

³³ Your children will wander in the wilderness for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last one of you dies.

³⁴ You will suffer the consequences of your sin for forty years, one year for each of the forty days you spent

exploring the land. You will know what it means to have me against you!

³⁵I swear that I will do this to you wicked people who have gathered together against me. Here in the wilderness every one of you will die. I, the LORD, have spoken.

³⁶The men Moses had sent to explore the land brought back a false report which caused the people to complain against the LORD. And so the LORD struck them with a disease, and they died.

³⁷ (14: 36)

³⁸Of the twelve spies only Joshua and Caleb survived.

³⁹When Moses told the Israelites what the LORD had said, they mourned bitterly.

⁴⁰Early the next morning they started out to invade the hill country, saying, Now we are ready to go to the place which the LORD told us about. We admit that we have sinned.

⁴¹But Moses said, Then why are you disobeying the LORD now? You will not succeed!

⁴²Don't go. The LORD is not with you, and your enemies will defeat you.

⁴³When you face the Amalekites and the Canaanites, you will die in battle; the LORD will not be with you, because you have refused to follow him.

⁴⁴Yet they still dared to go up into the hill country, even though neither the LORD's Covenant Box nor Moses left the camp.

⁴⁵Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived there attacked and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hormah.

15 ¹The LORD gave Moses ²the following regulations for the people of Israel to observe in the land that he was going to give them.

³A bull, a ram, a sheep, or a goat may be presented to the LORD as a burnt offering or as a sacrifice in fulfillment of a vow or as a freewill offering or as an offering at your regular religious festivals; the odor of these food offerings is pleasing to the LORD.

⁴Whoever presents a sheep or a goat as a burnt offering to the LORD is to bring with each animal 2 pounds of flour

mixed with 2 pints of olive oil as a grain offering, together with 2 pints of wine.

⁵ (15: 4)

⁶When a ram is offered, 4 pounds of flour mixed with 3 pints of olive oil are to be presented as a grain offering,

⁷together with 3 pints of wine. The odor of these sacrifices is pleasing to the LORD.

⁸When a bull is offered to the LORD as a burnt offering or as a sacrifice in fulfillment of a vow or as a fellowship offering,

⁹a grain offering of 6 pounds of flour mixed with 4 pints of olive oil is to be presented,

¹⁰together with 4 pints of wine. The odor of this sacrifice is pleasing to the LORD.

¹¹That is what shall be offered with each bull, ram, sheep, or goat.

¹²When more than one animal is offered, the accompanying offering is to be increased proportionately.

¹³All native Israelites are to do this when they present a food offering, an odor pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁴And if at any time foreigners living among you, whether on a temporary or a permanent basis, make a food offering, an odor that pleases the LORD, they are to observe the same regulations.

¹⁵For all time to come, the same rules are binding on you and on the foreigners who live among you. You and they are alike in the LORD's sight;

¹⁶the same laws and regulations apply to you and to them.

¹⁷The LORD gave Moses

¹⁸the following regulations for the people of Israel to observe in the land that he was going to give them.

¹⁹When any food produced there is eaten, some of it is to be set aside as a special contribution to the LORD.

²⁰When you bake bread, the first loaf of the first bread made from the new grain is to be presented as a special contribution to the LORD. This is to be presented in the same way as the special contribution you make from the grain you thresh.

²¹For all time to come, this special gift is to be given to the LORD from the bread you bake.

²² But suppose someone unintentionally fails to keep some of these regulations which the LORD has given Moses.

²³ And suppose that in the future the community fails to do everything that the LORD commanded through Moses.

²⁴ If the mistake was made because of the ignorance of the community, they are to offer a bull as a burnt offering, an odor that pleases the LORD, with the proper grain offering and wine offering. In addition, they are to offer a male goat as a sin offering.

²⁵ The priest shall perform the ritual of purification for the community, and they will be forgiven, because the mistake was unintentional and they brought their sin offering as a food offering to the LORD.

²⁶ The whole community of Israel and the foreigners living among them will be forgiven, because everyone was involved in the mistake.

²⁷ If any of you sin unintentionally, you are to offer a one-year-old female goat as a sin offering.

²⁸At the altar the priest shall perform the ritual of purification to purify you from your sin, and you will be forgiven.

²⁹The same regulation applies to all who unintentionally commit a sin, whether they are native Israelites or resident foreigners.

³⁰But any who sin deliberately, whether they are natives or foreigners, are guilty of treating the LORD with contempt, and they shall be put to death,

³¹because they have rejected what the LORD said and have deliberately broken one of his commands. They are responsible for their own death.

³²Once, while the Israelites were still in the wilderness, a man was found gathering firewood on the Sabbath.

³³He was taken to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community,

³⁴and was put under guard, because it was not clear what should be done with him.

³⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, The man must be put to death; the whole community is to stone him to death outside the camp.

³⁶So the whole community took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the LORD had commanded.

³⁷The LORD commanded Moses

³⁸to say to the people of Israel: Make tassels on the corners of your garments and put a blue cord on each tassel. You are to do this for all time to come.

³⁹The tassels will serve as reminders, and each time you see them you will remember all my commands and obey them; then you will not turn away from me and follow your own wishes and desires.

⁴⁰The tassels will remind you to keep all my commands, and you will belong completely to me.

⁴¹I am the LORD your God; I brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD.

16¹Korah son of Izhar, from the Levite clan of Kohath, rebelled against the leadership of Moses. He was joined by three members of the tribe of Reuben -- Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth -- and by 250 other Israelites, well-known leaders chosen by the community.

²(16:1)

³They assembled before Moses and Aaron and said to them, You have gone too far! All the members of the community belong to the LORD, and the LORD is with all of us. Why, then, Moses, do you set yourself above the LORD's community?

⁴When Moses heard this, he threw himself on the ground and prayed.

⁵Then he said to Korah and his followers, Tomorrow morning the LORD will show us who belongs to him; he will let the one who belongs to him, that is, the one he has chosen, approach him at the altar.

⁶Tomorrow morning you and your followers take fire pans, put live coals and incense on them, and take them to the altar. Then we will see which of us the LORD has chosen. You Levites are the ones who have gone too far!

⁷(16:6)

⁸Moses continued to speak to Korah. Listen, you Levites!

⁹Do you consider it a small matter that the God of Israel has set you apart from the rest of the community, so that you

can approach him, perform your service in the LORD's Tent, and minister to the community and serve them?

¹⁰He has let you and all the other Levites have this honor -- and now you are trying to get the priesthood too!

¹¹When you complain against Aaron, it is really against the LORD that you and your followers are rebelling.

¹²Then Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, but they said, We will not come!

¹³Isn't it enough that you have brought us out of the fertile land of Egypt to kill us here in the wilderness? Do you also have to lord it over us?

¹⁴You certainly have not brought us into a fertile land or given us fields and vineyards as our possession, and now you are trying to deceive us. We will not come!

¹⁵Moses became angry and said to the LORD, Do not accept any offerings these men bring. I have not wronged any of them; I have not even taken one of their donkeys.

¹⁶Moses said to Korah, Tomorrow you and your 250 followers must come to the

Tent of the LORD's presence; Aaron will also be there.

¹⁷ Each of you will take his fire pan, put incense on it, and then present it at the altar.

¹⁸ So they each took their fire pans, put live coals and incense on them, and stood at the entrance of the Tent with Moses and Aaron.

¹⁹ Then Korah gathered the whole community, and they stood facing Moses and Aaron at the entrance of the Tent. Suddenly the dazzling light of the LORD's presence appeared to the whole community,

²⁰ and the LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²¹ Move back from these people, and I will destroy them immediately.

²² But Moses and Aaron bowed down with their faces to the ground and said, O God, you are the source of all life. When one of us sins, do you become angry with the whole community?

²³ The LORD said to Moses,

²⁴ Tell the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

²⁵Then Moses, accompanied by the leaders of Israel, went to Dathan and Abiram.

²⁶He said to the people, Get away from the tents of these wicked men and don't touch anything that belongs to them. Otherwise, you will be wiped out with them for all their sins.

²⁷So they moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing at the entrance of their tents, with their wives and children.

²⁸Moses said to the people, This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things and that it is not by my own choice that I have done them.

²⁹If these men die a natural death without some punishment from God, then the LORD did not send me.

³⁰But if the LORD does something unheard of, and the earth opens up and swallows them with all they own, so that they go down alive to the world of the dead, you will know that these men have rejected the LORD.

³¹ As soon as he had finished speaking, the ground under Dathan and Abiram split open

³² and swallowed them and their families, together with all of Korah's followers and their possessions.

³³ So they went down alive to the world of the dead, with their possessions. The earth closed over them, and they vanished.

³⁴ All the people of Israel who were there fled when they heard their cry. They shouted, Run! The earth might swallow us too!

³⁵ Then the LORD sent a fire that blazed out and burned up the 250 men who had presented the incense.

³⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses,

³⁷ Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to remove the bronze fire pans from the remains of those who have been burned, and scatter the coals from the fire pans somewhere else, because the fire pans are holy.

³⁸ They became holy when they were presented at the LORD's altar. So take the fire pans of these who were put to death for their sin, beat them into thin

plates, and make a covering for the altar. It will be a warning to the people of Israel.

³⁹ So Eleazar the priest took the fire pans and had them beaten into thin plates to make a covering for the altar.

⁴⁰ This was a warning to the Israelites that no one who was not a descendant of Aaron should come to the altar to burn incense for the LORD. Otherwise he would be destroyed like Korah and his men. All this was done as the LORD had commanded Eleazar through Moses.

⁴¹ The next day the whole community complained against Moses and Aaron and said, You have killed some of the LORD's people.

⁴² After they had all gathered to protest to Moses and Aaron, they turned toward the Tent and saw that the cloud was covering it and that the dazzling light of the LORD's presence had appeared.

⁴³ Moses and Aaron went and stood in front of the Tent,

⁴⁴ and the LORD said to Moses,

⁴⁵ Move back from these people, and I will destroy them on the spot! The two

of them bowed down with their faces to the ground,

⁴⁶and Moses said to Aaron, Take your fire pan, put live coals from the altar in it, and put some incense on the coals. Then hurry with it to the people and perform the ritual of purification for them. Hurry! The LORD's anger has already broken out and an epidemic has already begun.

⁴⁷Aaron obeyed, took his fire pan and ran into the middle of the assembled people. When he saw that the plague had already begun, he put the incense on the coals and performed the ritual of purification for the people.

⁴⁸This stopped the plague, and he was left standing between the living and the dead.

⁴⁹The number of people who died was 14,700, not counting those who died in Korah's rebellion.

⁵⁰When the plague had stopped, Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tent.

17 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Tell the people of Israel to give you twelve walking sticks, one from the

leader of each tribe. Write each man's name on his stick

³and then write Aaron's name on the stick representing Levi. There will be one stick for each tribal leader.

⁴Take them to the Tent of my presence and put them in front of the Covenant Box, where I meet you.

⁵Then the stick of the man I have chosen will sprout. In this way I will put a stop to the constant complaining of these Israelites against you.

⁶So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a stick, one for each tribe, twelve in all, and Aaron's stick was put with them.

⁷Moses then put all the sticks in the Tent in front of the LORD's Covenant Box.

⁸The next day, when Moses went into the Tent, he saw that Aaron's stick, representing the tribe of Levi, had sprouted. It had budded, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds!

⁹Moses took all the sticks and showed them to the Israelites. They saw what had happened, and each leader took his own stick back.

¹⁰The LORD said to Moses, Put Aaron's stick back in front of the Covenant Box. It is to be kept as a warning to the rebel Israelites that they will die unless their complaining stops.

¹¹Moses did as the LORD commanded.

¹²The people of Israel said to Moses, Then that's the end of us!

¹³If anyone who even comes near the Tent must die, then we are all as good as dead!

18¹The LORD said to Aaron, You, your sons, and the Levites must suffer the consequences of any guilt connected with serving in the Tent of my presence; but only you and your sons will suffer the consequences of service in the priesthood.

²Bring in your relatives, the tribe of Levi, to work with you and help you while you and your sons are serving at the Tent.

³They are to fulfill their duties to you and their responsibilities for the Tent, but they must not have any contact with sacred objects in the Holy Place or with the altar. If they do, both they and you will be put to death.

⁴They are to work with you and fulfill their responsibilities for all the service in the Tent, but no unqualified person may work with you.

⁵You and your sons alone must fulfill the responsibilities for the Holy Place and the altar, so that my anger will not again break out against the people of Israel.

⁶I am the one who has chosen your relatives the Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you. They are dedicated to me, so that they can carry out their duties in the Tent.

⁷But you and your sons alone shall fulfill all the responsibilities of the priesthood that concern the altar and what is in the Most Holy Place. These things are your responsibility, because I have given you the gift of the priesthood. Any unqualified person who comes near the sacred objects shall be put to death.

⁸The LORD said to Aaron, Remember that I am giving you all the special contributions made to me that are not burned as sacrifices. I am giving them to you and to your descendants as the part assigned to you forever.

⁹Of the most sacred offerings not burned on the altar, the following belong to you: the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the repayment offerings. Everything that is presented to me as a sacred offering belongs to you and your sons.

¹⁰You must eat these things in a holy place, and only males may eat them; consider them holy.

¹¹In addition, any other special contributions that the Israelites present to me shall be yours. I am giving them to you, your sons, and your daughters for all time to come. Every member of your family who is ritually clean may eat them.

¹²I am giving you all the best of the first produce which the Israelites give me each year: olive oil, wine, and grain.

¹³It all belongs to you. Every member of your family who is ritually clean may eat it.

¹⁴Everything in Israel that has been unconditionally dedicated to me belongs to you.

¹⁵Every first-born child or animal that the Israelites present to me belongs to

you. But you must accept payment to buy back every first-born child, and must also accept payment for every first-born animal that is ritually unclean.

¹⁶Children shall be bought back at the age of one month for the fixed price of five pieces of silver, according to the official standard.

¹⁷But the first-born of cows, sheep, and goats are not to be bought back; they belong completely to me and are to be sacrificed. Throw their blood against the altar and burn their fat as a food offering, an odor pleasing to me.

¹⁸The meat from them belongs to you, like the breast and the right hind leg of the special offering.

¹⁹I am giving to you, to your sons, and to your daughters, for all time to come, all the special contributions which the Israelites present to me. This is an unbreakable covenant that I have made with you and your descendants.

²⁰The LORD said to Aaron, You will not receive any property that can be inherited, and no part of the land of Israel will be assigned to you. I, the LORD, am all you need.

²¹ The LORD said, I have given to the Levites every tithe that the people of Israel present to me. This is in payment for their service in taking care of the Tent of my presence.

²² The other Israelites must no longer approach the Tent and in this way bring on themselves the penalty of death.

²³ From now on only the Levites will take care of the Tent and bear the full responsibility for it. This is a permanent rule that applies also to your descendants. The Levites shall have no permanent property in Israel,

²⁴ because I have given to them as their possession the tithe which the Israelites present to me as a special contribution. That is why I told them that they would have no permanent property in Israel.

²⁵ The LORD commanded Moses

²⁶ to say to the Levites: When you receive from the Israelites the tithe that the LORD gives you as your possession, you must present a tenth of it as a special contribution to the LORD.

²⁷ This special contribution will be considered as the equivalent of the

offering which the farmer makes of new grain and new wine.

²⁸In this way you also will present the special contribution that belongs to the LORD from all the tithes which you receive from the Israelites. You are to give this special contribution for the LORD to Aaron the priest.

²⁹Give it from the best that you receive.

³⁰When you have presented the best part, you may keep the rest, just as the farmer keeps what is left after he makes his offering.

³¹You and your families may eat the rest anywhere, because it is your wages for your service in the Tent.

³²You will not become guilty when you eat it, as long as you have presented the best of it to the LORD. But be sure not to profane the sacred gifts of the Israelites by eating any of the gifts before the best part is offered; if you do, you will be put to death.

19¹The LORD commanded Moses and Aaron

²to give the Israelites the following regulations. Bring to Moses and Aaron a

red cow which has no defects and which has never been worked,

³and they will give it to Eleazar the priest. It is to be taken outside the camp and killed in his presence.

⁴Then Eleazar is to take some of its blood and with his finger sprinkle it seven times in the direction of the Tent.

⁵The whole animal, including skin, meat, blood, and intestines, is to be burned in the presence of the priest.

⁶Then he is to take some cedar wood, a sprig of hyssop, and a red cord and throw them into the fire.

⁷After that, he is to wash his clothes and pour water over himself, and then he may enter the camp; but he remains ritually unclean until evening.

⁸The one who burned the cow must also wash his clothes and pour water over himself, but he also remains unclean until evening.

⁹Then someone who is ritually clean is to collect the ashes of the cow and put them in a ritually clean place outside the camp, where they are to be kept for the Israelite community to use in preparing the water for removing ritual

uncleanness. This ritual is performed to remove sin.

¹⁰The one who collected the ashes must wash his clothes, but he remains unclean until evening. This regulation is valid for all time to come, both for the Israelites and for the foreigners living among them.

¹¹Those who touch a corpse are ritually unclean for seven days.

¹²They must purify themselves with the water for purification on the third day and on the seventh day, and then they will be clean. But if they do not purify themselves on both the third and the seventh day, they will not be clean.

¹³Those who touch a corpse and do not purify themselves remain unclean, because the water for purification has not been thrown over them. They defile the LORD's Tent, and they will no longer be considered God's people.

¹⁴In the case of a person who dies in a tent, anyone who is in the tent at the time of death or who enters it becomes ritually unclean for seven days.

¹⁵Every jar and pot in the tent that has no lid on it also becomes unclean.

¹⁶If any touch a person who has been killed or has died a natural death outdoors or if any touch a human bone or a grave, they become unclean for seven days.

¹⁷To remove the uncleanness, some ashes from the red cow which was burned to remove sin shall be taken and put in a pot, and fresh water added.

¹⁸In the first case, someone who is ritually clean is to take a sprig of hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle the tent, everything in it, and the people who were there. In the second case, someone who is ritually clean is to sprinkle the water on those who had touched the human bone or the dead body or the grave.

¹⁹On the third day and on the seventh the person who is ritually clean is to sprinkle the water on the unclean persons. On the seventh day he is to purify those, who, after washing their clothes and pouring water over themselves, become ritually clean at sunset.

²⁰Those who have become ritually unclean and do not purify themselves

remain unclean, because the water for purification has not been thrown over them. They defile the LORD's Tent and will no longer be considered God's people.

²¹ You are to observe this rule for all time to come. The person who sprinkles the water for purification must also wash his clothes; anyone who touches the water remains ritually unclean until evening.

²² Whatever an unclean person touches is unclean, and anyone else who touches it remains unclean until evening.

20¹ In the first month the whole community of Israel came to the wilderness of Zin and camped at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried.

² There was no water where they camped, so the people gathered around Moses and Aaron

³ and complained: It would have been better if we had died in front of the LORD's Tent along with the other Israelites.

⁴ Why have you brought us out into this wilderness? Just so that we can die here with our animals?

⁵Why did you bring us out of Egypt into this miserable place where nothing will grow? There's no grain, no figs, no grapes, no pomegranates. There is not even any water to drink!

⁶Moses and Aaron moved away from the people and stood at the entrance of the Tent. They bowed down with their faces to the ground, and the dazzling light of the LORD's presence appeared to them.

⁷The LORD said to Moses,

⁸Take the stick that is in front of the Covenant Box, and then you and Aaron assemble the whole community. There in front of them all speak to that rock over there, and water will gush out of it. In this way you will bring water out of the rock for the people, for them and their animals to drink.

⁹Moses went and got the stick, as the LORD had commanded.

¹⁰He and Aaron assembled the whole community in front of the rock, and Moses said, Listen, you rebels! Do we have to get water out of this rock for you?

¹¹ Then Moses raised the stick and struck the rock twice with it, and a great stream of water gushed out, and all the people and animals drank.

¹² But the LORD reprimanded Moses and Aaron. He said, Because you did not have enough faith to acknowledge my holy power before the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land that I promised to give them.

¹³ This happened at Meribah, where the people of Israel complained against the LORD and where he showed them that he is holy.

¹⁴ Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. They said, This message is from your kinsmen, the tribes of Israel. You know the hardships we have suffered,

¹⁵ how our ancestors went to Egypt, where we lived many years. The Egyptians mistreated our ancestors and us,

¹⁶ and we cried to the LORD for help. He heard our cry and sent an angel, who led us out of Egypt. Now we are at Kadesh, a town at the border of your territory.

¹⁷ Please permit us to pass through your land. We and our cattle will not leave the road or go into your fields or vineyards, and we will not drink from your wells. We will stay on the main road until we are out of your territory.

¹⁸ But the Edomites answered, We refuse to let you pass through our country! If you try, we will march out and attack you.

¹⁹ The people of Israel said, We will stay on the main road, and if we or our animals drink any of your water, we will pay for it -- all we want is to pass through.

²⁰ The Edomites repeated, We refuse! and they marched out with a powerful army to attack the people of Israel.

²¹ Because the Edomites would not let the Israelites pass through their territory, the Israelites turned and went another way.

²² The whole community of Israel left Kadesh and arrived at Mount Hor,

²³ on the border of Edom. There the LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²⁴ Aaron is not going to enter the land which I promised to give to Israel;

he is going to die, because the two of you rebelled against my command at Meribah.

²⁵Take Aaron and his son Eleazar up Mount Hor,

²⁶and there remove Aaron's priestly robes and put them on Eleazar. Aaron is going to die there.

²⁷Moses did what the LORD had commanded. They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community,

²⁸and Moses removed Aaron's priestly robes and put them on Eleazar. There on the top of the mountain Aaron died, and Moses and Eleazar came back down.

²⁹The whole community learned that Aaron had died, and they all mourned for him for thirty days.

21 ¹When the Canaanite king of Arad in the southern part of Canaan heard that the Israelites were coming by way of Atharim, he attacked them and captured some of them.

²Then the Israelites made a vow to the LORD: If you will let us conquer these people, we will unconditionally dedicate them and their cities to you and will destroy them.

³The LORD heard them and helped them conquer the Canaanites. So the Israelites completely destroyed them and their cities, and named the place Hormah.

⁴The Israelites left Mount Hor by the road that leads to the Gulf of Aqaba, in order to go around the territory of Edom. But on the way the people lost their patience

⁵and spoke against God and Moses. They complained, Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We can't stand any more of this miserable food!

⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many Israelites were bitten and died.

⁷The people came to Moses and said, We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Now pray to the LORD to take these snakes away. So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸Then the LORD told Moses to make a metal snake and put it on a pole, so that anyone who was bitten could look at it and be healed.

⁹So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Anyone who had been bitten would look at the bronze snake and be healed.

¹⁰The Israelites moved on and camped at Oboth.

¹¹After leaving that place, they camped at the ruins of Abarim in the wilderness east of Moabite territory.

¹²Then they camped in Zered Valley.

¹³From there they moved again and camped on the north side of the Arnon River, in the wilderness which extends into Amorite territory. (The Arnon was the border between the Moabites and the Amorites.)

¹⁴That is why The Book of the LORD's Battles speaks of ...the town of Waheb in the area of Suphah, and the valleys; the Arnon River,

¹⁵and the slope of the valleys that extend to the town of Ar and toward the border of Moab.

¹⁶From there they went on to a place called Wells, where the LORD said to Moses, Bring the people together, and I will give them water.

¹⁷ At that time the people of Israel sang this song: Wells, produce your water; And we will greet it with a song --

¹⁸ The well dug by princes And by leaders of the people, Dug with a royal scepter And with their walking sticks. They moved from the wilderness to Mattanah,

¹⁹ and from there they went on to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

²⁰ and from Bamoth to the valley in the territory of the Moabites, below the top of Mount Pisgah, looking out over the desert.

²¹ Then the people of Israel sent messengers to the Amorite king Sihon to say:

²² Let us pass through your land. We and our cattle will not leave the road and go into your fields or vineyards, and we will not drink water from your wells; we will stay on the main road until we are out of your territory.

²³ But Sihon would not permit the people of Israel to pass through his territory. He gathered his army and went out to Jahaz in the wilderness and attacked the Israelites.

²⁴ But the Israelites killed many of the enemy in battle and occupied their land from the Arnon River north to the Jabbok, that is, to the Ammonites, because the Ammonite border was strongly defended.

²⁵ So the people of Israel captured all the Amorite cities, including Heshbon and all the surrounding towns, and settled in them.

²⁶ Heshbon was the capital city of the Amorite king Sihon, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had captured all his land as far as the Arnon River.

²⁷ That is why the poets sing, Come to Heshbon, to King Sihon's city! We want to see it rebuilt and restored.

²⁸ Once from this city of Heshbon Sihon's army went forth like a fire; It destroyed the city of Ar in Moab And devoured the hills of the upper Arnon.

²⁹ How terrible for you, people of Moab! You worshipers of Chemosh are brought to ruin! Your god let the men become refugees, And the women became captives of the Amorite king.

³⁰But now their descendants are destroyed, All the way from Heshbon to Dibon, From Nashim to Nophah, near Medeba.

³¹So the people of Israel settled in the territory of the Amorites,

³²and Moses sent men to find the best way to attack the city of Jazer. The Israelites captured it and its surrounding towns and drove out the Amorites living there.

³³Then the Israelites turned and took the road to Bashan, and King Og of Bashan marched out with his army to attack them at Edrei.

³⁴The LORD said to Moses, Do not be afraid of him. I will give you victory over him, all his people, and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon, the Amorite king who ruled at Heshbon.

³⁵So the Israelites killed Og, his sons, and all his people, leaving no survivors, and then they occupied his land.

22¹The Israelites moved on and set up camp in the plains of Moab east of the Jordan and opposite Jericho.

²When the king of Moab, Balak son of Zippor, heard what the Israelites had

done to the Amorites and how many Israelites there were,

³ he and all his people became terrified.

⁴ The Moabites said to the leaders of the Midianites, This horde will soon destroy everything around us, like a bull eating the grass in a pasture. So King Balak

⁵ sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, who was at Pethor near the Euphrates River in the land of Amaw. They brought him this message from Balak: I want you to know that a whole nation has come from Egypt; its people are spreading out everywhere and threatening to take over our land.

⁶ They outnumber us, so please come and put a curse on them for me. Then perhaps we will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. I know that when you pronounce a blessing, people are blessed, and when you pronounce a curse, they are placed under a curse.

⁷ So the Moabite and Midianite leaders took with them the payment for the curse, went to Balaam, and gave him Balak's message.

⁸Balaam said to them, Spend the night here, and tomorrow I will report to you whatever the LORD tells me. So the Moabite leaders stayed with Balaam.

⁹God came to Balaam and asked, Who are these people that are staying with you?

¹⁰He answered, King Balak of Moab has sent them to tell me

¹¹that a people who came from Egypt has spread out over the whole land. He wants me to curse them for him, so that he can fight them and drive them out.

¹²God said to Balaam, Do not go with them, and do not put a curse on the people of Israel, because they have my blessing.

¹³The next morning Balaam went to Balak's messengers and said, Go back home; the LORD has refused to let me go with you.

¹⁴So they returned to Balak and told him that Balaam had refused to come with them.

¹⁵Then Balak sent a larger number of leaders, who were more important than the first.

¹⁶They went to Balaam and gave him this message from Balak: Please don't let anything prevent you from coming to me!

¹⁷I will reward you richly and do anything you say. Please come and curse these people for me.

¹⁸But Balaam answered, Even if Balak gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I could not disobey the command of the LORD my God in even the smallest matter.

¹⁹But please spend the night, as the others did, so that I may learn whether or not the LORD has something else to tell me.

²⁰That night God came to Balaam and said, If these men have come to ask you to go with them, get ready and go, but do only what I tell you.

²¹So the next morning Balaam saddled his donkey and went with the Moabite leaders.

²²God was angry that Balaam was going, and as Balaam was riding along on his donkey, accompanied by his two servants, the angel of the LORD stood in the road to bar his way.

²³When the donkey saw the angel standing there holding a sword, it left the road and turned into the fields. Balaam beat the donkey and brought it back onto the road.

²⁴Then the angel stood where the road narrowed between two vineyards and had a stone wall on each side.

²⁵When the donkey saw the angel, it moved over against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against it. Again Balaam beat the donkey.

²⁶Once more the angel moved ahead; he stood in a narrow place where there was no room at all to pass on either side.

²⁷This time, when the donkey saw the angel, it lay down. Balaam lost his temper and began to beat the donkey with his stick.

²⁸Then the LORD gave the donkey the power of speech, and it said to Balaam, What have I done to you? Why have you beaten me these three times?

²⁹Balaam answered, Because you have made a fool of me! If I had a sword, I would kill you.

³⁰The donkey replied, Am I not the same donkey on which you have ridden

all your life? Have I ever treated you like this before? No, he answered.

³¹ Then the LORD let Balaam see the angel standing there with his sword; and Balaam threw himself face downward on the ground.

³² The angel demanded, Why have you beaten your donkey three times like this? I have come to bar your way, because you should not be making this journey.

³³ But your donkey saw me and turned aside three times. If it hadn't, I would have killed you and spared the donkey.

³⁴ Balaam replied, I have sinned. I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me; but now if you think it is wrong for me to go on, I will return home.

³⁵ But the angel said, Go on with these men, but say only what I tell you to say. So Balaam went on with them.

³⁶ When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went to meet him at Ar, a city on the Arnon River at the border of Moab.

³⁷ Balak said to him, Why didn't you come when I sent for you the first time?

Did you think I wasn't able to reward you enough?

³⁸Balaam answered, I came, didn't I? But now, what power do I have? I can say only what God tells me to say.

³⁹So Balaam went with Balak to the town of Huzoth,

⁴⁰where Balak slaughtered cattle and sheep and gave some of the meat to Balaam and the leaders who were with him.

⁴¹The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, from where Balaam could see a part of the people of Israel.

23¹ He said to Balak, Build seven altars here for me, and bring me seven bulls and seven rams.

²Balak did as he was told, and he and Balaam offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

³Then Balaam said to Balak, Stand here by your burnt offering, while I go to see whether or not the LORD will meet me. I will tell you whatever he reveals to me. So he went alone to the top of a hill,

⁴and God met him. Balaam said to him, I have built the seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each.

⁵The LORD told Balaam what to say and sent him back to Balak to give him his message.

⁶So he went back and found Balak still standing by his burnt offering with all the leaders of Moab.

⁷Balaam uttered this prophecy: Balak king of Moab has brought me From Syria, from the eastern mountains. Come speak for me, he said. Put a curse on the people of Israel.

⁸How can I curse what God has not cursed, Or speak of doom when the LORD has not?

⁹From the high rocks I can see them; I can watch them from the hills. They are a nation that lives alone; They know they are blessed more than other nations.

¹⁰The descendants of Israel are like the dust -- There are too many of them to be counted. Let me end my days like one of God's people; Let me die in peace like the righteous.

¹¹Then Balak said to Balaam, What have you done to me? I brought you here to curse my enemies, but all you have done is bless them.

¹²He answered, I can say only what the LORD tells me to say.

¹³Then Balak said to Balaam, Come with me to another place from which you can see only some of the Israelites. Curse them for me from there.

¹⁴He took him to the field of Zophim on the top of Mount Pisgah. There also he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each of them.

¹⁵Balaam said to Balak, Stand here by your burnt offering, and I will meet God over there.

¹⁶The LORD met Balaam, told him what to say, and sent him back to Balak to give him his message.

¹⁷So he went back and found Balak still standing by his burnt offering, with the leaders of Moab. Balak asked what the LORD had said,

¹⁸and Balaam uttered this prophecy: Come, Balak son of Zippor, And listen to what I have to say.

¹⁹God is not like people, who lie; He is not a human who changes his mind. Whatever he promises, he does; He speaks, and it is done.

²⁰I have been instructed to bless, And when God blesses, I cannot call it back.

²¹I foresee that Israel's future Will bring her no misfortune or trouble. The LORD their God is with them; They proclaim that he is their king.

²²God has brought them out of Egypt; He fights for them like a wild ox.

²³There is no magic charm, no witchcraft, That can be used against the nation of Israel. Now people will say about Israel, Look what God has done!

²⁴The nation of Israel is like a mighty lion: It doesn't rest until it has torn and devoured, Until it has drunk the blood of those it has killed.

²⁵Then Balak said to Balaam, You refuse to curse the people of Israel, but at least don't bless them!

²⁶Balaam answered, Didn't I tell you that I had to do everything that the LORD told me?

²⁷Balak said, Come with me, and I will take you to another place. Perhaps God will be willing to let you curse them for me from there.

²⁸So he took Balaam to the top of Mount Peor overlooking the desert.

²⁹Balaam said to him, Build seven altars for me here and bring me seven bulls and seven rams.

³⁰Balak did as he was told, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

24¹ By now Balaam knew that the LORD wanted him to bless the people of Israel, so he did not go to look for omens, as he had done before. He turned toward the desert

²and saw the people of Israel camped tribe by tribe. The spirit of God took control of him,

³and he uttered this prophecy: The message of Balaam son of Beor, The words of the man who can see clearly,

⁴Who can hear what God is saying. With staring eyes I see in a trance A vision from Almighty God.

⁵The tents of Israel are beautiful,

⁶Like long rows of palms Or gardens beside a river, Like aloes planted by the LORD Or cedars beside the water.

⁷They will have abundant rainfall And plant their seed in well-watered fields. Their king shall be greater than Agag, And his rule shall be extended far and wide.

⁸God brought them out of Egypt; He fights for them like a wild ox. They devour their enemies, Crush their bones, smash their arrows.

⁹The nation is like a mighty lion; When it is sleeping, no one dares wake it. Whoever blesses Israel will be blessed, And whoever curses Israel will be cursed.

¹⁰Balak clenched his fists in anger and said to Balaam, I called you to curse my enemies, but three times now you have blessed them instead.

¹¹Now get on home! I promised to reward you, but the LORD has kept you from getting the reward.

¹²Balaam answered, I told the messengers you sent to me that

¹³even if you gave me all the silver and gold in your palace, I could not disobey the command of the LORD by doing anything of myself. I will say only what the LORD tells me to say.

¹⁴Balaam said to Balak, Now I am going back to my own people, but before I go, I am warning you what the people of Israel will do to your people in the future.

¹⁵Then he uttered this prophecy: The message of Balaam son of Beor, The words of the man who can see clearly,

¹⁶Who can hear what God is saying And receive the knowledge that comes from the Most High. With staring eyes I see in a trance A vision from Almighty God.

¹⁷I look into the future, And I see the nation of Israel. A king, like a bright star, will arise in that nation. Like a comet he will come from Israel. He will strike the leaders of Moab And beat down all the people of Seth.

¹⁸He will conquer his enemies in Edom And make their land his property, While Israel continues victorious.

¹⁹The nation of Israel will trample them down And wipe out the last survivors.

²⁰Then in his vision Balaam saw the Amalekites and uttered this prophecy: Amalek was the most powerful nation of all, But at the end it will perish forever.

²¹In his vision he saw the Kenites, and uttered this prophecy: The place where you live is secure, Safe as a nest set high on a cliff,

²²But you Kenites will be destroyed When Assyria takes you captive.

²³ Balaam uttered this prophecy: Who are these people gathering in the north?

²⁴ Invaders will sail from Cyprus; They will conquer Assyria and Eber, But they, in turn, will perish forever.

²⁵ Then Balaam got ready and went back home, and Balak went on his way.

25 ¹ When the Israelites were camped at Acacia Valley, the men began to have sexual intercourse with the Moabite women who were there.

² These women invited them to sacrificial feasts, where the god of Moab was worshiped. The Israelites ate the food and worshiped the god

³ Baal of Peor. So the LORD was angry with them

⁴ and said to Moses, Take all the leaders of Israel and, in obedience to me, execute them in broad daylight, and then I will no longer be angry with the people.

⁵ Moses said to the officials, Each of you is to kill every man in your tribe who has become a worshiper of Baal of Peor.

⁶ One of the Israelites took a Midianite woman into his tent in the sight of Moses and the whole community, while they

were mourning at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence.

⁷When Phinehas, the son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest, saw this, he got up and left the assembly. He took a spear,

⁸followed the man and the woman into the tent, and drove the spear through both of them. In this way the epidemic that was destroying Israel was stopped,

⁹but it had already killed twenty-four thousand people.

¹⁰The LORD said to Moses,

¹¹Because of what Phinehas has done, I am no longer angry with the people of Israel. He refused to tolerate the worship of any god but me, and that is why I did not destroy them in my anger.

¹²So tell him that I am making a covenant with him that is valid for all time to come.

¹³He and his descendants are permanently established as priests, because he did not tolerate any rivals to me and brought about forgiveness for the people's sin.

¹⁴The name of the Israelite who was killed with the Midianite woman was

Zimri son of Salu, the head of a family in the tribe of Simeon.

¹⁵The woman's name was Cozbi. Zur, her father, was chief of a group of Midianite clans.

¹⁶The LORD commanded Moses,

¹⁷Attack the Midianites and destroy them,

¹⁸because of the evil they did to you when they deceived you at Peor, and because of Cozbi, who was killed at the time of the epidemic at Peor.

26 ¹After the epidemic the LORD said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron,

²Take a census by families of the whole community of Israel, of all men twenty years old or older who are fit for military service.

³Moses and Eleazar obeyed and called together all the men of that age group. They assembled in the plains of Moab across the Jordan River from Jericho. These were the Israelites who came out of Egypt:

⁴(26: 3)

⁵The tribe of Reuben (Reuben was the oldest son of Jacob): the clans of Hanoch, Pallu,

⁶Hezron, and Carmi.

⁷These clans numbered 43,730 men.

⁸The descendants of Pallu were Eliab

⁹and his sons Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. (These are the Dathan and Abiram who were chosen by the community. They defied Moses and Aaron and joined the followers of Korah when they rebelled against the LORD.

¹⁰The ground opened and swallowed them, and they died with Korah and his followers when fire destroyed 250 men; they became a warning to the people.

¹¹But the sons of Korah were not killed.)

¹²The tribe of Simeon: the clans of Nemuel, Jamin, Jachin,

¹³Zerah, and Shaul.

¹⁴These clans numbered 22,200 men.

¹⁵The tribe of Gad: the clans of Zephon, Haggi, Shuni,

¹⁶Ozni, Eri,

¹⁷Arod, and Areli.

¹⁸These clans numbered 40,500 men.

¹⁹The tribe of Judah: the clans of Shelah, Perez, Zerah, Hezron, and Hamul. (Two of Judah's sons, Er and Onan, had died in the land of Canaan.)

²⁰(26: 19)

²¹(26: 19)

²²These clans numbered 76,500 men.

²³The tribe of Issachar: the clans of Tola, Puah,

²⁴Jashub, and Shimron.

²⁵These clans numbered 64,300 men.

²⁶The tribe of Zebulun: the clans of Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

²⁷These clans numbered 60,500 men.

²⁸The tribes of Joseph, who was the father of two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

²⁹The tribe of Manasseh. Machir son of Manasseh was the father of Gilead, and the following clans traced their ancestry to Gilead:

³⁰the clans of Iezer, Helek,

³¹Asriel, Shechem,

³²Shemida, and Hopher.

³³Zelophehad son of Hopher had no sons, but only daughters; their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

³⁴ These clans numbered 52,700 men.

³⁵ The tribe of Ephraim: the clans of Shuthelah, Becher, and Tahan.

³⁶ The clan of Eran traced its descent from Shuthelah.

³⁷ These clans numbered 32,500 men. These are the clans descended from Joseph.

³⁸ The tribe of Benjamin: the clans of Bela, Ashbel, Ahiram,

³⁹ Shephupham, and Hupham.

⁴⁰ The clans of Ard and Naaman traced their descent from Bela.

⁴¹ These clans numbered 45,600 men.

⁴² The tribe of Dan: the clan of Shuham,

⁴³ which numbered 64,400 men.

⁴⁴ The tribe of Asher: the clans of Imnah, Ishvi, and Beriah.

⁴⁵ The clans of Heber and Malchiel traced their descent from Beriah.

⁴⁶ Asher had a daughter named Serah.

⁴⁷ These clans numbered 53,400 men.

⁴⁸ The tribe of Naphtali: the clans of Jahzeel, Guni,

⁴⁹ Jezer, and Shillem.

⁵⁰ These clans numbered 45,400 men.

⁵¹ The total number of the Israelite men was 601,730.

⁵²The LORD said to Moses,

⁵³Divide the land among the tribes, according to their size.

⁵⁴Divide the land by drawing lots, and give a large share to a large tribe and a small one to a small tribe.

⁵⁵(26: 54)

⁵⁶(26: 54)

⁵⁷The tribe of Levi consisted of the clans of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

⁵⁸Their descendants included the subclans of Libni, Hebron, Mahli, Mushi, and Korah. Kohath was the father of Amram,

⁵⁹who was married to Levi's daughter Jochebed, who was born in Egypt. She bore Amram two sons, Aaron and Moses, and a daughter, Miriam.

⁶⁰Aaron had four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

⁶¹Nadab and Abihu died when they offered unholy fire to the LORD.

⁶²The male Levites who were one month old or older numbered 23,000. They were listed separately from the rest of the Israelites, because they were not given any property in Israel.

⁶³All these clans were listed by Moses and Eleazar when they took a census of the Israelites in the plains of Moab across the Jordan River from Jericho.

⁶⁴There was not even one man left among those whom Moses and Aaron had listed in the first census in the Sinai Desert.

⁶⁵The LORD had said that all of them would die in the wilderness, and except for Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun they all did.

27 ¹Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah were the daughters of Zelophehad son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, son of Joseph.

²They went and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders, and the whole community at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence and said,

³Our father died in the wilderness without leaving any sons. He was not among the followers of Korah, who rebelled against the LORD; he died because of his own sin.

⁴Just because he had no sons, why should our father's name disappear from

Israel? Give us property among our father's relatives.

⁵ Moses presented their case to the LORD,

⁶ and the LORD said to him,

⁷ What the daughters of Zelophehad request is right; give them property among their father's relatives. Let his inheritance pass on to them.

⁸ Tell the people of Israel that whenever a man dies without leaving a son, his daughter is to inherit his property.

⁹ If he has no daughter, his brothers are to inherit it.

¹⁰ If he has no brothers, his father's brothers are to inherit it.

¹¹ If he has no brothers or uncles, then his nearest relative is to inherit it and hold it as his own property. The people of Israel are to observe this as a legal requirement, just as I, the LORD, have commanded you.

¹² The LORD said to Moses, Go up the Abarim Mountains and look out over the land that I am giving to the Israelites.

¹³ After you have seen it, you will die, as your brother Aaron did,

¹⁴ because both of you rebelled against my command in the wilderness of Zin. When the whole community complained against me at Meribah, you refused to acknowledge my holy power before them. (Meribah is the spring at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.)

¹⁵ Moses prayed,

¹⁶ LORD God, source of all life, appoint, I pray, a man who can lead the people

¹⁷ and can command them in battle, so that your community will not be like sheep without a shepherd.

¹⁸ The LORD said to Moses, Take Joshua son of Nun, a capable man, and place your hands on his head.

¹⁹ Have him stand in front of Eleazar the priest and the whole community, and there before them all proclaim him as your successor.

²⁰ Give him some of your own authority, so that the whole community of Israel will obey him.

²¹ He will depend on Eleazar the priest, who will learn my will by using the Urim and Thummim. In this way Eleazar will direct Joshua and the whole community of Israel in all their affairs.

²² Moses did as the LORD had commanded him. He had Joshua stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole community.

²³ As the LORD had commanded, Moses put his hands on Joshua's head and proclaimed him as his successor.

28 ¹ The LORD commanded Moses ² to instruct the Israelites to present to God at the appointed times the required food offerings that are pleasing to him.

³ These are the food offerings that are to be presented to the LORD: for the daily burnt offering, two one-year-old male lambs without any defects.

⁴ Offer the first lamb in the morning, and the second in the evening,

⁵ each with a grain offering of 2 pounds of flour, mixed with 2 pints of the best olive oil.

⁶ This is the daily offering that is completely burned, which was first offered at Mount Sinai as a food offering, an odor pleasing to the LORD.

⁷ As the wine offering with the first lamb, pour out at the altar 2 pints of wine.

⁸In the evening offer the second lamb in the same way as the morning offering, together with its wine offering. It also is a food offering, an odor pleasing to the LORD.

⁹On the Sabbath day offer two one-year-old male lambs without any defects, 4 pounds of flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering, and the wine offering.

¹⁰This burnt offering is to be offered every Sabbath in addition to the daily offering with its wine offering.

¹¹Present a burnt offering to the LORD at the beginning of each month: two young bulls, one ram, seven one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

¹²As a grain offering, offer flour mixed with olive oil: with each bull, 6 pounds of flour; with the ram, 4 pounds;

¹³and with each lamb, 2 pounds. These burnt offerings are food offerings, an odor pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁴The proper wine offering is 4 pints of wine with each bull, 3 pints with the ram, and 2 pints with each lamb. This is the regulation for the burnt offering for

the first day of each month throughout the year.

¹⁵And in addition to the daily burnt offering with its wine offering, offer one male goat as a sin offering.

¹⁶The Passover Festival in honor of the LORD is to be held on the fourteenth day of the first month.

¹⁷On the fifteenth day a religious festival begins which lasts seven days, during which only bread prepared without yeast is to be eaten.

¹⁸On the first day of the festival you are to gather for worship, and no work is to be done.

¹⁹Offer a burnt offering as a food offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

²⁰Offer the proper grain offering of flour mixed with olive oil: 6 pounds with each bull, 4 pounds with the ram,

²¹and 2 pounds with each lamb.

²²Also offer one male goat as a sin offering, and in this way perform the ritual of purification for the people.

²³Offer these in addition to the regular morning burnt offering.

²⁴In the same way, for seven days offer to the LORD a food offering, an odor pleasing to him. Offer this in addition to the daily burnt offering and wine offering.

²⁵Meet for worship on the seventh day and do no work.

²⁶On the first day of the Harvest Festival, when you present the offering of new grain to the LORD, you are to gather for worship, and no work is to be done.

²⁷Offer a burnt offering as an odor pleasing to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

²⁸Offer the proper grain offering of flour mixed with olive oil: 6 pounds with each bull, 4 pounds with the ram,

²⁹and 2 pounds with each lamb.

³⁰Also offer one male goat as a sin offering, and in this way perform the ritual of purification for the people.

³¹Offer these and the wine offering in addition to the daily burnt offering and grain offering.

29¹ On the first day of the seventh month you are to gather for

worship, and no work is to be done. On that day trumpets are to be blown.

²Present a burnt offering to the LORD, an odor pleasing to him: one young bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

³Offer the proper grain offering of flour mixed with olive oil: 6 pounds of flour with the bull, 4 pounds with the ram, ⁴and 2 pounds with each lamb.

⁵Also offer one male goat as a sin offering, and in this way perform the ritual of purification for the people.

⁶Offer these in addition to the regular burnt offering for the first day of the month with its grain offering, and the daily burnt offering with its grain offering and wine offering. These food offerings are an odor pleasing to the LORD.

⁷Gather for worship on the tenth day of the seventh month; eat no food and do no work.

⁸Offer a burnt offering to the LORD, an odor pleasing to him: one young bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

⁹ Offer the proper grain offering of flour mixed with olive oil: 6 pounds of flour with the bull, 4 pounds with the ram, ¹⁰ and 2 pounds with each lamb.

¹¹ Also offer one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the goat offered in the ritual of purification for the people, and the daily burnt offering with its grain offering and wine offering.

¹² Gather for worship on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Celebrate this festival in honor of the LORD for seven days and do no work.

¹³ On this first day offer a food offering to the LORD, an odor pleasing to him: thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

¹⁴ Offer the proper grain offering of flour mixed with olive oil: 6 pounds of flour with each bull, 4 pounds with each ram,

¹⁵ and 2 pounds with each lamb, with the required wine offerings.

¹⁶ Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. Offer these in addition to the daily burnt offering with its grain offering and wine offering.

¹⁷ On the second day offer twelve young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

¹⁸ Offer with them all the other offerings required for the first day.

¹⁹ (29: 18)

²⁰ On the third day offer eleven young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

²¹ Offer with them all the other offerings required for the first day.

²² (29: 21)

²³ On the fourth day offer ten young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

²⁴ Offer with them all the other offerings required for the first day.

²⁵ (29: 24)

²⁶ On the fifth day offer nine young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

²⁷ Offer with them all the other offerings required for the first day.

²⁸ (29: 27)

²⁹ On the sixth day offer eight young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

³⁰ Offer with them all the other offerings required for the first day.

³¹ (29: 30)

³² On the seventh day offer seven young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

³³ Offer with them all the other offerings required for the first day.

³⁴ (29: 33)

³⁵ On the eighth day gather for worship and do no work.

³⁶ Offer a burnt offering as a food offering to the LORD, an odor pleasing to him: one young bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs, all without any defects.

³⁷ Offer with them all the other offerings required for the first day.

³⁸ (29: 37)

³⁹ These are the regulations concerning the burnt offerings, grain offerings, wine offerings, and fellowship offerings that you are to make to the LORD at your

appointed festivals. These are in addition to the offerings you give in fulfillment of a vow or as freewill offerings.

⁴⁰So Moses told the people of Israel everything that the LORD had commanded him.

30¹ Moses gave the following instructions to the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

²When a man makes a vow to give something to the LORD or takes an oath to abstain from something, he must not break his promise, but must do everything that he said he would.

³When a young woman still living in her father's house makes a vow to give something to the LORD or promises to abstain from something,

⁴she must do everything that she vowed or promised unless her father raises an objection when he hears about it.

⁵But if her father forbids her to fulfill the vow when he hears about it, she is not required to keep it. The LORD will forgive her, because her father refused to let her keep it.

⁶If an unmarried woman makes a vow, whether deliberately or carelessly, or promises to abstain from something, and then marries,

⁷she must do everything that she vowed or promised unless her husband raises an objection when he hears about it.

⁸But if her husband forbids her to fulfill the vow when he hears about it, she is not required to keep it. The LORD will forgive her.

⁹A widow or a divorced woman must keep every vow she makes and every promise to abstain from something.

¹⁰If a married woman makes a vow or promises to abstain from something,

¹¹she must do everything that she vowed or promised unless her husband raises an objection when he hears about it.

¹²But if her husband forbids her to fulfill the vow when he hears about it, she is not required to keep it. The LORD will forgive her, because her husband prevented her from keeping her vow.

¹³Her husband has the right to affirm or to annul any vow or promise that she has made.

¹⁴But if, by the day after he hears of the vow, he has raised no objection, she must do everything that she has vowed or promised. He has affirmed the vow by not objecting on the day he heard of it.

¹⁵But if he later annuls the vow, he must suffer the consequences for the failure to fulfill the vow.

¹⁶These are the rules that the LORD gave Moses concerning vows made by an unmarried woman living in her father's house or by a married woman.

31 ¹The LORD said to Moses, ²Punish the Midianites for what they did to the people of Israel. After you have done that, you will die.

³So Moses said to the people, Get ready for war, so that you can attack Midian and punish them for what they did to the LORD.

⁴From each tribe of Israel send a thousand men to war.

⁵So a thousand men were chosen from each tribe, a total of twelve thousand men ready for battle.

⁶ Moses sent them to war under the command of Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest, who took charge of the sacred objects and the trumpets for giving signals.

⁷ They attacked Midian, as the LORD had commanded Moses, and killed all the men,

⁸ including the five kings of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba. They also killed Balaam son of Beor.

⁹ The people of Israel captured the Midianite women and children, took their cattle and their flocks, plundered all their wealth,

¹⁰ and burned all their cities and camps.

¹¹ They took all the loot that they had captured, including the prisoners and the animals,

¹² and brought them to Moses and Eleazar and to the community of the people of Israel, who were at the camp on the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho.

¹³ Moses, Eleazar, and all the other leaders of the community went out of the camp to meet the army.

¹⁴ Moses became angry with the officers, the commanders of battalions and companies, who had returned from the war.

¹⁵ He asked them, Why have you kept all the women alive?

¹⁶ Remember that it was the women who followed Balaam's instructions and at Peor led the people to be unfaithful to the LORD. That was what brought the epidemic on the LORD's people.

¹⁷ So now kill every boy and kill every woman who has had sexual intercourse,

¹⁸ but keep alive for yourselves all the girls and all the women who are virgins.

¹⁹ Now all of you who have killed anyone or have touched a corpse must stay outside the camp for seven days. On the third day and on the seventh day purify yourselves and the women you have captured.

²⁰ You must also purify every piece of clothing and everything made of leather, goats' hair, or wood.

²¹ Eleazar the priest said to the men who had returned from battle, These are the regulations that the LORD has given to Moses.

²² Everything that will not burn, such as gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, or lead, is to be purified by passing it through fire. Everything else is to be purified by the water for purification.

²³ (31: 22)

²⁴ On the seventh day you must wash your clothes; then you will be ritually clean and will be permitted to enter the camp.

²⁵ The LORD said to Moses,

²⁶ You and Eleazar, together with the other leaders of the community, are to count everything that has been captured, including the prisoners and the animals.

²⁷ Divide what was taken into two equal parts, one part for the soldiers and the other part for the rest of the community.

²⁸ From the part that belongs to the soldiers, withhold as a tax for the LORD one out of every five hundred prisoners and the same proportion of the cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats.

²⁹ Give them to Eleazar the priest as a special contribution to the LORD.

³⁰ From the part given to the rest of the people, take one out of every fifty prisoners and the same proportion of the

cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats. Give them to the Levites who are in charge of the LORD's Tent.

³¹ Moses and Eleazar did what the LORD commanded.

³² The following is a list of what was captured by the soldiers, in addition to what they kept for themselves: 675,000 sheep and goats, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys, and 32,000 virgins.

³³ (31: 32)

³⁴ (31: 32)

³⁵ (31: 32)

³⁶ The half share of the soldiers was 337,500 sheep and goats, of which 675 were the tax for the LORD; 36,000 cattle for the soldiers, of which 72 were the tax for the LORD; 30,500 donkeys for the soldiers, of which 61 were the tax for the LORD; and 16,000 virgins for the soldiers, of which 32 were the tax for the LORD.

³⁷ (31: 36)

³⁸ (31: 36)

³⁹ (31: 36)

⁴⁰ (31: 36)

⁴¹ So Moses gave Eleazar the tax as a special contribution to the LORD, as the LORD had commanded.

⁴² The share of the community was the same as that for the soldiers: 337,500 sheep and goats, 36,000 cattle, 30,500 donkeys, and 16,000 virgins.

⁴³ (31: 42)

⁴⁴ (31: 42)

⁴⁵ (31: 42)

⁴⁶ (31: 42)

⁴⁷ From this share Moses took one out of every fifty prisoners and animals, and as the LORD had commanded, gave them to the Levites who were in charge of the LORD's Tent.

⁴⁸ Then the officers who had commanded the army went to Moses

⁴⁹ and reported, Sir, we have counted the soldiers under our command and not one of them is missing.

⁵⁰ So we are bringing the gold ornaments, armlets, bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces that each of us has taken. We offer them to the LORD as a payment for our lives, so that he will protect us.

⁵¹ Moses and Eleazar received the gold, all of which was in the form of ornaments.

⁵² The total contribution of the officers weighed over four hundred pounds.

⁵³ Those who were not officers kept the loot they had taken.

⁵⁴ So Moses and Eleazar took the gold to the Tent, so that the LORD would protect the people of Israel.

32¹ The tribes of Reuben and Gad had a lot of livestock. When they saw how suitable the land of Jazer and Gilead was for cattle,

² they went to Moses, Eleazar, and the other leaders of the community and said,

³ This region which the LORD has helped the Israelites occupy -- the towns of Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sibmah, Nebo, and Beon -- is good land for livestock, and we have so much livestock.

⁴ (32: 3)

⁵ Please give us this land as our property, and do not make us cross the Jordan River and settle there.

⁶ Moses replied, Do you want to stay here while the other Israelites go to war?

⁷ How dare you try to discourage the people of Israel from crossing the Jordan into the land which the LORD has given them?

⁸ That is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land.

⁹ They went as far as Eshcol Valley and saw the land, but when they returned, they discouraged the people from entering the land which the LORD had given them.

¹⁰ The LORD became angry that day and made a promise:

¹¹ I swear that because they did not remain loyal to me, none of the men twenty years old or older who came out of Egypt will enter the land that I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

¹² This included everyone, except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun; they remained loyal to the LORD.

¹³ The LORD became angry with the people and made them wander in the wilderness forty years until that whole generation that had displeased him was dead.

¹⁴And now you have taken your ancestors' place, a new generation of sinful people ready to bring down the fierce anger of the LORD on Israel again.

¹⁵If you people of Reuben and Gad refuse to follow him now, he will once again abandon all these people in the wilderness, and you will be responsible for their destruction.

¹⁶They approached Moses and said, First, allow us to build stone enclosures here for our sheep and fortified towns for our dependents.

¹⁷Then we will be ready to go with the other Israelites into battle and lead the attack until we have settled them in the land that will be theirs. In the meantime, our dependents can live here in the fortified towns, safe from the people of this land.

¹⁸We will not return to our homes until all the other Israelites have taken possession of the land assigned to them.

¹⁹We will not take possession of any property among them on the other side of the Jordan, because we have received our share here east of the Jordan.

²⁰ Moses answered, If you really mean what you say, then here in the presence of the LORD get ready to go into battle.

²¹ All your fighting men are to cross the Jordan and under the command of the LORD they are to attack our enemies until the LORD defeats them

²² and takes possession of the land. After that, you may return, because you will have fulfilled your obligation to the LORD and to the other Israelites. Then the LORD will acknowledge that this land east of the Jordan is yours.

²³ But if you do not keep your promise, I warn you that you will be sinning against the LORD. Make no mistake about it; you will be punished for your sin.

²⁴ So build your towns and the enclosures for your sheep, but do what you have promised!

²⁵ The men of Gad and Reuben said, Sir, we will do as you command.

²⁶ Our wives and children and our cattle and sheep will remain here in the towns of Gilead.

²⁷ But all of us are ready to go into battle under the LORD's command. We

will cross the Jordan and fight, just as you have said.

²⁸ So Moses gave these commands to Eleazar, Joshua, and the other leaders of Israel:

²⁹ If the men of Gad and Reuben cross the Jordan ready for battle at the LORD's command and if with their help you are able to conquer the land, then give them the land of Gilead as their property.

³⁰ But if they do not cross the Jordan and go into battle with you, they are to receive their share of the property in the land of Canaan, as you do.

³¹ The men of Gad and Reuben answered, Sir, we will do as the LORD has commanded.

³² Under his command we will cross into the land of Canaan and go into battle, so that we can retain our property here east of the Jordan.

³³ So Moses assigned to the tribes of Gad and Reuben and to half the tribe of Manasseh all the territory of King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan, including the towns and the country around them.

³⁴ The tribe of Gad rebuilt the fortified towns of Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer,

³⁵ Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah,

³⁶ Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran.

³⁷ The tribe of Reuben rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim,

³⁸ Nebo, Baal Meon (this name was changed), and Sibmah. They gave new names to the towns they rebuilt.

³⁹ The clan of Machir son of Manasseh invaded the land of Gilead, occupied it, and drove out the Amorites who were there.

⁴⁰ So Moses gave Gilead to the clan of Machir, and they lived there.

⁴¹ Jair, of the tribe of Manasseh, attacked and captured some villages and named them Villages of Jair.

⁴² Nobah attacked and captured Kenath and its villages, and he renamed it Nobah, after himself.

33¹ The following account gives the names of the places where the Israelites set up camp after they left Egypt in their tribes under the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

²At the command of the LORD, Moses wrote down the name of the place each time they set up camp.

³The people of Israel left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month of the year, the day after the first Passover. Under the LORD's protection they left the city of Rameses in full view of the Egyptians,

⁴who were burying the first-born sons that the LORD had killed. By doing this, the LORD showed that he was more powerful than the gods of Egypt.

⁵The people of Israel left Rameses and set up camp at Sukkoth.

⁶Their next camp was at Etham on the edge of the desert.

⁷From there they turned back to Pi Hahiroth, east of Baal Zephon, and camped near Migdol.

⁸They left Pi Hahiroth and passed through the Red Sea into the desert of Shur; after a three days' march they camped at Marah.

⁹From there they went to Elim, where they camped, because there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees there.

¹⁰They left Elim and camped near the Gulf of Suez.

¹¹Their next camp was in the desert of Sin.

¹²Then they camped at Dophkah,

¹³and after that at Alush.

¹⁴Next was Rephidim, where there was no water for them to drink.

¹⁵From Rephidim to Mount Hor they set up camp at the following places: the Sinai Desert, Kibroth Hattaavah (or Graves of Craving), HazerOTH, Rithmah, Rimmon Perez, Libnah, Rissah, Kehelathah, Mount Shepher, Haradah, Makheloth, Tahath, Terah, Mithkah, Hashmonah, Moseroth, Bene Jaakan, Hor Haggidgad, Jotbathah, Abronah, Eziongeber, the wilderness of Zin (that is, Kadesh), and Mount Hor, at the edge of the land of Edom.

¹⁶(33: 15)

¹⁷(33: 15)

¹⁸(33: 15)

¹⁹(33: 15)

²⁰(33: 15)

²¹(33: 15)

²²(33: 15)

²³(33: 15)

24 (33: 15)

25 (33: 15)

26 (33: 15)

27 (33: 15)

28 (33: 15)

29 (33: 15)

30 (33: 15)

31 (33: 15)

32 (33: 15)

33 (33: 15)

34 (33: 15)

35 (33: 15)

36 (33: 15)

37 (33: 15)

³⁸At the command of the LORD, Aaron the priest climbed Mount Hor. At the age of 123 he died there on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year after the Israelites had left Egypt.

³⁹(33: 38)

⁴⁰The king of Arad in southern Canaan heard that the Israelites were coming.

⁴¹From Mount Hor to the plains of Moab the Israelites set up camp at the following places: Zalmonah, Punon, Oboth, the ruins of Abarim in the territory of Moab, Dibon Gad, Almon Diblathaim, the Abarim Mountains near

Mount Nebo, and in the plains of Moab across the Jordan River from Jericho, between Beth Jeshimoth and Acacia Valley.

⁴² (33: 41)

⁴³ (33: 41)

⁴⁴ (33: 41)

⁴⁵ (33: 41)

⁴⁶ (33: 41)

⁴⁷ (33: 41)

⁴⁸ (33: 41)

⁴⁹ (33: 41)

⁵⁰ There in the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho the LORD gave Moses

⁵¹ the following instructions for Israel: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

⁵² you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land. Destroy all their stone and metal idols and all their places of worship.

⁵³ Occupy the land and settle in it, because I am giving it to you.

⁵⁴ Divide the land among the various tribes and clans by drawing lots, giving a large piece of property to a large clan and a small one to a small clan.

⁵⁵ But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those that are left will be as troublesome as splinters in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they will fight against you.

⁵⁶ If you do not drive them out, I will destroy you, as I planned to destroy them.

34 ¹ The LORD gave Moses ² the following instructions for the people of Israel: When you enter Canaan, the land which I am giving you, the borders of your territory will be as follows.

³ The southern border will extend from the wilderness of Zin along the border of Edom. It will begin on the east at the southern end of the Dead Sea.

⁴ Then it will turn southward toward Akrabbim Pass and continue on through Zin as far south as Kadesh Barnea. Then it will turn northwest to Hazar Addar and on to Azmon,

⁵ where it will turn toward the valley at the border of Egypt and end at the Mediterranean.

⁶ The western border will be the Mediterranean Sea.

⁷The northern border will follow a line from the Mediterranean to Mount Hor
⁸and from there to Hamath Pass. It will continue to Zedad
⁹and to Ziphron, and will end at Hazar Enan.

¹⁰The eastern border will follow a line from Hazar Enan to Shepham.

¹¹It will then go south to Harbel, east of Ain, and on to the hills on the eastern shore of Lake Galilee,

¹²then south along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea. These will be the four borders of your land.

¹³So Moses said to the Israelites, This is the land that you will receive by drawing lots, the land that the LORD has assigned to the nine and one-half tribes.

¹⁴The tribes of Reuben and Gad and the eastern half of Manasseh have received their property, divided according to their families,

¹⁵on the eastern side of the Jordan, opposite Jericho.

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁷Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun will divide the land for the people.

¹⁸Take also one leader from each tribe to help them divide it.

¹⁹These are the men the LORD chose:
Tribe ~ ~ Leader; Judah ~ ~ Caleb son of Jephunneh; Simeon ~ ~ Shelumiel son of Ammihud; Benjamin ~ ~ Elidad son of Chislon; Dan ~ ~ Bukki son of Jogli; Manasseh ~ ~ Hanniel son of Ephod; Ephraim ~ ~ Kemuel son of Shiphthan; Zebulun ~ ~ Elizaphan son of Parnach; Issachar ~ ~ Paltiel son of Azzan; Asher ~ ~ Ahihud son of Shelomi; Naphtali ~ ~ Pedahel son of Ammihud

²⁰(34: 19)

²¹(34: 19)

²²(34: 19)

²³(34: 19)

²⁴(34: 19)

²⁵(34: 19)

²⁶(34: 19)

²⁷(34: 19)

²⁸(34: 19)

²⁹These are the men that the LORD assigned to divide the property for the people of Israel in the land of Canaan.

35¹In the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho the LORD said to Moses,

²Tell the Israelites that from the property they receive they must give the Levites some cities to live in and pasture land around the cities.

³These cities will belong to the Levites, and they will live there. The pasture land will be for their cattle and all their other animals.

⁴The pasture land is to extend outward from the city walls five hundred yards in each direction,

⁵so that there is a square area measuring one thousand yards on each side, with the city in the middle.

⁶You are to give the Levites six cities of refuge to which any of you can escape if you kill someone accidentally. In addition, give them forty-two other cities

⁷with their pasture land, making a total of forty-eight.

⁸The number of Levite cities in each tribe is to be determined according to the size of its territory.

⁹The LORD told Moses

¹⁰to say to the people of Israel: When you cross the Jordan River and enter the land of Canaan,

¹¹ you are to choose cities of refuge to which any of you can escape if you kill someone accidentally.

¹² There you will be safe from the dead person's relative who seeks revenge. No one accused of manslaughter is to be put to death without a public trial.

¹³ Choose six cities,

¹⁴ three east of the Jordan and three in the land of Canaan.

¹⁵ These will serve as cities of refuge for Israelites and for foreigners who are temporary or permanent residents. Anyone who kills someone accidentally can escape to one of them.

¹⁶ If, however, any of you use a weapon of iron or stone or wood to kill someone, you are guilty of murder and are to be put to death.

¹⁷ (35: 16)

¹⁸ (35: 16)

¹⁹ The dead person's nearest relative has the responsibility for putting the murderer to death. When he finds you, he is to kill you.

²⁰ If you hate someone and kill him by pushing him down or by throwing something at him

²¹ or by striking him with your fist, you are guilty of murder and are to be put to death. The dead person's nearest relative has the responsibility for putting the murderer to death. When he finds you, he is to kill you.

²² But suppose you accidentally kill someone you do not hate, whether by pushing him down or by throwing something at him.

²³ Or suppose that, without looking, you throw a stone that kills someone whom you did not intend to hurt and who was not your enemy.

²⁴ In such cases the community shall judge in your favor and not in favor of the dead person's relative who is seeking revenge.

²⁵ You are guilty only of manslaughter, and the community is to rescue you from the dead person's relative, and they are to return you to the city of refuge to which you had escaped. You must live there until the death of the man who is then High Priest.

²⁶ If you leave the city of refuge to which you have escaped

²⁷ and if the dead person's relative finds you and kills you, this act of revenge is not murder.

²⁸ Any of you guilty of manslaughter must remain in the city of refuge until the death of the High Priest, but after that you may return home.

²⁹ These rules apply to you and your descendants wherever you may live.

³⁰ Those accused of murder may be found guilty and put to death only on the evidence of two or more witnesses; the evidence of one witness is not sufficient to support an accusation of murder.

³¹ Murderers must be put to death. They cannot escape this penalty by the payment of money.

³² If they have fled to a city of refuge, do not allow them to make a payment in order to return home before the death of the High Priest.

³³ If you did this, you would defile the land where you are living. Murder defiles the land, and except by the death of the murderer there is no way to perform the ritual of purification for the land where someone has been murdered.

³⁴ Do not defile the land where you are living, because I am the LORD and I live among the people of Israel.

36 ¹ The heads of the families in the clan of Gilead, the son of Machir and grandson of Manasseh son of Joseph, went to Moses and the other leaders.

² They said, The LORD commanded you to distribute the land to the people of Israel by drawing lots. He also commanded you to give the property of our relative Zelophehad to his daughters.

³ But remember, if they marry men of another tribe, their property will then belong to that tribe, and the total allotted to us will be reduced.

⁴ In the Year of Restoration, when all property that has been sold is restored to its original owners, the property of Zelophehad's daughters will be permanently added to the tribe into which they marry and will be lost to our tribe.

⁵ So Moses gave the people of Israel the following command from the LORD. He said, What the tribe of Manasseh says is right,

⁶and so the LORD says that the daughters of Zelophehad are free to marry anyone they wish but only within their own tribe.

⁷The property of every Israelite will remain attached to his tribe.

⁸Every woman who inherits property in an Israelite tribe must marry a man belonging to that tribe. In this way all Israelites will inherit the property of their ancestors,

⁹and the property will not pass from one tribe to another. Each tribe will continue to possess its own property.

¹⁰So Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, did as the LORD had commanded Moses, and they married their cousins.

¹¹ (36: 10)

¹²They married within the clans of the tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph, and their property remained in their father's tribe.

¹³These are the rules and regulations that the LORD gave the Israelites through Moses in the plains of Moab across the Jordan River from Jericho.

Deuteronomy

1 ¹In this book are the words that Moses spoke to the people of Israel when they were in the wilderness east of the Jordan River. They were in the Jordan Valley near Suph, between the town of Paran on one side and the towns of Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab on the other.

²(It takes eleven days to travel from Mount Sinai to Kadesh Barnea by way of the hill country of Edom.)

³On the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after they had left Egypt, Moses told the people everything the LORD had commanded him to tell them.

⁴This was after the LORD had defeated King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in the town of Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who ruled in the towns of Ashtaroth and Edrei.

⁵It was while the people were east of the Jordan in the territory of Moab that

Moses began to explain God's laws and teachings. He said,

⁶When we were at Mount Sinai, the LORD our God said to us, You have stayed long enough at this mountain.

⁷Break camp and move on. Go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all the surrounding regions -- to the Jordan Valley, to the hill country and the lowlands, to the southern region, and to the Mediterranean coast. Go to the land of Canaan and on beyond the Lebanon Mountains as far as the great Euphrates River.

⁸All of this is the land which I, the LORD, promised to give to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their descendants. Go and occupy it.

⁹Moses said to the people, While we were still at Mount Sinai, I told you, The responsibility for leading you is too much for me. I can't do it alone.

¹⁰The LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

¹¹May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, make you increase a

thousand times more and make you prosperous, as he promised!

¹²But how can I alone bear the heavy responsibility for settling your disputes?

¹³Choose some wise, understanding, and experienced men from each tribe, and I will put them in charge of you.

¹⁴And you agreed that this was a good thing to do.

¹⁵So I took the wise and experienced leaders you chose from your tribes, and I placed them in charge of you. Some were responsible for a thousand people, some for a hundred, some for fifty, and some for ten. I also appointed other officials throughout the tribes.

¹⁶At that time I instructed them, Listen to the disputes that come up among your people. Judge every dispute fairly, whether it concerns only your own people or involves foreigners who live among you.

¹⁷Show no partiality in your decisions; judge everyone on the same basis, no matter who they are. Do not be afraid of anyone, for the decisions you make come from God. If any case is too difficult for you, bring it to me, and I will decide it.

¹⁸At the same time I gave you instructions for everything else you were to do.

¹⁹We did what the LORD our God commanded us. We left Mount Sinai and went through that vast and fearful desert on the way to the hill country of the Amorites. When we reached Kadesh Barnea,

²⁰I told you, You have now come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God, the God of our ancestors, is giving us. Look, there it is. Go and occupy it as he commanded. Do not hesitate or be afraid.

²¹ (1: 20)

²²But you came to me and said, Let's send men ahead of us to spy out the land, so that they can tell us the best route to take and what kind of cities are there.

²³That seemed like a good thing to do, so I selected twelve men, one from each tribe.

²⁴They went into the hill country as far as Eshcol Valley and explored it.

²⁵They brought us back some fruit they found there, and reported that the land

which the LORD our God was giving us was very fertile.

²⁶But you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God, and you would not enter the land.

²⁷You grumbled to one another: The LORD hates us. He brought us out of Egypt just to hand us over to these Amorites, so that they could kill us.

²⁸Why should we go there? We are afraid. The men we sent tell us that the people there are stronger and taller than we are, and that they live in cities with walls that reach the sky. They saw giants there!

²⁹But I told you, Don't be afraid of those people.

³⁰The LORD your God will lead you, and he will fight for you, just as you saw him do in Egypt

³¹and in the desert. You saw how he brought you safely all the way to this place, just as a father would carry his son.

³²But in spite of what I said, you still would not trust the LORD,

³³even though he always went ahead of you to find a place for you to camp.

To show you the way, he went in front of you in a pillar of fire by night and in a pillar of cloud by day.

³⁴The LORD heard your complaints and became angry, and so he solemnly declared,

³⁵Not one of you from this evil generation will enter the fertile land that I promised to give your ancestors.

³⁶Only Caleb son of Jephunneh will enter it. He has remained faithful to me, and I will give him and his descendants the land that he has explored.

³⁷Because of you the LORD also became angry with me and said, Not even you, Moses, will enter the land.

³⁸But strengthen the determination of your helper, Joshua son of Nun. He will lead Israel to occupy the land.

³⁹Then the LORD said to all of us, Your children, who are still too young to know right from wrong, will enter the land -- the children you said would be seized by your enemies. I will give the land to them, and they will occupy it.

⁴⁰But as for you people, turn around and go back into the desert on the road to the Gulf of Aqaba.

⁴¹ You replied, Moses, we have sinned against the LORD. But now we will attack, just as the LORD our God commanded us. Then each one of you got ready to fight, thinking it would be easy to invade the hill country.

⁴² But the LORD said to me, Warn them not to attack, for I will not be with them, and their enemies will defeat them.

⁴³ I told you what the LORD had said, but you paid no attention. You rebelled against him, and in your pride you marched into the hill country.

⁴⁴ Then the Amorites who lived in those hills came out against you like a swarm of bees. They chased you as far as Hormah and defeated you there in the hill country of Edom.

⁴⁵ So you cried out to the LORD for help, but he would not listen to you or pay any attention to you.

⁴⁶ So then, after we had stayed at Kadesh for a long time,

2¹ we finally turned and went into the desert, on the road to the Gulf of Aqaba, as the LORD had commanded, and we spent a long time wandering about in the hill country of Edom.

²Then the LORD told me

³that we had spent enough time wandering about in those hills and that we should go north.

⁴He told me to give you the following instructions You are about to go through the hill country of Edom, the territory of your distant relatives, the descendants of Esau. They will be afraid of you,

⁵but you must not start a war with them, because I am not going to give you so much as a square foot of their land. I have given Edom to Esau's descendants.

⁶You may buy food and water from them.

⁷Remember how the LORD your God has blessed you in everything that you have done. He has taken care of you as you wandered through this vast desert. He has been with you these forty years, and you have had everything you needed.

⁸So we moved on and left the road that goes from the towns of Elath and Eziongeber to the Dead Sea, and we turned northeast toward Moab.

⁹The LORD said to me, Don't trouble the people of Moab, the descendants of Lot, or start a war against them. I have given them the city of Ar, and I am not going to give you any of their land.

¹⁰(A mighty race of giants called the Emim used to live in Ar. They were as tall as the Anakim, another race of giants.

¹¹Like the Anakim they were also known as Rephaim; but the Moabites called them Emim.

¹²The Horites used to live in Edom, but the descendants of Esau chased them out, destroyed their nation, and settled there themselves, just as the Israelites later chased their enemies out of the land that the LORD gave them.)

¹³Then we crossed the Zered River as the LORD told us to do.

¹⁴This was thirty-eight years after we had left Kadesh Barnea. All the fighting men of that generation had died, as the LORD had said they would.

¹⁵The LORD kept on opposing them until he had destroyed them all.

¹⁶After they had all died,

¹⁷the LORD said to us,

¹⁸Today you are to pass through the territory of Moab by way of Ar.

¹⁹You will then be near the land of the Ammonites, the descendants of Lot. Don't trouble them or start a war against them, because I am not going to give you any of the land that I have given them.

²⁰(This territory is also known as the land of the Rephaim, the name of the people who used to live there; the Ammonites called them Zamzummim.

²¹They were as tall as the Anakim. There were many of them, and they were a mighty race. But the LORD destroyed them, so that the Ammonites took over their land and settled there.

²²The LORD had done the same thing for the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, who live in the hill country of Edom. He destroyed the Horites, so that the Edomites took over their land and settled there, where they still live.

²³The land along the Mediterranean coast had been settled by people from the island of Crete. They had destroyed the Avvim, the original inhabitants, and

had taken over all their land as far south as the city of Gaza.)

²⁴After we had passed through Moab, the LORD told us, Now, start out and cross the Arnon River. I am placing in your power Sihon, the Amorite king of Heshbon, along with his land. Attack him, and begin occupying his land.

²⁵From today on I will make people everywhere afraid of you. Everyone will tremble with fear at the mention of your name.

²⁶Then I sent messengers from the desert of Kedemoth to King Sihon of Heshbon with the following offer of peace:

²⁷Let us pass through your country. We will go straight through and not leave the road.

²⁸We will pay for the food we eat and the water we drink. All we want to do is to pass through your country,

²⁹until we cross the Jordan River into the land that the LORD our God is giving us. The descendants of Esau, who live in Edom, and the Moabites, who live in Ar, allowed us to pass through their territory.

³⁰ But King Sihon would not let us pass through his country. The LORD your God had made him stubborn and rebellious, so that we could defeat him and take his territory, which we still occupy.

³¹ Then the LORD said to me, Look, I have made King Sihon and his land helpless before you; take his land and occupy it.

³² Sihon came out with all his men to fight us near the town of Jahaz,

³³ but the LORD our God put him in our power, and we killed him, his sons, and all his men.

³⁴ At the same time we captured and destroyed every town, and put everyone to death, men, women, and children. We left no survivors.

³⁵ We took the livestock and plundered the towns.

³⁶ The LORD our God let us capture all the towns from Aroer, on the edge of the Arnon Valley, and the city in the middle of that valley, all the way to Gilead. No town had walls too strong for us.

³⁷ But we did not go near the territory of the Ammonites or to the banks of the Jabbok River or to the towns of the hill

country or to any other place where the LORD our God had commanded us not to go.

3¹ Next, we moved north toward the region of Bashan, and King Og came out with all his men to fight us near the town of Edrei.

² But the LORD said to me, Don't be afraid of him. I am going to give him, his men, and all his territory to you. Do the same thing to him that you did to Sihon the Amorite king who ruled in Heshbon.

³ So the LORD also placed King Og and his people in our power, and we slaughtered them all.

⁴ At the same time we captured all his towns -- there was not one that we did not take. In all we captured sixty towns -- the whole region of Argob, where King Og of Bashan ruled.

⁵ All these towns were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars to lock the gates, and there were also many villages without walls.

⁶ We destroyed all the towns and put to death all the men, women, and children, just as we did in the towns that belonged to King Sihon of Heshbon.

⁷ We took the livestock and plundered the towns.

⁸ At that time we took from those two Amorite kings the land east of the Jordan River, from the Arnon River to Mount Hermon.

⁹ (Mount Hermon is called Sirion by the Sidonians, and Senir by the Amorites.)

¹⁰ We took all the territory of King Og of Bashan: the cities on the plateau, the regions of Gilead and of Bashan, as far east as the towns of Salecah and Edrei.

¹¹ (King Og was the last of the Rephaim. His coffin, made of stone, was six feet wide and almost fourteen feet long, according to standard measurements. It can still be seen in the Ammonite city of Rabbah.)

¹² When we took possession of the land, I assigned to the tribes of Reuben and Gad the territory north of the town of Aroer near the Arnon River and part of the hill country of Gilead, along with its towns.

¹³ To half the tribe of Manasseh I assigned the rest of Gilead and also all of Bashan, where Og had ruled, that is, the

entire Argob region. (Bashan was known as the land of the Rephaim.

¹⁴Jair, from the tribe of Manasseh, took the entire region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of Geshur and Maacah. He named the villages after himself, and they are still known as the villages of Jair.)

¹⁵I assigned Gilead to the clan of Machir of the tribe of Manasseh.

¹⁶And to the tribes of Reuben and Gad I assigned the territory from Gilead to the Arnon River. The middle of the river was their southern boundary, and their northern boundary was the Jabbok River, part of which formed the Ammonite border.

¹⁷On the west their territory extended to the Jordan River, from Lake Galilee in the north down to the Dead Sea in the south and to the foot of Mount Pisgah on the east.

¹⁸At the same time, I gave them the following instructions: The LORD our God has given you this land east of the Jordan to occupy. Now arm your fighting men and send them across the Jordan

ahead of the other tribes of Israel, to help them occupy their land.

¹⁹Only your wives, children, and livestock -- I know you have a lot of livestock -- will remain behind in the towns that I have assigned to you.

²⁰Help the other Israelites until they occupy the land that the LORD is giving them west of the Jordan and until the LORD lets them live there in peace, as he has already done here for you. After that, you may return to this land that I have assigned to you.

²¹Then I instructed Joshua: You have seen all that the LORD your God did to those two kings, Sihon and Og; and he will do the same thing to everyone else whose land you invade.

²²Don't be afraid of them, for the LORD your God will fight for you.

²³At that time I earnestly prayed,

²⁴Sovereign LORD, I know that you have shown me only the beginning of the great and wonderful things you are going to do. There is no god in heaven or on earth who can do the mighty things that you have done!

²⁵ Let me cross the Jordan River, LORD, and see the fertile land on the other side, the beautiful hill country and the Lebanon Mountains.

²⁶ But because of you people the LORD was angry with me and would not listen. Instead, he said, That's enough! Don't mention this again!

²⁷ Go to the peak of Mount Pisgah and look to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west. Look carefully at what you see, because you will never go across the Jordan.

²⁸ Give Joshua his instructions. Strengthen his determination, because he will lead the people across to occupy the land that you see.

²⁹ So we remained in the valley opposite the town of Bethpeor.

4¹ Then Moses said to the people, Obey all the laws that I am teaching you, and you will live and occupy the land which the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you.

² Do not add anything to what I command you, and do not take anything away. Obey the commands of the LORD your God that I have given you.

³You yourselves saw what the LORD did at Mount Peor. He destroyed everyone who worshiped Baal there,

⁴but those of you who were faithful to the LORD your God are still alive today.

⁵I have taught you all the laws, as the LORD my God told me to do. Obey them in the land that you are about to invade and occupy.

⁶Obey them faithfully, and this will show the people of other nations how wise you are. When they hear of all these laws, they will say, What wisdom and understanding this great nation has!

⁷No other nation, no matter how great, has a god who is so near when they need him as the LORD our God is to us. He answers us whenever we call for help.

⁸No other nation, no matter how great, has laws so just as those that I have taught you today.

⁹Be on your guard! Make certain that you do not forget, as long as you live, what you have seen with your own eyes. Tell your children and your grandchildren

¹⁰about the day you stood in the presence of the LORD your God at Mount Sinai, when he said to me, Assemble the

people. I want them to hear what I have to say, so that they will learn to obey me as long as they live and so that they will teach their children to do the same.

¹¹ Tell your children how you went and stood at the foot of the mountain which was covered with thick clouds of dark smoke and fire blazing up to the sky.

¹² Tell them how the LORD spoke to you from the fire, how you heard him speaking but did not see him in any form at all.

¹³ He told you what you must do to keep the covenant he made with you -- you must obey the Ten Commandments, which he wrote on two stone tablets.

¹⁴ The LORD told me to teach you all the laws that you are to obey in the land that you are about to invade and occupy.

¹⁵ When the LORD spoke to you from the fire on Mount Sinai, you did not see any form. For your own good, then, make certain

¹⁶ that you do not sin by making for yourselves an idol in any form at all -- whether man or woman,

¹⁷ animal or bird,

¹⁸ reptile or fish.

¹⁹Do not be tempted to worship and serve what you see in the sky -- the sun, the moon, and the stars. The LORD your God has given these to all other peoples for them to worship.

²⁰But you are the people he rescued from Egypt, that blazing furnace. He brought you out to make you his own people, as you are today.

²¹Because of you the LORD your God was angry with me and solemnly declared that I would not cross the Jordan River to enter the fertile land which he is giving you.

²²I will die in this land and never cross the river, but you are about to go across and occupy that fertile land.

²³Be certain that you do not forget the covenant that the LORD your God made with you. Obey his command not to make yourselves any kind of idol,

²⁴because the LORD your God is like a flaming fire; he tolerates no rivals.

²⁵Even when you have been in the land a long time and have children and grandchildren, do not sin by making for yourselves an idol in any form at all. This

is evil in the LORD's sight, and it will make him angry.

²⁶I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that, if you disobey me, you will soon disappear from the land. You will not live very long in the land across the Jordan that you are about to occupy. You will be completely destroyed.

²⁷The LORD will scatter you among other nations, where only a few of you will survive.

²⁸There you will serve gods made by human hands, gods of wood and stone, gods that cannot see or hear, eat or smell.

²⁹There you will look for the LORD your God, and if you search for him with all your heart, you will find him.

³⁰When you are in trouble and all those things happen to you, then you will finally turn to the LORD and obey him.

³¹He is a merciful God. He will not abandon you or destroy you, and he will not forget the covenant that he himself made with your ancestors.

³²Search the past, the time before you were born, all the way back to the time

when God created human beings on the earth. Search the entire earth. Has anything as great as this ever happened before? Has anyone ever heard of anything like this?

³³Have any people ever lived after hearing a god speak to them from a fire, as you have?

³⁴Has any god ever dared to go and take a people from another nation and make them his own, as the LORD your God did for you in Egypt? Before your very eyes he used his great power and strength; he brought plagues and war, worked miracles and wonders, and caused terrifying things to happen.

³⁵The LORD has shown you this, to prove to you that he alone is God and that there is no other.

³⁶He let you hear his voice from heaven so that he could instruct you; and here on earth he let you see his holy fire, and he spoke to you from it.

³⁷Because he loved your ancestors, he chose you, and by his great power he himself brought you out of Egypt.

³⁸As you advanced, he drove out nations greater and more powerful than

you, so that he might bring you in and give you their land, the land which still belongs to you.

³⁹ So remember today and never forget: the LORD is God in heaven and on earth. There is no other god.

⁴⁰ Obey all his laws that I have given you today, and all will go well with you and your descendants. You will continue to live in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to be yours forever.

⁴¹ Then Moses set aside three cities east of the Jordan River

⁴² to which a man could escape and be safe if he had accidentally killed someone who had not been his enemy. He could escape to one of these cities and not be put to death.

⁴³ For the tribe of Reuben there was the city of Bezer, on the desert plateau; for the tribe of Gad there was Ramoth, in the territory of Gilead; and for the tribe of Manasseh there was Golan, in the territory of Bashan.

⁴⁴ Moses gave God's laws and teachings to the people of Israel.

⁴⁵ It was after they had come out of Egypt and were in the valley east of

the Jordan River, opposite the town of Bethpeor, that he gave them these laws. This was in the territory that had belonged to King Sihon of the Amorites, who had ruled in the town of Heshbon. Moses and the people of Israel defeated him when they came out of Egypt.

⁴⁶ (4: 45)

⁴⁷ They occupied his land and the land of King Og of Bashan, the other Amorite king who lived east of the Jordan.

⁴⁸ This land extended from the town of Aroer, on the edge of the Arnon River, all the way north to Mount Sirion, that is, Mount Hermon.

⁴⁹ It also included all the region east of the Jordan River as far south as the Dead Sea and east to the foot of Mount Pisgah.

5¹ Moses called together all the people of Israel and said to them, People of Israel, listen to all the laws that I am giving you today. Learn them and be sure that you obey them.

² At Mount Sinai the LORD our God made a covenant,

³ not only with our fathers, but with all of us who are living today.

⁴There on the mountain the LORD spoke to you face-to-face from the fire.

⁵I stood between you and the LORD at that time to tell you what he said, because you were afraid of the fire and would not go up the mountain. The LORD said,

⁶I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves.

⁷Worship no god but me.

⁸Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth.

⁹Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, for I am the LORD your God and I tolerate no rivals. I bring punishment on those who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.

¹⁰But I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.

¹¹Do not use my name for evil purposes, for I, the LORD your God, will punish anyone who misuses my name.

¹²Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy, as I, the LORD your God, have commanded you.

¹³You have six days in which to do your work,

¹⁴but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work -- neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. Your slaves must rest just as you do.

¹⁵Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and that I, the LORD your God, rescued you by my great power and strength. That is why I command you to observe the Sabbath.

¹⁶Respect your father and your mother, as I, the LORD your God, command you, so that all may go well with you and so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.

¹⁷Do not commit murder.

¹⁸Do not commit adultery.

¹⁹Do not steal.

²⁰Do not accuse anyone falsely.

²¹Do not desire another man's wife; do not desire his house, his land, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.

²²These are the commandments the LORD gave to all of you when you were

gathered at the mountain. When he spoke with a mighty voice from the fire and from the thick clouds, he gave these commandments and no others. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

²³When the whole mountain was on fire and you heard the voice from the darkness, your leaders and the chiefs of your tribes came to me

²⁴and said, The LORD our God showed us his greatness and his glory when we heard him speak from the fire! Today we have seen that it is possible for people to continue to live, even though God has spoken to them.

²⁵But why should we risk death again? That terrible fire will destroy us. We are sure to die if we hear the LORD our God speak again.

²⁶Has any human being ever lived after hearing the living God speak from a fire?

²⁷Go back, Moses, and listen to everything that the LORD our God says. Then return and tell us what he said to you. We will listen and obey.

²⁸When the LORD heard this, he said to me, I have heard what these people said, and they are right.

²⁹If only they would always feel this way! If only they would always honor me and obey all my commands, so that everything would go well with them and their descendants forever.

³⁰Go and tell them to return to their tents.

³¹But you, Moses, stay here with me, and I will give you all my laws and commands. Teach them to the people, so that they will obey them in the land that I am giving them.

³²People of Israel, be sure that you do everything that the LORD your God has commanded you. Do not disobey any of his laws.

³³Obey them all, so that everything will go well with you and so that you will continue to live in the land that you are going to occupy.

6¹These are all the laws that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you. Obey them in the land that you are about to enter and occupy.

²As long as you live, you and your descendants are to honor the LORD your God and obey all his laws that I am giving you, so that you may live in that land a long time.

³Listen to them, people of Israel, and obey them! Then all will go well with you, and you will become a mighty nation and live in that rich and fertile land, just as the LORD, the God of our ancestors, has promised.

⁴Israel, remember this! The LORD -- and the LORD alone -- is our God.

⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶Never forget these commands that I am giving you today.

⁷Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working.

⁸Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder.

⁹Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

¹⁰Just as the LORD your God promised your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, he will give you a land with large and prosperous cities which you did not build.

¹¹ The houses will be full of good things which you did not put in them, and there will be wells that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant. When the LORD brings you into this land and you have all you want to eat,

¹² make certain that you do not forget the LORD who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves.

¹³ Honor the LORD your God, worship only him, and make your promises in his name alone.

¹⁴ Do not worship other gods, any of the gods of the peoples around you.

¹⁵ If you do worship other gods, the LORD's anger will come against you like fire and will destroy you completely, because the LORD your God, who is present with you, tolerates no rivals.

¹⁶ Do not put the LORD your God to the test, as you did at Massah.

¹⁷ Be sure that you obey all the laws that he has given you.

¹⁸Do what the LORD says is right and good, and all will go well with you. You will be able to take possession of the fertile land that the LORD promised your ancestors,

¹⁹and you will drive out your enemies, as he promised.

²⁰In times to come your children will ask you, Why did the LORD our God command us to obey all these laws?

²¹Then tell them, We were slaves of the king of Egypt, and the LORD rescued us by his great power.

²²With our own eyes we saw him work miracles and do terrifying things to the Egyptians and to their king and to all his officials.

²³He freed us from Egypt to bring us here and give us this land, as he had promised our ancestors he would.

²⁴Then the LORD our God commanded us to obey all these laws and to honor him. If we do, he will always watch over our nation and keep it prosperous.

²⁵If we faithfully obey everything that God has commanded us, he will be pleased with us.'

7¹ The LORD your God will bring you into the land that you are going to occupy, and he will drive many nations out of it. As you advance, he will drive out seven nations larger and more powerful than you: the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

² When the LORD your God places these people in your power and you defeat them, you must put them all to death. Do not make an alliance with them or show them any mercy.

³ Do not marry any of them, and do not let your children marry any of them,

⁴ because then they would lead your children away from the LORD to worship other gods. If that happens, the LORD will be angry with you and destroy you at once.

⁵ So then, tear down their altars, break their sacred stone pillars in pieces, cut down their symbols of the goddess Asherah, and burn their idols.

⁶ Do this because you belong to the LORD your God. From all the peoples on

earth he chose you to be his own special people.

⁷The LORD did not love you and choose you because you outnumbered other peoples; you were the smallest nation on earth.

⁸But the LORD loved you and wanted to keep the promise that he made to your ancestors. That is why he saved you by his great might and set you free from slavery to the king of Egypt.

⁹Remember that the LORD your God is the only God and that he is faithful. He will keep his covenant and show his constant love to a thousand generations of those who love him and obey his commands,

¹⁰but he will not hesitate to punish those who hate him.

¹¹Now then, obey what you have been taught; obey all the laws that I have given you today.

¹²If you listen to these commands and obey them faithfully, then the LORD your God will continue to keep his covenant with you and will show you his constant love, as he promised your ancestors.

¹³He will love you and bless you, so that you will increase in number and have many children; he will bless your fields, so that you will have grain, wine, and olive oil; and he will bless you by giving you many cattle and sheep. He will give you all these blessings in the land that he promised your ancestors he would give to you.

¹⁴No people in the world will be as richly blessed as you. None of you nor any of your livestock will be sterile.

¹⁵The LORD will protect you from all sickness, and he will not bring on you any of the dreadful diseases that you experienced in Egypt, but he will bring them on all your enemies.

¹⁶Destroy every nation that the LORD your God places in your power, and do not show them any mercy. Do not worship their gods, for that would be fatal.

¹⁷Do not tell yourselves that these peoples outnumber you and that you cannot drive them out.

¹⁸Do not be afraid of them; remember what the LORD your God did to the king of Egypt and to all his people.

¹⁹Remember the terrible plagues that you saw with your own eyes, the miracles and wonders, and the great power and strength by which the LORD your God set you free. In the same way that he destroyed the Egyptians, he will destroy all these people that you now fear.

²⁰He will even cause panic among them and will destroy those who escape and go into hiding.

²¹So do not be afraid of these people. The LORD your God is with you; he is a great God and one to be feared.

²²Little by little he will drive out these nations as you advance. You will not be able to destroy them all at once, for, if you did, the number of wild animals would increase and be a threat to you.

²³The LORD will put your enemies in your power and make them panic until they are destroyed.

²⁴He will put their kings in your power. You will kill them, and they will be forgotten. No one will be able to stop you; you will destroy everyone.

²⁵Burn their idols. Do not desire the silver or gold that is on them, and do

not take it for yourselves. If you do, that will be fatal, because the LORD hates idolatry.

²⁶Do not bring any of these idols into your homes, or the same curse will be on you that is on them. You must hate and despise these idols, because they are under the LORD's curse.

8¹Obey faithfully all the laws that I have given you today, so that you may live, increase in number, and occupy the land that the LORD promised to your ancestors.

²Remember how the LORD your God led you on this long journey through the desert these past forty years, sending hardships to test you, so that he might know what you intended to do and whether you would obey his commands.

³He made you go hungry, and then he gave you manna to eat, food that you and your ancestors had never eaten before. He did this to teach you that you must not depend on bread alone to sustain you, but on everything that the LORD says.

⁴ During these forty years your clothes have not worn out, nor have your feet swollen up.

⁵ Remember that the LORD your God corrects and punishes you just as parents discipline their children.

⁶ So then, do as the LORD has commanded you: live according to his laws and obey him.

⁷ The LORD your God is bringing you into a fertile land -- a land that has rivers and springs, and underground streams gushing out into the valleys and hills;

⁸ a land that produces wheat and barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and honey.

⁹ There you will never go hungry or ever be in need. Its rocks have iron in them, and from its hills you can mine copper.

¹⁰ You will have all you want to eat, and you will give thanks to the LORD your God for the fertile land that he has given you.

¹¹ Make certain that you do not forget the LORD your God; do not fail to obey any of his laws that I am giving you today.

¹²When you have all you want to eat and have built good houses to live in

¹³and when your cattle and sheep, your silver and gold, and all your other possessions have increased,

¹⁴be sure that you do not become proud and forget the LORD your God who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves.

¹⁵He led you through that vast and terrifying desert where there were poisonous snakes and scorpions. In that dry and waterless land he made water flow out of solid rock for you.

¹⁶In the desert he gave you manna to eat, food that your ancestors had never eaten. He sent hardships on you to test you, so that in the end he could bless you with good things.

¹⁷So then, you must never think that you have made yourselves wealthy by your own power and strength.

¹⁸Remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you the power to become rich. He does this because he is still faithful today to the covenant that he made with your ancestors.

¹⁹Never forget the LORD your God or turn to other gods to worship and serve them. If you do, then I warn you today that you will certainly be destroyed.

²⁰If you do not obey the LORD, then you will be destroyed just like those nations that he is going to destroy as you advance.

9¹Listen, people of Israel! Today you are about to cross the Jordan River and occupy the land belonging to nations greater and more powerful than you. Their cities are large, with walls that reach the sky.

²The people themselves are tall and strong; they are giants, and you have heard it said that no one can stand against them.

³But now you will see for yourselves that the LORD your God will go ahead of you like a raging fire. He will defeat them as you advance, so that you will drive them out and destroy them quickly, as he promised.

⁴After the LORD your God has driven them out for you, do not say to yourselves that he brought you in to possess this land because you deserved

it. No, the LORD is going to drive these people out for you because they are wicked.

⁵It is not because you are good and do what is right that the LORD is letting you take their land. He will drive them out because they are wicked and because he intends to keep the promise that he made to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

⁶You can be sure that the LORD is not giving you this fertile land because you deserve it. No, you are a stubborn people.

⁷Never forget how you made the LORD your God angry in the desert. From the day that you left Egypt until the day you arrived here, you have rebelled against him.

⁸Even at Mount Sinai you made the LORD angry -- angry enough to destroy you.

⁹I went up the mountain to receive the stone tablets on which was written the covenant that the LORD had made with you. I stayed there forty days and nights and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰Then the LORD gave me the two stone tablets on which he had written with his own hand what he had said to you from the fire on the day that you were gathered there at the mountain.

¹¹Yes, after those forty days and nights the LORD gave me the two stone tablets on which he had written the covenant.

¹²Then the LORD said to me, Go down the mountain at once, because your people, whom you led out of Egypt, have become corrupt and have done evil. They have already turned away from what I commanded them to do, and they have made an idol for themselves.

¹³The LORD also said to me, I know how stubborn these people are.

¹⁴Don't try to stop me. I intend to destroy them so that no one will remember them any longer. Then I will make you the father of a nation larger and more powerful than they are.

¹⁵So I turned and went down the mountain, carrying the two stone tablets on which the covenant was written. Flames of fire were coming from the mountain.

¹⁶I saw that you had already disobeyed the command that the LORD your God had given you, and that you had sinned against him by making yourselves a metal idol in the form of a bull-calf.

¹⁷So there in front of you I threw the stone tablets down and broke them to pieces.

¹⁸Then once again I lay face downward in the LORD's presence for forty days and nights and did not eat or drink anything. I did this because you had sinned against the LORD and had made him angry.

¹⁹I was afraid of the LORD's fierce anger, because he was furious enough to destroy you; but once again the LORD listened to me.

²⁰The LORD was also angry enough with Aaron to kill him, so I prayed for Aaron at the same time.

²¹I took that sinful thing that you had made -- that metal bull-calf -- and threw it into the fire. Then I broke it in pieces, ground it to dust, and threw the dust into the stream that flowed down the mountain.

²²You also made the LORD your God angry when you were at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth Hattaavah.

²³And when he sent you from Kadesh Barnea with orders to go and take possession of the land that he was giving you, you rebelled against him; you did not trust him or obey him.

²⁴Ever since I have known you, you have rebelled against the LORD.

²⁵So I lay face downward in the LORD's presence those forty days and nights, because I knew that he was determined to destroy you.

²⁶And I prayed, Sovereign LORD, don't destroy your own people, the people you rescued and brought out of Egypt by your great strength and power.

²⁷Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and do not pay any attention to the stubbornness, wickedness, and sin of this people.

²⁸Otherwise, the Egyptians will say that you were unable to take your people into the land that you had promised them. They will say that you took your people out into the desert to kill them, because you hated them.

²⁹After all, these are the people whom you chose to be your own and whom you brought out of Egypt by your great power and might.

10¹Then the LORD said to me, Cut two stone tablets like the first ones and make a wooden Box to put them in. Come up to me on the mountain,

²and I will write on those tablets what I wrote on the tablets that you broke, and then you are to put them in the Box.

³So I made a Box of acacia wood and cut two stone tablets like the first ones and took them up the mountain.

⁴Then the LORD wrote on those tablets the same words that he had written the first time, the Ten Commandments that he gave you when he spoke from the fire on the day you were gathered at the mountain. The LORD gave me the tablets,

⁵and I turned and went down the mountain. Then, just as the LORD had commanded, I put them in the Box that I had made -- and they have been there ever since.

⁶(The Israelites set out from the wells that belonged to the people of Jaakan, and went to Moserah. There Aaron died and was buried, and his son Eleazar succeeded him as priest.

⁷From there they went to Gudgodah and then on to Jotbathah, a well-watered place.

⁸At the mountain the LORD appointed the men of the tribe of Levi to be in charge of the Covenant Box, to serve him as priests, and to pronounce blessings in his name. And these are still their duties.

⁹That is why the tribe of Levi received no land as the other tribes did; what they received was the privilege of being the LORD's priests, as the LORD your God promised.)

¹⁰I stayed on the mountain forty days and nights, as I did the first time. The LORD listened to me once more and agreed not to destroy you.

¹¹Then he told me to go and lead you, so that you could take possession of the land that he had promised to give to your ancestors.

¹²Now, people of Israel, listen to what the LORD your God demands of you:

Worship the LORD and do all that he commands. Love him, serve him with all your heart,

¹³and obey all his laws. I am giving them to you today for your benefit.

¹⁴To the LORD belong even the highest heavens; the earth is his also, and everything on it.

¹⁵But the LORD's love for your ancestors was so strong that he chose you instead of any other people, and you are still his chosen people.

¹⁶So then, from now on be obedient to the LORD and stop being stubborn.

¹⁷The LORD your God is supreme over all gods and over all powers. He is great and mighty, and he is to be obeyed. He does not show partiality, and he does not accept bribes.

¹⁸He makes sure that orphans and widows are treated fairly; he loves the foreigners who live with our people, and gives them food and clothes.

¹⁹So then, show love for those foreigners, because you were once foreigners in Egypt.

²⁰Have reverence for the LORD your God and worship only him. Be faithful

to him and make your promises in his name alone.

²¹ Praise him -- he is your God, and you have seen with your own eyes the great and astounding things that he has done for you.

²² When your ancestors went to Egypt, there were only seventy of them. But now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

11 ¹ Love the LORD your God and always obey all his laws.

² Remember today what you have learned about the LORD through your experiences with him. It was you, not your children, who had these experiences. You saw the LORD's greatness, his power, his might,

³ and his miracles. You saw what he did to the king of Egypt and to his entire country.

⁴ You saw how the LORD completely wiped out the Egyptian army, along with their horses and chariots, by drowning them in the Red Sea when they were pursuing you.

⁵ You know what the LORD did for you in the desert before you arrived here.

⁶You recall what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab of the tribe of Reuben. In the sight of everyone the earth opened up and swallowed them, along with their families, their tents, and all their servants and animals.

⁷Yes, you are the ones who have seen all these great things that the LORD has done.

⁸Obey everything that I have commanded you today. Then you will be able to cross the river and occupy the land that you are about to enter.

⁹And you will live a long time in the rich and fertile land that the LORD promised to give your ancestors and their descendants.

¹⁰The land that you are about to occupy is not like the land of Egypt, where you lived before. There, when you planted grain, you had to work hard to irrigate the fields;

¹¹but the land that you are about to enter is a land of mountains and valleys, a land watered by rain.

¹²The LORD your God takes care of this land and watches over it throughout the year.

¹³So then, obey the commands that I have given you today; love the LORD your God and serve him with all your heart.

¹⁴If you do, he will send rain on your land when it is needed, in the autumn and in the spring, so that there will be grain, wine, and olive oil for you,

¹⁵and grass for your livestock. You will have all the food you want.

¹⁶Do not let yourselves be led away from the LORD to worship and serve other gods.

¹⁷If you do, the LORD will become angry with you. He will hold back the rain, and your ground will become too dry for crops to grow. Then you will soon die there, even though it is a good land that he is giving you.

¹⁸Remember these commands and cherish them. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder.

¹⁹Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working.

²⁰Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

²¹Then you and your children will live a long time in the land that the LORD your God promised to give to your ancestors. You will live there as long as there is a sky above the earth.

²²Obey faithfully everything that I have commanded you: Love the LORD your God, do everything he commands, and be faithful to him.

²³Then he will drive out all those nations as you advance, and you will occupy the land belonging to nations greater and more powerful than you.

²⁴All the ground that you march over will be yours. Your territory will extend from the desert in the south to the Lebanon Mountains in the north, and from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

²⁵Wherever you go in that land, the LORD your God will make the people fear you, as he has promised, and no one will be able to stop you.

²⁶Today I am giving you the choice between a blessing and a curse --

²⁷ a blessing, if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today;

²⁸ but a curse, if you disobey these commands and turn away to worship other gods that you have never worshiped before.

²⁹ When the LORD brings you into the land that you are going to occupy, you are to proclaim the blessing from Mount Gerizim and the curse from Mount Ebal.

³⁰ (These two mountains are west of the Jordan River in the territory of the Canaanites who live in the Jordan Valley. They are toward the west, not far from the sacred trees of Moreh near the town of Gilgal.)

³¹ You are about to cross the Jordan River and occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you. When you take it and settle there,

³² be sure to obey all the laws that I am giving you today.

12¹ Here are the laws that you are to obey as long as you live in the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. Listen to them!

²In the land that you are taking, destroy all the places where the people worship their gods on high mountains, on hills, and under green trees.

³Tear down their altars and smash their sacred stone pillars to pieces. Burn their symbols of the goddess Asherah and chop down their idols, so that they will never again be worshiped at those places.

⁴Do not worship the LORD your God in the way that these people worship their gods.

⁵Out of the territory of all your tribes the LORD will choose the one place where the people are to come into his presence and worship him.

⁶There you are to offer your sacrifices that are to be burned and your other sacrifices, your tithes and your offerings, the gifts that you promise to the LORD, your freewill offerings, and the first-born of your cattle and sheep.

⁷There, in the presence of the LORD your God, who has blessed you, you and your families will eat and enjoy the good things that you have worked for.

⁸When that time comes, you must not do as you have been doing. Until now you have all been worshiping as you please,

⁹because you have not yet entered the land that the LORD your God is giving you, where you can live in peace.

¹⁰When you cross the Jordan River, the LORD will let you occupy the land and live there. He will keep you safe from all your enemies, and you will live in peace.

¹¹The LORD will choose a single place where he is to be worshiped, and there you must bring to him everything that I have commanded: your sacrifices that are to be burned and your other sacrifices, your tithes and your offerings, and those special gifts that you have promised to the LORD.

¹²Be joyful there in his presence, together with your children, your servants, and the Levites who live in your towns; remember that the Levites will have no land of their own.

¹³You are not to offer your sacrifices wherever you choose;

¹⁴you must offer them only in the one place that the LORD will choose in the

territory of one of your tribes. Only there are you to offer your sacrifices that are to be burned and do all the other things that I have commanded you.

¹⁵But you are free to kill and eat your animals wherever you live. You may eat as many as the LORD gives you. All of you, whether ritually clean or unclean, may eat them, just as you would eat the meat of deer or antelope.

¹⁶But you must not eat their blood; you must pour it out on the ground like water.

¹⁷Nothing that you offer to the LORD is to be eaten in the places where you live: neither the tithes of your grain, your wine, or your olive oil, nor the first-born of your cattle and sheep, the gifts that you promise to the LORD, your freewill offerings, or any other offerings.

¹⁸You and your children, together with your servants and the Levites who live in your towns, are to eat these offerings only in the presence of the LORD your God, in the one place of worship chosen by the LORD your God. And you are to be happy there over everything that you have done.

¹⁹ Be sure, also, not to neglect the Levites, as long as you live in your land.

²⁰ When the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised, you may eat meat whenever you want to.

²¹ If the one place of worship is too far away, then, whenever you wish, you may kill any of the cattle or sheep that the LORD has given you, and you may eat the meat at home, as I have told you.

²² Anyone, ritually clean or unclean, may eat that meat, just as he would eat the meat of deer or antelope.

²³ Only do not eat meat with blood still in it, for the life is in the blood, and you must not eat the life with the meat.

²⁴ Do not use the blood for food; instead, pour it out on the ground like water.

²⁵ If you obey this command, the LORD will be pleased, and all will go well for you and your descendants.

²⁶ Take to the one place of worship your offerings and the gifts that you have promised the LORD.

²⁷ Offer there the sacrifices which are to be completely burned on the LORD's altar. Also offer those sacrifices in which

you eat the meat and pour the blood out on the altar.

²⁸Obey faithfully everything that I have commanded you, and all will go well for you and your descendants forever, because you will be doing what is right and what pleases the LORD your God.

²⁹The LORD your God will destroy the nations as you invade their land, and you will occupy it and settle there.

³⁰After the LORD destroys those nations, make sure that you don't follow their religious practices, because that would be fatal. Don't try to find out how they worship their gods, so that you can worship in the same way.

³¹Do not worship the LORD your God in the way they worship their gods, for in the worship of their gods they do all the disgusting things that the LORD hates. They even sacrifice their children in the fires on their altars.

³²Do everything that I have commanded you; do not add anything to it or take anything from it.

13¹Prophets or interpreters of dreams may promise a miracle or a wonder,

²in order to lead you to worship and serve gods that you have not worshiped before. Even if what they promise comes true,

³do not pay any attention to them. The LORD your God is using them to test you, to see if you love the LORD with all your heart.

⁴Follow the LORD and honor him; obey him and keep his commands; worship him and be faithful to him.

⁵But put to death any interpreters of dreams or prophets that tell you to rebel against the LORD, who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves. Such people are evil and are trying to lead you away from the life that the LORD has commanded you to live. They must be put to death, in order to rid yourselves of this evil.

⁶Even your brother or your son or your daughter or the wife you love or your closest friend may secretly encourage you to worship other gods, gods that you and your ancestors have never worshiped.

⁷Some of them may encourage you to worship the gods of the people who live

near you or the gods of those who live far away.

⁸But do not let any of them persuade you; do not even listen to them. Show them no mercy or pity, and do not protect them.

⁹Kill them! Be the first to stone them, and then let everyone else stone them too.

¹⁰Stone them to death! They tried to lead you away from the LORD your God, who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves.

¹¹Then all the people of Israel will hear what happened; they will be afraid, and no one will ever again do such an evil thing.

¹²When you are living in the towns that the LORD your God gives you, you may hear

¹³that some worthless people of your nation have misled the people of their town to worship gods that you have never worshiped before.

¹⁴If you hear such a rumor, investigate it thoroughly; and if it is true that this evil thing did happen,

¹⁵ then kill all the people in that town and all their livestock too. Destroy that town completely.

¹⁶ Bring together all the possessions of the people who live there and pile them up in the town square. Then burn the town and everything in it as an offering to the LORD your God. It must be left in ruins forever and never again be rebuilt.

¹⁷ Do not keep for yourselves anything that was condemned to destruction, and then the LORD will turn from his fierce anger and show you mercy. He will be merciful to you and make you a numerous people, as he promised your ancestors,

¹⁸ if you obey all his commands that I have given you today, and do what he requires.

14¹ You are the people of the LORD your God. So when you mourn for the dead, don't gash yourselves or shave the front of your head, as other people do.

² You belong to the LORD your God; he has chosen you to be his own people from among all the peoples who live on earth.

³ Do not eat anything that the LORD has declared unclean.

⁴ You may eat these animals: cattle, sheep, goats,

⁵ deer, wild sheep, wild goats, or antelopes --

⁶ any animals that have divided hoofs and that also chew the cud.

⁷ But no animals may be eaten unless they have divided hoofs and also chew the cud. You may not eat camels, rabbits, or rock badgers. They must be considered unclean; they chew the cud but do not have divided hoofs.

⁸ Do not eat pigs. They must be considered unclean; they have divided hoofs but do not chew the cud. Do not eat any of these animals or even touch their dead bodies.

⁹ You may eat any kind of fish that has fins and scales,

¹⁰ but anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales may not be eaten; it must be considered unclean.

¹¹ You may eat any clean bird.

¹² But these are the kinds of birds you are not to eat: eagles, owls, hawks, falcons; buzzards, vultures, crows;

ostriches; seagulls, storks, herons, pelicans, cormorants; hoopoes; and bats.

¹³ (14: 12)

¹⁴ (14: 12)

¹⁵ (14: 12)

¹⁶ (14: 12)

¹⁷ (14: 12)

¹⁸ (14: 12)

¹⁹ All winged insects are unclean; do not eat them.

²⁰ You may eat any clean insect.

²¹ Do not eat any animal that dies a natural death. You may let the foreigners who live among you eat it, or you may sell it to other foreigners. But you belong to the LORD your God; you are his people. Do not cook a young sheep or goat in its mother's milk.

²² Set aside a tithe -- a tenth of all that your fields produce each year.

²³ Then go to the one place where the LORD your God has chosen to be worshiped; and there in his presence eat the tithes of your grain, wine, and olive oil, and the first-born of your cattle and sheep. Do this so that you may learn to honor the LORD your God always.

²⁴ If the place of worship is too far from your home for you to carry there the tithe of the produce that the LORD has blessed you with, then do this:

²⁵ Sell your produce and take the money with you to the one place of worship.

²⁶ Spend it on whatever you want -- beef, lamb, wine, beer -- and there, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families are to eat and enjoy yourselves.

²⁷ Do not neglect the Levites who live in your towns; they have no property of their own.

²⁸ At the end of every third year bring the tithe of all your crops and store it in your towns.

²⁹ This food is for the Levites, since they own no property, and for the foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your towns. They are to come and get all they need. Do this, and the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

15 ¹ At the end of every seventh year you are to cancel the debts of those who owe you money.

² This is how it is to be done. Each of you who has lent money to any Israelite

is to cancel the debt; you must not try to collect the money; the LORD himself has declared the debt canceled.

³You may collect what a foreigner owes you, but you must not collect what any of your own people owe you.

⁴The LORD your God will bless you in the land that he is giving you. Not one of your people will be poor

⁵if you obey him and carefully observe everything that I command you today.

⁶The LORD will bless you, as he has promised. You will lend money to many nations, but you will not have to borrow from any; you will have control over many nations, but no nation will have control over you.

⁷If in any of the towns in the land that the LORD your God is giving you there are Israelites in need, then do not be selfish and refuse to help them.

⁸Instead, be generous and lend them as much as they need.

⁹Do not refuse to lend them something, just because the year when debts are canceled is near. Do not let such an evil thought enter your mind. If you refuse to make the loan, they will cry out to the

LORD against you, and you will be held guilty.

¹⁰Give to them freely and unselfishly, and the LORD will bless you in everything you do.

¹¹There will always be some Israelites who are poor and in need, and so I command you to be generous to them.

¹²If any Israelites, male or female, sell themselves to you as slaves, you are to release them after they have served you for six years. When the seventh year comes, you must let them go free.

¹³When you set them free, do not send them away empty-handed.

¹⁴Give to them generously from what the LORD has blessed you with -- sheep, grain, and wine.

¹⁵Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God set you free; that is why I am now giving you this command.

¹⁶But your slave may not want to leave; he may love you and your family and be content to stay.

¹⁷Then take him to the door of your house and there pierce his ear; he will

then be your slave for life. Treat your female slave in the same way.

¹⁸Do not be resentful when you set slaves free; after all, they have served you for six years at half the cost of hired servants. Do this, and the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

¹⁹Set aside for the LORD your God all the first-born males of your cattle and sheep; don't use any of these cattle for work and don't shear any of these sheep.

²⁰Each year you and your family are to eat them in the LORD's presence at the one place of worship.

²¹But if there is anything wrong with the animals, if they are crippled or blind or have any other serious defect, you must not sacrifice them to the LORD your God.

²²You may eat such animals at home. All of you, whether ritually clean or unclean, may eat them, just as you eat deer or antelope.

²³But do not use their blood for food; instead, you must pour it out on the ground like water.

16¹Honor the LORD your God by celebrating Passover in the month

of Abib; it was on a night in that month that he rescued you from Egypt.

²Go to the one place of worship and slaughter there one of your sheep or cattle for the Passover meal to honor the LORD your God.

³When you eat this meal, do not eat bread prepared with yeast. For seven days you are to eat bread prepared without yeast, as you did when you had to leave Egypt in such a hurry. Eat this bread -- it will be called the bread of suffering -- so that as long as you live you will remember the day you came out of Egypt, that place of suffering.

⁴For seven days no one in your land is to have any yeast in the house; and the meat of the animal killed on the evening of the first day must be eaten that same night.

⁵Slaughter the Passover animals at the one place of worship -- and nowhere else in the land that the LORD your God will give you. Do it at sunset, the time of day when you left Egypt.

⁶(16:5)

⁷ Boil the meat and eat it at the one place of worship; and the next morning return home.

⁸ For the next six days you are to eat bread prepared without yeast, and on the seventh day assemble to worship the LORD your God, and do no work on that day.

⁹ Count seven weeks from the time that you begin to harvest the grain,

¹⁰ and then celebrate the Harvest Festival, to honor the LORD your God, by bringing him a freewill offering in proportion to the blessing he has given you.

¹¹ Be joyful in the LORD's presence, together with your children, your servants, and the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your towns. Do this at the one place of worship.

¹² Be sure that you obey these commands; do not forget that you were slaves in Egypt.

¹³ After you have threshed all your grain and pressed all your grapes, celebrate the Festival of Shelters for seven days.

¹⁴Enjoy it with your children, your servants, and the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your towns.

¹⁵Honor the LORD your God by celebrating this festival for seven days at the one place of worship. Be joyful, because the LORD has blessed your harvest and your work.

¹⁶All the men of your nation are to come to worship the LORD three times a year at the one place of worship: at Passover, Harvest Festival, and the Festival of Shelters. Each man is to bring a gift

¹⁷as he is able, in proportion to the blessings that the LORD your God has given him.

¹⁸Appoint judges and other officials in every town that the LORD your God gives you. These men are to judge the people impartially.

¹⁹They are not to be unjust or show partiality in their judgments; and they are not to accept bribes, for gifts blind the eyes even of wise and honest men, and cause them to give wrong decisions.

²⁰ Always be fair and just, so that you will occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you and so that you will continue to live there.

²¹ When you make an altar for the LORD your God, do not put beside it a wooden symbol of the goddess Asherah.

²² And do not set up any stone pillar for idol worship; the LORD hates them.

17 ¹ Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God cattle or sheep that have any defects; the LORD hates this.

² Suppose you hear that in one of your towns some men or women have sinned against the LORD and broken his covenant

³ by worshiping and serving other gods or the sun or the moon or the stars, contrary to the LORD's command.

⁴ If you hear such a report, then investigate it thoroughly. If it is true that this evil thing has happened in Israel,

⁵ then take them outside the town and stone them to death.

⁶ However, they may be put to death only if two or more witnesses testify against them; they are not to be put to death if there is only one witness.

⁷The witnesses are to throw the first stones, and then the rest of the people are to stone them; in this way you will get rid of this evil.

⁸It may be that some cases will be too difficult for the local judges to decide, such as certain cases of property rights or of bodily injury or those cases that involve a distinction between murder and manslaughter. When this happens, go to the one place of worship chosen by the LORD your God,

⁹and present your case to the levitical priests and to the judge who is in office at that time, and let them decide the case.

¹⁰They will give their decision, and you are to do exactly as they tell you.

¹¹Accept their verdict and follow their instructions in every detail.

¹²Anyone who dares to disobey either the judge or the priest on duty is to be put to death; in this way you will remove this evil from Israel.

¹³Then everyone will hear of it and be afraid, and no one else will dare to act in such a way.

¹⁴After you have taken possession of the land that the LORD your God is going to give you and have settled there, then you will decide you need a king like all the nations around you.

¹⁵Be sure that the man you choose to be king is the one whom the LORD has chosen. He must be one of your own people; do not make a foreigner your king.

¹⁶The king is not to have a large number of horses for his army, and he is not to send people to Egypt to buy horses, because the LORD has said that his people are never to return there.

¹⁷The king is not to have many wives, because this would make him turn away from the LORD; and he is not to make himself rich with silver and gold.

¹⁸When he becomes king, he is to have a copy of the book of God's laws and teachings made from the original copy kept by the levitical priests.

¹⁹He is to keep this book near him and read from it all his life, so that he will learn to honor the LORD and to obey faithfully everything that is commanded in it.

²⁰This will keep him from thinking that he is better than other Israelites and from disobeying the LORD's commands in any way. Then he will reign for many years, and his descendants will rule Israel for many generations.

18¹The priestly tribe of Levi is not to receive any share of land in Israel; instead, they are to live on the offerings and other sacrifices given to the LORD.

²They are to own no land, as the other tribes do; their share is the privilege of being the LORD's priests, as the LORD has promised.

³Whenever cattle or sheep are sacrificed, the priests are to be given the shoulder, the jaw, and the stomach.

⁴They are to receive the first share of the grain, wine, olive oil, and wool.

⁵The LORD chose from all your tribes the tribe of Levi to serve him as priests forever.

⁶Any Levite who wants to may come from any town in Israel to the one place of worship

⁷ and may serve there as a priest of the LORD his God, like the other Levites who are serving there.

⁸ He is to receive the same amount of food as the other priests, and he may keep whatever his family sends him.

⁹ When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, don't follow the disgusting practices of the nations that are there.

¹⁰ Don't sacrifice your children in the fires on your altars; and don't let your people practice divination or look for omens or use spells

¹¹ or charms, and don't let them consult the spirits of the dead.

¹² The LORD your God hates people who do these disgusting things, and that is why he is driving those nations out of the land as you advance.

¹³ Be completely faithful to the LORD.

¹⁴ Then Moses said, In the land you are about to occupy, people follow the advice of those who practice divination and look for omens, but the LORD your God does not allow you to do this.

¹⁵ Instead, he will send you a prophet like me from among your own people, and you are to obey him.

¹⁶ On the day that you were gathered at Mount Sinai, you begged not to hear the LORD speak again or to see his fiery presence any more, because you were afraid you would die.

¹⁷ So the LORD said to me, They have made a wise request.

¹⁸ I will send them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will tell him what to say, and he will tell the people everything I command.

¹⁹ He will speak in my name, and I will punish anyone who refuses to obey him.

²⁰ But if any prophet dares to speak a message in my name when I did not command him to do so, he must die for it, and so must any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods.

²¹ You may wonder how you can tell when a prophet's message does not come from the LORD.

²² If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD and what he says does not come true, then it is not the LORD's message. That prophet has spoken on

his own authority, and you are not to fear him.

19¹ After the LORD your God has destroyed the people whose land he is giving you and after you have taken their cities and houses and settled there,² divide the territory into three parts, each with a city that can be easily reached. Then any of you that kill will be able to escape to one of them for protection.

³ (19: 2)

⁴ If you accidentally kill someone who is not your enemy, you may escape to any of these cities and be safe.

⁵ For example, if two of you go into the forest together to cut wood and if, as one of you is chopping down a tree, the ax head comes off the handle and kills the other, you can run to one of those three cities and be safe.

⁶ If there were only one city, the distance to it might be too great, and the relative who is responsible for taking revenge for the killing might catch you and angrily kill an innocent person. After all, it was by accident that you killed someone who was not your enemy.

⁷This is why I order you to set aside three cities.

⁸When the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he told your ancestors he would, and gives you all the land he has promised,

⁹then you are to select three more cities. (He will give you this land if you do everything that I command you today and if you love the LORD your God and live according to his teachings.)

¹⁰Do this, so that innocent people will not die and so that you will not be guilty of putting them to death in the land that the LORD is giving you.

¹¹But suppose you deliberately murder your enemy in cold blood and then escape to one of those cities for protection.

¹²In that case, the leaders of your own town are to send for you and hand you over to the relative responsible for taking revenge for the murder, so that you may be put to death.

¹³No mercy will be shown to you. Israel must rid itself of murderers, so that all will go well.

¹⁴ Do not move your neighbor's property line, established long ago in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁵ One witness is not enough to convict someone of a crime; at least two witnesses are necessary to prove that someone is guilty.

¹⁶ If any of you try to harm another by false accusations,

¹⁷ both of you are to go to the one place of worship and be judged by the priests and judges who are then in office.

¹⁸ The judges will investigate the case thoroughly; and if you have made a false accusation,

¹⁹ you are to receive the punishment the accused would have received. In this way your nation will get rid of this evil.

²⁰ Then everyone else will hear what happened; they will be afraid, and no one will ever again do such an evil thing.

²¹ In such cases show no mercy; the punishment is to be a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot.

20¹ When you go out to fight against your enemies and you see chariots and horses and an army that

outnumbers yours, do not be afraid of them. The LORD your God, who rescued you from Egypt, will be with you.

²Before you start fighting, a priest is to come forward and say to the army,

³Men of Israel, listen! Today you are going into battle. Do not be afraid of your enemies or lose courage or panic.

⁴The LORD your God is going with you, and he will give you victory.

⁵Then the officers will address the men and say, Is there any man here who has just built a house, but has not yet dedicated it? If so, he is to go home. Otherwise, if he is killed in battle, someone else will dedicate his house.

⁶Is there any man here who has just planted a vineyard, but has not yet had the chance to harvest its grapes? If so, he is to go home. Otherwise, if he is killed in battle, someone else will enjoy the wine.

⁷Is there anyone here who is engaged to be married? If so, he is to go home. Otherwise, if he is killed in battle, someone else will marry the woman he is engaged to.

⁸The officers will also say to the men, Is there any man here who has lost his nerve and is afraid? If so, he is to go home. Otherwise, he will destroy the morale of the others.

⁹When the officers have finished speaking to the army, leaders are to be chosen for each unit.

¹⁰When you go to attack a city, first give its people a chance to surrender.

¹¹If they open the gates and surrender, they are all to become your slaves and do forced labor for you.

¹²But if the people of that city will not surrender, but choose to fight, surround it with your army.

¹³Then, when the LORD your God lets you capture the city, kill every man in it.

¹⁴You may, however, take for yourselves the women, the children, the livestock, and everything else in the city. You may use everything that belongs to your enemies. The LORD has given it to you.

¹⁵That is how you are to deal with those cities that are far away from the land you will settle in.

¹⁶But when you capture cities in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, kill everyone.

¹⁷Completely destroy all the people: the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the LORD ordered you to do.

¹⁸Kill them, so that they will not make you sin against the LORD by teaching you to do all the disgusting things that they do in the worship of their gods.

¹⁹When you are trying to capture a city, do not cut down its fruit trees, even though the siege lasts a long time. Eat the fruit, but do not destroy the trees; the trees are not your enemies.

²⁰You may cut down the other trees and use them in the siege mounds until the city is captured.

21 ¹Suppose someone is found murdered in a field in the land that the LORD your God is going to give you, and you do not know who killed him.

²Your leaders and judges are to go out and measure the distance from the place

where the body was found to each of the nearby towns.

³Then the leaders of the town nearest to where the body was found are to select a young cow that has never been used for work.

⁴They are to take it down to a spot near a stream that never runs dry and where the ground has never been plowed or planted, and there they are to break its neck.

⁵The levitical priests are to go there also, because they are to decide every legal case involving violence. The LORD your God has chosen them to serve him and to pronounce blessings in his name.

⁶Then all the leaders from the town nearest the place where the murdered person was found are to wash their hands over the cow

⁷and say, We did not murder this one, and we do not know who did it.

⁸LORD, forgive your people Israel, whom you rescued from Egypt. Forgive us and do not hold us responsible for the murder of an innocent person.

⁹And so, by doing what the LORD requires, you will not be held responsible for the murder.

¹⁰When the LORD your God gives you victory in battle and you take prisoners,

¹¹you may see among them a beautiful woman that you like and want to marry.

¹²Take her to your home, where she will shave her head, cut her fingernails,

¹³and change her clothes. She is to stay in your home and mourn for her parents for a month; after that, you may marry her.

¹⁴Later, if you no longer want her, you are to let her go free. Since you forced her to have intercourse with you, you cannot treat her as a slave and sell her.

¹⁵Suppose a man has two wives and they both bear him sons, but the first son is not the child of his favorite wife.

¹⁶When the man decides how he is going to divide his property among his children, he is not to show partiality to the son of his favorite wife by giving him the share that belongs to the first-born son.

¹⁷He is to give a double share of his possessions to his first son, even though

he is not the son of his favorite wife. A man must acknowledge his first son and give him the share he is legally entitled to.

¹⁸Suppose someone has a son who is stubborn and rebellious, a son who will not obey his parents, even though they punish him.

¹⁹His parents are to take him before the leaders of the town where he lives and make him stand trial.

²⁰They are to say to them, Our son is stubborn and rebellious and refuses to obey us; he wastes money and is a drunkard.

²¹Then the men of the city are to stone him to death, and so you will get rid of this evil. Everyone in Israel will hear what has happened and be afraid.

²²If someone has been put to death for a crime and the body is hung on a post,

²³it is not to remain there overnight. It must be buried the same day, because a dead body hanging on a post brings God's curse on the land. Bury the body, so that you will not defile the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

22¹ If you see an Israelite's cow or sheep running loose, do not ignore it; take it back.

² But if its owner lives a long way off or if you don't know who owns it, then take it home with you. When its owner comes looking for it, give it to him.

³ Do the same thing if you find a donkey, a piece of clothing, or anything else that an Israelite may have lost.

⁴ If an Israelite's donkey or cow has fallen down, don't ignore it; help him get the animal to its feet again.

⁵ Women are not to wear men's clothing, and men are not to wear women's clothing; the LORD your God hates people who do such things.

⁶ If you happen to find a bird's nest in a tree or on the ground with the mother bird sitting either on the eggs or with her young, you are not to take the mother bird.

⁷ You may take the young birds, but you must let the mother bird go, so that you will live a long and prosperous life.

⁸ When you build a new house, be sure to put a railing around the edge of the

roof. Then you will not be responsible if someone falls off and is killed.

⁹Do not plant any crop in the same field with your grapevines; if you do, you are forbidden to use either the grapes or the produce of the other crop.

¹⁰Do not hitch an ox and a donkey together for plowing.

¹¹Do not wear cloth made by weaving wool and linen together.

¹²Sew tassels on the four corners of your clothes.

¹³Suppose a man marries a young woman and later he decides he doesn't want her.

¹⁴So he makes up false charges against her, accusing her of not being a virgin when they got married.

¹⁵If this happens, the young woman's parents are to take the blood-stained wedding sheet that proves she was a virgin, and they are to show it in court to the town leaders.

¹⁶Her father will say to them, I gave my daughter to this man in marriage, and now he doesn't want her.

¹⁷He has made false charges against her, saying that she was not a virgin

when he married her. But here is the proof that my daughter was a virgin; look at the bloodstains on the wedding sheet!

¹⁸Then the town leaders are to take the husband and beat him.

¹⁹They are also to fine him a hundred pieces of silver and give the money to the young woman's father, because the man has brought disgrace on an Israelite woman. Moreover, she will continue to be his wife, and he can never divorce her as long as he lives.

²⁰But if the charge is true and there is no proof that she was a virgin,

²¹then they are to take her out to the entrance of her father's house, where the men of her city are to stone her to death. She has done a shameful thing among our people by having intercourse before she was married, while she was still living in her father's house. In this way you will get rid of this evil.

²²If a man is caught having intercourse with another man's wife, both of them are to be put to death. In this way you will get rid of this evil.

²³ Suppose a man is caught in a town having intercourse with a young woman who is engaged to someone else.

²⁴ You are to take them outside the town and stone them to death. She is to die because she did not cry out for help, although she was in a town, where she could have been heard. And the man is to die because he had intercourse with someone who was engaged. In this way you will get rid of this evil.

²⁵ Suppose a man out in the countryside rapes a young woman who is engaged to someone else. Then only the man is to be put to death;

²⁶ nothing is to be done to the woman, because she has not committed a sin worthy of death. This case is the same as when one man attacks another man and murders him.

²⁷ The man raped the engaged woman in the countryside, and although she cried for help, there was no one to help her.

²⁸ Suppose a man is caught raping a young woman who is not engaged.

²⁹ He is to pay her father the bride price of fifty pieces of silver, and she is to

become his wife, because he forced her to have intercourse with him. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.

³⁰No man is to disgrace his father by having intercourse with any of his father's wives.

23¹No man who has been castrated or whose penis has been cut off may be included among the LORD's people.

²No one born out of wedlock or any descendant of such a person, even in the tenth generation, may be included among the LORD's people.

³No Ammonite or Moabite -- or any of their descendants, even in the tenth generation -- may be included among the LORD's people.

⁴They refused to provide you with food and water when you were on your way out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor, from the city of Pethor in Mesopotamia, to curse you.

⁵But the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam; instead he turned the curse into a blessing, because he loved you.

⁶As long as you are a nation, never do anything to help these nations or to make them prosperous.

⁷Do not despise the Edomites; they are your relatives. And do not despise the Egyptians; you once lived in their land.

⁸From the third generation onward their descendants may be included among the LORD's people.

⁹When you are in camp in time of war, you are to avoid anything that would make you ritually unclean.

¹⁰If a man becomes unclean because he has had a wet dream during the night, he is to go outside the camp and stay there.

¹¹Toward evening he is to wash himself, and at sunset he may come back into camp.

¹²You are to have a place outside the camp where you can go when you need to relieve yourselves.

¹³Carry a stick as part of your equipment, so that when you have a bowel movement you can dig a hole and cover it up.

¹⁴Keep your camp ritually clean, because the LORD your God is with you

in your camp to protect you and to give you victory over your enemies. Do not do anything indecent that would cause the LORD to turn his back on you.

¹⁵If slaves run away from their owners and come to you for protection, do not send them back.

¹⁶They may live in any of your towns that they choose, and you are not to treat them harshly.

¹⁷No Israelite, man or woman, is to become a temple prostitute.

¹⁸Also, no money earned in this way may be brought into the house of the LORD your God in fulfillment of a vow. The LORD hates temple prostitutes.

¹⁹When you lend money or food or anything else to Israelites, do not charge them interest.

²⁰You may charge interest on what you lend to foreigners, but not on what you lend to Israelites. Obey this rule, and the LORD your God will bless everything you do in the land that you are going to occupy.

²¹When you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not put off doing what you

promised; the LORD will hold you to your vow, and it is a sin not to keep it.

²²It is no sin not to make a vow to the LORD,

²³but if you make one voluntarily, be sure that you keep it.

²⁴When you walk along a path in someone else's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but you must not carry any away in a container.

²⁵When you walk along a path in someone else's grainfield, you may eat all the grain you can pull off with your hands, but you must not cut any grain with a sickle.

24¹ Suppose a man marries a woman and later decides that he doesn't want her, because he finds something about her that he doesn't like. So he writes out divorce papers, gives them to her, and sends her away from his home.

² Then suppose she marries another man,

³ and he also decides that he doesn't want her, so he also writes out divorce papers, gives them to her, and sends her

away from his home. Or suppose her second husband dies.

⁴In either case, her first husband is not to marry her again; he is to consider her defiled. If he married her again, it would be offensive to the LORD. You are not to commit such a terrible sin in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

⁵When a man is newly married, he is not to be drafted into military service or any other public duty; he is to be excused from duty for one year, so that he can stay at home and make his wife happy.

⁶When you lend someone something, you are not to take as security his millstones used for grinding his grain. This would take away the family's means of preparing food to stay alive.

⁷If any of you kidnap Israelites and make them your slaves or sell them into slavery, you are to be put to death. In this way your nation will get rid of this evil.

⁸When you are suffering from a dreaded skin disease, be sure to do exactly what the levitical priests tell you;

follow the instructions that I have given them.

⁹Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam as you were coming from Egypt.

¹⁰When you lend someone something, do not go into his house to get the garment he is going to give you as security;

¹¹wait outside and let him bring it to you himself.

¹²If he is poor, do not keep it overnight;

¹³return it to him each evening, so that he can have it to sleep in. Then he will be grateful, and the LORD your God will be pleased with you.

¹⁴Do not cheat poor and needy hired servants, whether they are Israelites or foreigners living in one of your towns.

¹⁵Each day before sunset pay them for that day's work; they need the money and have counted on getting it. If you do not pay them, they will cry out against you to the LORD, and you will be guilty of sin.

¹⁶Parents are not to be put to death for crimes committed by their children, and children are not to be put to death

for crimes committed by their parents; people are to be put to death only for a crime they themselves have committed.

¹⁷Do not deprive foreigners and orphans of their rights; and do not take a widow's garment as security for a loan.

¹⁸Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God set you free; that is why I have given you this command.

¹⁹When you gather your crops and fail to bring in some of the grain that you have cut, do not go back for it; it is to be left for the foreigners, orphans, and widows, so that the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

²⁰When you have picked your olives once, do not go back and get those that are left; they are for the foreigners, orphans, and widows.

²¹When you have gathered your grapes once, do not go back over the vines a second time; the grapes that are left are for the foreigners, orphans, and widows.

²²Never forget that you were slaves in Egypt; that is why I have given you this command.

25¹ Suppose two Israelites go to court to settle a dispute, and one is declared innocent and the other guilty.

² If the guilty one is sentenced to be beaten, the judge is to make him lie face downward and have him whipped. The number of lashes will depend on the crime he has committed.

³ He may be given as many as forty lashes, but no more; more than that would humiliate him publicly.

⁴ Do not muzzle an ox when you are using it to thresh grain.

⁵ If two brothers live on the same property and one of them dies, leaving no son, then his widow is not to be married to someone outside the family; it is the duty of the dead man's brother to marry her.

⁶ The first son that they have will be considered the son of the dead man, so that his family line will continue in Israel.

⁷ But if the dead man's brother does not want to marry her, she is to go before the town leaders and say, My husband's brother will not do his duty; he refuses to give his brother a descendant among the people of Israel.

⁸Then the town leaders are to summon him and speak to him. If he still refuses to marry her,

⁹his brother's widow is to go up to him in the presence of the town leaders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face, and say, This is what happens to the man who refuses to give his brother a descendant.

¹⁰His family will be known in Israel as the family of the man who had his sandal pulled off.

¹¹If two men are having a fight and the wife of one tries to help her husband by grabbing hold of the other man's genitals,

¹²show her no mercy; cut off her hand.

¹³Do not cheat when you use weights and measures.

¹⁴(25: 13)

¹⁵Use true and honest weights and measures, so that you may live a long time in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁶The LORD hates people who cheat.

¹⁷Remember what the Amalekites did to you as you were coming from Egypt.

¹⁸They had no fear of God, and so they attacked you from the rear when you were tired and exhausted, and killed all who were straggling behind.

¹⁹So then, when the LORD your God has given you the land and made you safe from all your enemies who live around you, be sure to kill all the Amalekites, so that no one will remember them any longer. Do not forget!

26 ¹After you have occupied the land that the LORD your God is giving you and have settled there,

²each of you must place in a basket the first part of each crop that you harvest and you must take it with you to the one place of worship.

³Go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, I now acknowledge to the LORD my God that I have entered the land that he promised our ancestors to give us.

⁴The priest will take the basket from you and place it before the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵Then, in the LORD's presence you will recite these words: My ancestor was a wandering Aramean, who took his

family to Egypt to live. They were few in number when they went there, but they became a large and powerful nation.

⁶The Egyptians treated us harshly and forced us to work as slaves.

⁷Then we cried out for help to the LORD, the God of our ancestors. He heard us and saw our suffering, hardship, and misery.

⁸By his great power and strength he rescued us from Egypt. He worked miracles and wonders, and caused terrifying things to happen.

⁹He brought us here and gave us this rich and fertile land.

¹⁰So now I bring to the LORD the first part of the harvest that he has given me. Then set the basket down in the LORD's presence and worship there.

¹¹Be grateful for the good things that the LORD your God has given you and your family; and let the Levites and the foreigners who live among you join in the celebration.

¹²Every third year give the tithe -- a tenth of your crops -- to the Levites, the foreigners, the orphans, and the widows, so that in every community they will

have all they need to eat. When you have done this,

¹³say to the LORD, None of the sacred tithe is left in my house; I have given it to the Levites, the foreigners, the orphans, and the widows, as you commanded me to do. I have not disobeyed or forgotten any of your commands concerning the tithe.

¹⁴I have not eaten any of it when I was mourning; I have not taken any of it out of my house when I was ritually unclean; and I have not given any of it as an offering for the dead. I have obeyed you, O LORD; I have done everything you commanded concerning the tithe.

¹⁵Look down from your holy place in heaven and bless your people Israel; bless also the rich and fertile land that you have given us, as you promised our ancestors.

¹⁶Today the LORD your God commands you to obey all his laws; so obey them faithfully with all your heart.

¹⁷Today you have acknowledged the LORD as your God; you have promised to obey him, to keep all his laws, and to do all that he commands.

¹⁸Today the LORD has accepted you as his own people, as he promised you; and he commands you to obey all his laws.

¹⁹He will make you greater than any other nation that he has created, and you will bring praise and honor to his name. You will be his own people, as he promised.

27 ¹Then Moses, together with the leaders of Israel, said to the people, Obey all the instructions that I am giving you today.

²On the day you cross the Jordan River and enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you are to set up some large stones, cover them with plaster,

³and write on them all these laws and teachings. When you have entered the rich and fertile land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you,

⁴and you are on the other side of the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I am instructing you today, and cover them with plaster.

⁵Build an altar there made of stones that have had no iron tools used on them,

⁶because any altar you build for the LORD your God must be made of uncut stones. There you are to offer the sacrifices that are to be burned,

⁷and there you are to sacrifice and eat your fellowship offerings and be grateful in the presence of the LORD your God.

⁸On the stones covered with plaster write clearly every word of God's laws.

⁹Then Moses, together with the levitical priests, said to all the people of Israel, Give me your attention, people of Israel, and listen to me. Today you have become the people of the LORD your God;

¹⁰so obey him and keep all his laws that I am giving you today.

¹¹Then Moses said to the people of Israel,

¹²After you have crossed the Jordan, the following tribes are to stand on Mount Gerizim when the blessings are pronounced on the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin.

¹³And the following tribes will stand on Mount Ebal when the curses are pronounced: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

¹⁴ The Levites will speak these words in a loud voice:

¹⁵ God's curse on anyone who makes an idol of stone, wood, or metal and secretly worships it; the LORD hates idolatry. And all the people will answer, Amen!

¹⁶ God's curse on anyone who dishonors his father or mother. And all the people will answer, Amen!

¹⁷ God's curse on anyone who moves a neighbor's property line. And all the people will answer, Amen!

¹⁸ God's curse on anyone who leads a blind person in the wrong direction. And all the people will answer, Amen!

¹⁹ God's curse on anyone who deprives foreigners, orphans, and widows of their rights. And all the people will answer, Amen!

²⁰ God's curse on anyone who disgraces his father by having intercourse with any of his father's wives. And all the people will answer, Amen!

²¹ God's curse on anyone who has sexual relations with an animal. And all the people will answer, Amen!

²² God's curse on anyone who has intercourse with his sister or half sister. And all the people will answer, Amen!

²³ God's curse on anyone who has intercourse with his mother-in-law. And all the people will answer, Amen!

²⁴ God's curse on anyone who secretly commits murder. And all the people will answer, Amen!

²⁵ God's curse on anyone who accepts money to murder an innocent person. And all the people will answer, Amen!

²⁶ God's curse on anyone who does not obey all of God's laws and teachings. And all the people will answer, Amen!

28¹ If you obey the LORD your God and faithfully keep all his commands that I am giving you today, he will make you greater than any other nation on earth.

² Obey the LORD your God and all these blessings will be yours:

³ The LORD will bless your towns and your fields.

⁴ The LORD will bless you with many children, with abundant crops, and with many cattle and sheep.

⁵The LORD will bless your grain crops and the food you prepare from them.

⁶The LORD will bless everything you do.

⁷The LORD will defeat your enemies when they attack you. They will attack from one direction, but they will run from you in all directions.

⁸The LORD your God will bless your work and fill your barns with grain. He will bless you in the land that he is giving you.

⁹If you obey the LORD your God and do everything he commands, he will make you his own people, as he has promised.

¹⁰Then all the peoples on earth will see that the LORD has chosen you to be his own people, and they will be afraid of you.

¹¹The LORD will give you many children, many cattle, and abundant crops in the land that he promised your ancestors to give you.

¹²He will send rain in season from his rich storehouse in the sky and bless all your work, so that you will lend to many nations, but you will not have to borrow from any.

¹³The LORD your God will make you the leader among the nations and not a follower; you will always prosper and never fail if you obey faithfully all his commands that I am giving you today.

¹⁴But you must never disobey them in any way, or worship and serve other gods.

¹⁵But if you disobey the LORD your God and do not faithfully keep all his commands and laws that I am giving you today, all these evil things will happen to you:

¹⁶The LORD will curse your towns and your fields.

¹⁷The LORD will curse your grain crops and the food you prepare from them.

¹⁸The LORD will curse you by giving you only a few children, poor crops, and few cattle and sheep.

¹⁹The LORD will curse everything you do.

²⁰If you do evil and reject the LORD, he will bring on you disaster, confusion, and trouble in everything you do, until you are quickly and completely destroyed.

²¹ He will send disease after disease on you until there is not one of you left in the land that you are about to occupy.

²² The LORD will strike you with infectious diseases, with swelling and fever; he will send drought and scorching winds to destroy your crops. These disasters will be with you until you die.

²³ No rain will fall, and your ground will become as hard as iron.

²⁴ Instead of rain, the LORD will send down duststorms and sandstorms until you are destroyed.

²⁵ The LORD will give your enemies victory over you. You will attack them from one direction, but you will run from them in all directions, and all the people on earth will be terrified when they see what happens to you.

²⁶ When you die, birds and wild animals will come and eat your bodies, and there will be no one to scare them off.

²⁷ The LORD will send boils on you, as he did on the Egyptians. He will make your bodies break out with sores. You will be covered with scabs, and you will itch, but there will be no cure.

²⁸The LORD will make you lose your mind; he will strike you with blindness and confusion.

²⁹You will grope about in broad daylight like someone blind, and you will not be able to find your way. You will not prosper in anything you do. You will be constantly oppressed and robbed, and there will be no one to help you.

³⁰You will be engaged to a young woman -- but someone else will marry her. You will build a house -- but never live in it. You will plant a vineyard -- but never eat its grapes.

³¹Your cattle will be butchered before your very eyes, but you will not eat any of the meat. Your donkeys will be dragged away while you look on, and they will not be given back to you. Your sheep will be given to your enemies, and there will be no one to help you.

³²Your sons and daughters will be given as slaves to foreigners while you look on. Every day you will strain your eyes, looking in vain for your children to return.

³³A foreign nation will take all the crops that you have worked so hard to grow,

while you receive nothing but constant oppression and harsh treatment.

³⁴Your sufferings will make you lose your mind.

³⁵The LORD will cover your legs with incurable, painful sores; boils will cover you from head to foot.

³⁶The LORD will take you and your king away to a foreign land, where neither you nor your ancestors ever lived before; there you will serve gods made of wood and stone.

³⁷In the countries to which the LORD will scatter you, the people will be shocked at what has happened to you; they will make fun of you and ridicule you.

³⁸You will plant plenty of seed, but reap only a small harvest, because the locusts will eat your crops.

³⁹You will plant vineyards and take care of them, but you will not gather their grapes or drink wine from them, because worms will eat the vines.

⁴⁰Olive trees will grow everywhere in your land, but you will not have any olive oil, because the olives will drop off.

⁴¹ You will have sons and daughters, but you will lose them, because they will be taken away as prisoners of war.

⁴² All your trees and crops will be devoured by insects.

⁴³ Foreigners who live in your land will gain more and more power, while you gradually lose yours.

⁴⁴ They will have money to lend you, but you will have none to lend them. In the end they will be your rulers.

⁴⁵ All these disasters will come on you, and they will be with you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the LORD your God and keep all the laws that he gave you.

⁴⁶ They will be the evidence of God's judgment on you and your descendants forever.

⁴⁷ The LORD blessed you in every way, but you would not serve him with glad and joyful hearts.

⁴⁸ So then, you will serve the enemies that the LORD is going to send against you. You will be hungry, thirsty, and naked -- in need of everything. The LORD will oppress you harshly until you are destroyed.

⁴⁹The LORD will bring against you a nation from the ends of the earth, a nation whose language you do not know. They will swoop down on you like an eagle.

⁵⁰They will be ruthless and show no mercy to anyone, young or old.

⁵¹They will eat your livestock and your crops, and you will starve to death. They will not leave you any grain, wine, olive oil, cattle, or sheep; and you will die.

⁵²They will attack every town in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and the high, fortified walls in which you trust will fall.

⁵³When your enemies are besieging your towns, you will become so desperate for food that you will even eat the children that the LORD your God has given you.

⁵⁴Even the most refined man of noble birth will become so desperate during the siege that he will eat some of his own children because he has no other food. He will not even give any to his brother or to the wife he loves or to any of his children who are left.

⁵⁵ (28: 54)

⁵⁶Even the most refined woman of noble birth, so rich that she has never had to walk anywhere, will behave in the same way. When the enemy besieges her town, she will become so desperate for food that she will secretly eat her newborn child and the afterbirth as well. She will not share them with the husband she loves or with any of her children.

⁵⁷ (28: 56)

⁵⁸If you do not obey faithfully all of God's teachings that are written in this book and if you do not honor the wonderful and awesome name of the LORD your God,

⁵⁹he will send on you and on your descendants incurable diseases and horrible epidemics that can never be stopped.

⁶⁰He will bring on you once again all the dreadful diseases you experienced in Egypt, and you will never recover.

⁶¹He will also send all kinds of diseases and epidemics that are not mentioned in this book of God's laws and teachings, and you will be destroyed.

⁶² Although you become as numerous as the stars in the sky, only a few of you will survive, because you did not obey the LORD your God.

⁶³ Just as the LORD took delight in making you prosper and in making you increase in number, so he will take delight in destroying you and in bringing ruin on you. You will be uprooted from the land that you are about to occupy.

⁶⁴ The LORD will scatter you among all the nations, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you will serve gods made of wood and stone, gods that neither you nor your ancestors have ever worshiped before.

⁶⁵ You will find no peace anywhere, no place to call your own; the LORD will overwhelm you with anxiety, hopelessness, and despair.

⁶⁶ Your life will always be in danger. Day and night you will be filled with terror, and you will live in constant fear of death.

⁶⁷ Your hearts will pound with fear at everything you see. Every morning you will wish for evening; every evening you will wish for morning.

⁶⁸The LORD will send you back to Egypt in ships, even though he said that you would never have to go there again. There you will try to sell yourselves to your enemies as slaves, but no one will want to buy you.

29¹ These are the terms of the covenant that the LORD commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab; all this was in addition to the covenant which the LORD had made with them at Mount Sinai.

² Moses called together all the people of Israel and said to them, You saw for yourselves what the LORD did to the king of Egypt, to his officials, and to his entire country.

³ You saw the terrible plagues, the miracles, and the great wonders that the LORD performed.

⁴ But to this very day he has not let you understand what you have experienced.

⁵ For forty years the LORD led you through the desert, and your clothes and sandals never wore out.

⁶ You did not have bread to eat or wine or beer to drink, but the LORD provided

for your needs in order to teach you that he is your God.

⁷And when we came to this place, King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan came out to fight against us. But we defeated them,

⁸took their land, and divided it among the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

⁹Obey faithfully all the terms of this covenant, so that you will be successful in everything you do.

¹⁰Today you are standing in the presence of the LORD your God, all of you -- your leaders and officials, your men,

¹¹women, and children, and the foreigners who live among you and cut wood and carry water for you.

¹²You are here today to enter into this covenant that the LORD your God is making with you and to accept its obligations,

¹³so that the LORD may now confirm you as his people and be your God, as he promised you and your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

¹⁴You are not the only ones with whom the LORD is making this covenant with its obligations.

¹⁵He is making it with all of us who stand here in his presence today and also with our descendants who are not yet born.

¹⁶You remember what life was like in Egypt and what it was like to travel through the territory of other nations.

¹⁷You saw their disgusting idols made of wood, stone, silver, and gold.

¹⁸Make sure that no man, woman, family, or tribe standing here today turns from the LORD our God to worship the gods of other nations. This would be like a root that grows to be a bitter and poisonous plant.

¹⁹Make sure that there is no one here today who hears these solemn demands and yet convinces himself that all will be well with him, even if he stubbornly goes his own way. That would destroy all of you, good and evil alike.

²⁰The LORD will not forgive such a man. Instead, the LORD's burning anger will flame up against him, and all the disasters written in this book will fall on

him until the LORD has destroyed him completely.

²¹ The LORD will make an example of him before all the tribes of Israel and will bring disaster on him in accordance with all the curses listed in the covenant that is written in this book of the LORD's teachings.

²² In future generations your descendants and foreigners from distant lands will see the disasters and sufferings that the LORD has brought on your land.

²³ The fields will be a barren waste, covered with sulfur and salt; nothing will be planted, and not even weeds will grow there. Your land will be like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Admah and Zeboim, which the LORD destroyed when he was furiously angry.

²⁴ Then the whole world will ask, Why did the LORD do this to their land? What was the reason for his fierce anger?

²⁵ And the answer will be, It is because the LORD's people broke the covenant they had made with him, the God of their ancestors, when he brought them out of Egypt.

²⁶They served other gods that they had never worshiped before, gods that the LORD had forbidden them to worship.

²⁷And so the LORD became angry with his people and brought on their land all the disasters written in this book.

²⁸The LORD became furiously angry, and in his great anger he uprooted them from their land and threw them into a foreign land, and there they are today.

²⁹There are some things that the LORD our God has kept secret; but he has revealed his Law, and we and our descendants are to obey it forever.

30¹I have now given you a choice between a blessing and a curse. When all these things have happened to you, and you are living among the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you, you will remember the choice I gave you.

²If you and your descendants will turn back to the LORD and with all your heart obey his commands that I am giving you today,

³then the LORD your God will have mercy on you. He will bring you back from the nations where he has scattered

you, and he will make you prosperous again.

⁴Even if you are scattered to the farthest corners of the earth, the LORD your God will gather you together and bring you back,

⁵so that you may again take possession of the land where your ancestors once lived. And he will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your ancestors ever were.

⁶The LORD your God will give you and your descendants obedient hearts, so that you will love him with all your heart, and you will continue to live in that land.

⁷He will turn all these curses against your enemies, who hated you and oppressed you,

⁸and you will again obey him and keep all his commands that I am giving you today.

⁹The LORD will make you prosperous in all that you do; you will have many children and a lot of livestock, and your fields will produce abundant crops. He will be as glad to make you prosperous as he was to make your ancestors prosperous,

¹⁰but you will have to obey him and keep all his laws that are written in this book of his teachings. You will have to turn to him with all your heart.

¹¹The command that I am giving you today is not too difficult or beyond your reach.

¹²It is not up in the sky. You do not have to ask, Who will go up and bring it down for us, so that we can hear it and obey it?

¹³Nor is it on the other side of the ocean. You do not have to ask, Who will go across the ocean and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and obey it?

¹⁴No, it is here with you. You know it and can quote it, so now obey it.

¹⁵Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death.

¹⁶If you obey the commands of the LORD your God, which I give you today, if you love him, obey him, and keep all his laws, then you will prosper and become a nation of many people. The LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are about to occupy.

¹⁷ But if you disobey and refuse to listen, and are led away to worship other gods,

¹⁸ you will be destroyed -- I warn you here and now. You will not live long in that land across the Jordan that you are about to occupy.

¹⁹ I am now giving you the choice between life and death, between God's blessing and God's curse, and I call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Choose life.

²⁰ Love the LORD your God, obey him and be faithful to him, and then you and your descendants will live long in the land that he promised to give your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

31 ¹ Moses continued speaking to the people of Israel,

² and said, I am now a hundred and twenty years old and am no longer able to be your leader. And besides this, the LORD has told me that I will not cross the Jordan.

³ The LORD your God himself will go before you and destroy the nations living there, so that you can occupy their land;

and Joshua will be your leader, as the LORD has said.

⁴The LORD will destroy those people, just as he defeated Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and destroyed their country.

⁵The LORD will give you victory over them, and you are to treat them exactly as I have told you.

⁶Be determined and confident. Do not be afraid of them. Your God, the LORD himself, will be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you.

⁷Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the presence of all the people of Israel, Be determined and confident; you are the one who will lead these people to occupy the land that the LORD promised to their ancestors.

⁸The LORD himself will lead you and be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you, so do not lose courage or be afraid.

⁹So Moses wrote down God's Law and gave it to the levitical priests, who were in charge of the LORD's Covenant Box, and to the leaders of Israel.

¹⁰He commanded them, At the end of every seven years, when the year that

debts are canceled comes around, read this aloud at the Festival of Shelters.

¹¹Read it to the people of Israel when they come to worship the LORD your God at the one place of worship.

¹²Call together all the men, women, and children, and the foreigners who live in your towns, so that everyone may hear it and learn to honor the LORD your God and to obey his teachings faithfully.

¹³In this way your descendants who have never heard the Law of the LORD your God will hear it. And so they will learn to obey him as long as they live in the land that you are about to occupy across the Jordan.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, You do not have much longer to live. Call Joshua and bring him to the Tent, so that I may give him his instructions. Moses and Joshua went to the Tent,

¹⁵and the LORD appeared to them there in a pillar of cloud that stood by the door of the Tent.

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses, You will soon die, and after your death the people will become unfaithful to me and break the covenant that I made with them.

They will abandon me and worship the pagan gods of the land they are about to enter.

¹⁷When that happens, I will become angry with them; I will abandon them, and they will be destroyed. Many terrible disasters will come upon them, and then they will realize that these things are happening to them because I, their God, am no longer with them.

¹⁸And I will refuse to help them then, because they have done evil and worshiped other gods.

¹⁹Now, write down this song. Teach it to the people of Israel, so that it will stand as evidence against them.

²⁰I will take them into this rich and fertile land, as I promised their ancestors. There they will have all the food they want, and they will live comfortably. But they will turn away and worship other gods. They will reject me and break my covenant,

²¹and many terrible disasters will come on them. But this song will still be sung, and it will stand as evidence against them. Even now, before I take them into

the land that I promised to give them, I know what they are thinking.

²²That same day Moses wrote down the song and taught it to the people of Israel.

²³Then the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun and told him, Be confident and determined. You will lead the people of Israel into the land that I promised them, and I will be with you.

²⁴Moses wrote God's Law in a book, taking care not to leave out anything.

²⁵When he finished, he said to the levitical priests, who were in charge of the LORD's Covenant Box,

²⁶Take this book of God's Law and place it beside the Covenant Box of the LORD your God, so that it will remain there as a witness against his people.

²⁷I know how stubborn and rebellious they are. They have rebelled against the LORD during my lifetime, and they will rebel even more after I am dead.

²⁸Assemble all your tribal leaders and officials before me, so that I can tell them these things; I will call heaven and earth to be my witnesses against them.

²⁹I know that after my death the people will become wicked and reject what I have taught them. And in time to come they will meet with disaster, because they will have made the LORD angry by doing what he has forbidden.

³⁰Then Moses recited the entire song while all the people of Israel listened.

32¹Earth and sky, hear my words, listen closely to what I say.

²My teaching will fall like drops of rain and form on the earth like dew. My words will fall like showers on young plants, like gentle rain on tender grass.

³I will praise the name of the LORD, and his people will tell of his greatness.

⁴The LORD is your mighty defender, perfect and just in all his ways; Your God is faithful and true; he does what is right and fair.

⁵But you are unfaithful, unworthy to be his people, a sinful and deceitful nation.

⁶Is this the way you should treat the LORD, you foolish, senseless people? He is your father, your Creator, he made you into a nation.

⁷Think of the past, of the time long ago; ask your parents to tell you what

happened, ask the old people to tell of the past.

⁸The Most High assigned nations their lands; he determined where peoples should live. He assigned to each nation a heavenly being,

⁹but Jacob's descendants he chose for himself.

¹⁰He found them wandering through the desert, a desolate, wind-swept wilderness. He protected them and cared for them, as he would protect himself.

¹¹Like an eagle teaching its young to fly, catching them safely on its spreading wings, the LORD kept Israel from falling.

¹²The LORD alone led his people without the help of a foreign god.

¹³He let them rule the highlands, and they ate what grew in the fields. They found wild honey among the rocks; their olive trees flourished in stony ground.

¹⁴Their cows and goats gave plenty of milk; they had the best sheep, goats, and cattle, the finest wheat, and the choicest wine.

¹⁵The LORD's people grew rich, but rebellious; they were fat and stuffed with

food. They abandoned God their Creator and rejected their mighty savior.

¹⁶Their idolatry made the LORD jealous; the evil they did made him angry.

¹⁷They sacrificed to gods that are not real, new gods their ancestors had never known, gods that Israel had never obeyed.

¹⁸They forgot their God, their mighty savior, the one who had given them life.

¹⁹When the LORD saw this, he was angry and rejected his sons and daughters.

²⁰I will no longer help them, he said; then I will see what happens to them, those stubborn, unfaithful people.

²¹With their idols they have made me angry, jealous with their so-called gods, gods that are really not gods. So I will use a so-called nation to make them angry; I will make them jealous with a nation of fools.

²²My anger will flame up like fire and burn everything on earth. It will reach to the world below and consume the roots of the mountains.

²³ I will bring on them endless disasters and use all my arrows against them.

²⁴ They will die from hunger and fever; they will die from terrible diseases. I will send wild animals to attack them, and poisonous snakes to bite them.

²⁵ War will bring death in the streets; terrors will strike in the homes. Young men and young women will die; neither babies nor old people will be spared.

²⁶ I would have destroyed them completely, so that no one would remember them.

²⁷ But I could not let their enemies boast that they had defeated my people, when it was I myself who had crushed them.'

²⁸ Israel is a nation without sense; they have no wisdom at all.

²⁹ They fail to see why they were defeated; they cannot understand what happened.

³⁰ Why were a thousand defeated by one, and ten thousand by only two? The LORD, their God, had abandoned them; their mighty God had given them up.

³¹ Their enemies know that their own gods are weak, not mighty like Israel's God.

³² Their enemies, corrupt as Sodom and Gomorrah, are like vines that bear bitter and poisonous grapes,

³³ like wine made from the venom of snakes.

³⁴ The LORD remembers what their enemies have done; he waits for the right time to punish them.

³⁵ The LORD will take revenge and punish them; the time will come when they will fall; the day of their doom is near.

³⁶ The LORD will rescue his people when he sees that their strength is gone. He will have mercy on those who serve him, when he sees how helpless they are.

³⁷ Then the LORD will ask his people, Where are those mighty gods you trusted?

³⁸ You fed them the fat of your sacrifices and offered them wine to drink. Let them come and help you now; let them run to your rescue.

³⁹I, and I alone, am God; no other god is real. I kill and I give life, I wound and I heal, and no one can oppose what I do.

⁴⁰As surely as I am the living God, I raise my hand and I vow

⁴¹that I will sharpen my flashing sword and see that justice is done. I will take revenge on my enemies and punish those who hate me.

⁴²My arrows will drip with their blood, and my sword will kill all who oppose me. I will spare no one who fights against me; even the wounded and prisoners will die.'

⁴³Nations, you must praise the LORD's people -- he punishes all who kill them. He takes revenge on his enemies and forgives the sins of his people.

⁴⁴Moses and Joshua son of Nun recited this song, so that the people of Israel could hear it.

⁴⁵When Moses had finished giving God's teachings to the people,

⁴⁶he said, Be sure to obey all these commands that I have given you today. Repeat them to your children, so that they may faithfully obey all of God's teachings.

⁴⁷ These teachings are not empty words; they are your very life. Obey them and you will live long in that land across the Jordan that you are about to occupy.

⁴⁸ That same day the LORD said to Moses,

⁴⁹ Go to the Abarim Mountains in the land of Moab opposite the city of Jericho; climb Mount Nebo and look at the land of Canaan that I am about to give the people of Israel.

⁵⁰ You will die on that mountain as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor,

⁵¹ because both of you were unfaithful to me in the presence of the people of Israel. When you were at the waters of Meribah, near the town of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, you dishonored me in the presence of the people.

⁵² You will look at the land from a distance, but you will not enter the land that I am giving the people of Israel.

33¹ These are the blessings that Moses, the man of God, pronounced on the people of Israel before he died.

²The LORD came from Mount Sinai; he rose like the sun over Edom and shone on his people from Mount Paran. Ten thousand angels were with him, a flaming fire at his right hand.

³The LORD loves his people and protects those who belong to him. So we bow at his feet and obey his commands.

⁴We obey the Law that Moses gave us, our nation's most treasured possession.

⁵The LORD became king of his people Israel when their tribes and leaders were gathered together.

⁶Moses said about the tribe of Reuben: May Reuben never die out, Although their people are few.

⁷About the tribe of Judah he said: LORD, listen to their cry for help; Unite them again with the other tribes. Fight for them, LORD, And help them against their enemies.

⁸About the tribe of Levi he said: You, LORD, reveal your will by the Urim and Thummim Through your faithful servants, the Levites; You put them to the test at Massah And proved them true at the waters of Meribah.

⁹They showed greater loyalty to you
Than to parents, brothers, or children.
They obeyed your commands And were
faithful to your covenant.

¹⁰They will teach your people to obey
your Law; They will offer sacrifices on
your altar.

¹¹LORD, help their tribe to grow strong;
Be pleased with what they do. Crush
all their enemies; Let them never rise
again.

¹²About the tribe of Benjamin he said:
This is the tribe the LORD loves and
protects; He guards them all the day
long, And he dwells in their midst.

¹³About the tribe of Joseph he said:
May the LORD bless their land with rain
And with water from under the earth.

¹⁴May their land be blessed with
sun-ripened fruit, Rich with the best
fruits of each season.

¹⁵May their ancient hills be covered
with choice fruit.

¹⁶May their land be filled with all that
is good, Blessed by the goodness of
the LORD, Who spoke from the burning
bush. May these blessings come to the

tribe of Joseph, Because he was the leader among his brothers.

¹⁷ Joseph has the strength of a bull,
The horns of a wild ox. His horns are
Manasseh's thousands And Ephraim's
ten thousands. With them he gores the
nations And pushes them to the ends of
the earth.

¹⁸ About the tribes of Zebulun and
Issachar he said: May Zebulun be
prosperous in their trade on the sea, And
may Issachar's wealth increase at home.

¹⁹ They invite foreigners to their
mountain And offer the right sacrifices
there. They get their wealth from the
sea And from the sand along the shore.

²⁰ About the tribe of Gad he said: Praise
God, who made their territory large. Gad
waits like a lion To tear off an arm or a
scalp.

²¹ They took the best of the land
for themselves; A leader's share was
assigned to them. They obeyed the
LORD's commands and laws When the
leaders of Israel were gathered together.

²² About the tribe of Dan he said: Dan is
a young lion; He leaps out from Bashan.

²³ About the tribe of Naphtali he said: Naphtali is richly blessed by the LORD's good favor; Their land reaches to the south from Lake Galilee.

²⁴ About the tribe of Asher he said: Asher is blessed more than the other tribes. May he be the favorite of his brothers, And may his land be rich with olive trees.

²⁵ May his towns be protected with iron gates, And may he always live secure.

²⁶ People of Israel, no god is like your God, riding in splendor across the sky, riding through the clouds to come to your aid.

²⁷ God has always been your defense; his eternal arms are your support. He drove out your enemies as you advanced, and told you to destroy them all.

²⁸ So Jacob's descendants live in peace, secure in a land full of grain and wine, where dew from the sky waters the ground.

²⁹ Israel, how happy you are! There is no one like you, a nation saved by the LORD. The LORD himself is your shield and your sword, to defend you and give

you victory. Your enemies will come begging for mercy, and you will trample them down.

34¹ Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Mount Pisgah east of Jericho, and there the LORD showed him the whole land: the territory of Gilead as far north as the town of Dan;

² the entire territory of Naphtali; the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh; the territory of Judah as far west as the Mediterranean Sea;

³ the southern part of Judah; and the plain that reaches from Zoar to Jericho, the city of palm trees.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, This is the land that I promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob I would give to their descendants. I have let you see it, but I will not let you go there.

⁵ So Moses, the LORD's servant, died there in the land of Moab, as the LORD had said he would.

⁶ The LORD buried him in a valley in Moab, opposite the town of Bethpeor, but to this day no one knows the exact place of his burial.

⁷ Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; he was as strong as ever, and his eyesight was still good.

⁸ The people of Israel mourned for him for thirty days in the plains of Moab.

⁹ Joshua son of Nun was filled with wisdom, because Moses had appointed him to be his successor. The people of Israel obeyed Joshua and kept the commands that the LORD had given them through Moses.

¹⁰ There has never been a prophet in Israel like Moses; the LORD spoke with him face-to-face.

¹¹ No other prophet has ever done miracles and wonders like those that the LORD sent Moses to perform against the king of Egypt, his officials, and the entire country.

¹² No other prophet has been able to do the great and terrifying things that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

Joshua

1 ¹After the death of the LORD's servant Moses, the LORD spoke to Moses' helper, Joshua son of Nun.

²He said, My servant Moses is dead. Get ready now, you and all the people of Israel, and cross the Jordan River into the land that I am giving them.

³As I told Moses, I have given you and all my people the entire land that you will be marching over.

⁴Your borders will reach from the desert in the south to the Lebanon Mountains in the north; from the great Euphrates River in the east, through the Hittite country, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

⁵Joshua, no one will be able to defeat you as long as you live. I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will always be with you; I will never abandon you.

⁶Be determined and confident, for you will be the leader of these people as they occupy this land which I promised their ancestors.

⁷ Just be determined, be confident; and make sure that you obey the whole Law that my servant Moses gave you. Do not neglect any part of it and you will succeed wherever you go.

⁸ Be sure that the book of the Law is always read in your worship. Study it day and night, and make sure that you obey everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

⁹ Remember that I have commanded you to be determined and confident! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, am with you wherever you go.

¹⁰ Then Joshua ordered the leaders to

¹¹ go through the camp and say to the people, Get some food ready, because in three days you are going to cross the Jordan River to occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹² Joshua said to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to half the tribe of Manasseh,

¹³ Remember how the LORD's servant Moses told you that the LORD your God would give you this land on the east side of the Jordan as your home.

¹⁴Your wives, your children, and your livestock will stay here, but your soldiers, armed for battle, will cross over ahead of the other Israelites in order to help them

¹⁵until they have occupied the land west of the Jordan that the LORD your God has given them. When he has given safety to all the tribes of Israel, then you may come back and settle here in your own land east of the Jordan, which Moses, the LORD's servant, gave to you.

¹⁶They answered Joshua, We will do everything you have told us and will go anywhere you send us.

¹⁷We will obey you, just as we always obeyed Moses, and may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses!

¹⁸Whoever questions your authority or disobeys any of your orders will be put to death. Be determined and confident!

2¹ Then Joshua sent two spies from the camp at Acacia with orders to go and secretly explore the land of Canaan, especially the city of Jericho. When they came to the city, they went to spend the night in the house of a prostitute named Rahab.

²The king of Jericho heard that some Israelites had come that night to spy out the country,

³so he sent word to Rahab: The men in your house have come to spy out the whole country! Bring them out!

⁴Some men did come to my house, she answered, but I don't know where they were from. They left at sundown before the city gate was closed. I didn't find out where they were going, but if you start after them quickly, you can catch them. (Now Rahab had taken the two spies up on the roof and hidden them under some stalks of flax that she had put there.)

⁵(2: 4)

⁶(2: 4)

⁷The king's men left the city, and then the gate was shut. They went looking for the Israelite spies as far as the place where the road crosses the Jordan.

⁸Before the spies settled down for the night, Rahab went up on the roof

⁹and said to them, I know that the LORD has given you this land. Everyone in the country is terrified of you.

¹⁰We have heard how the LORD dried up the Red Sea in front of you when you

were leaving Egypt. We have also heard how you killed Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan.

¹¹We were afraid as soon as we heard about it; we have all lost our courage because of you. The LORD your God is God in heaven above and here on earth.

¹²Now swear by him that you will treat my family as kindly as I have treated you, and give me some sign that I can trust you.

¹³Promise me that you will save my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families! Don't let us be killed!

¹⁴The men said to her, May God take our lives if we don't do as we say! If you do not tell anyone what we have been doing, we promise you that when the LORD gives us this land, we will treat you well.

¹⁵Rahab lived in a house built into the city wall, so she let the men down from the window by a rope.

¹⁶Go into the hill country, she said, or the king's men will find you. Hide there for three days until they come back. After that, you can go on your way.

¹⁷The men said to her, We will keep the promise that you have made us give.

¹⁸This is what you must do. When we invade your land, tie this red cord to the window you let us down from. Get your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's family together in your house.

¹⁹If anyone goes out of the house, his death will be his own fault, and we will not be responsible; but if anyone in the house with you is harmed, then we will be responsible.

²⁰However, if you tell anyone what we have been doing, then we will not have to keep our promise which you have made us give you.

²¹She agreed and sent them away. When they had gone, she tied the red cord to the window.

²²The spies went into the hills and hid. The king's men looked for them all over the countryside for three days, but they did not find them, so they returned to Jericho.

²³Then the two spies came down from the hills, crossed the river, and went

back to Joshua. They told him everything that had happened,

²⁴and then said, We are sure that the LORD has given us the whole country. All the people there are terrified of us.

3¹The next morning Joshua and all the people of Israel got up early, left the camp at Acacia, and went to the Jordan, where they camped while waiting to cross it.

²Three days later the leaders went through the camp

³and told the people, When you see the priests carrying the Covenant Box of the LORD your God, break camp and follow them.

⁴You have never been here before, so they will show you the way to go. But do not get near the Covenant Box; stay about half a mile behind it.

⁵Joshua told the people, Purify yourselves, because tomorrow the LORD will perform miracles among you.

⁶Then he told the priests to take the Covenant Box and go with it ahead of the people. They did as he said.

⁷The LORD said to Joshua, What I do today will make all the people of Israel

begin to honor you as a great man, and they will realize that I am with you as I was with Moses.

⁸Tell the priests carrying the Covenant Box that when they reach the river, they must wade in and stand near the bank.

⁹Then Joshua said to the people, Come here and listen to what the LORD your God has to say.

¹⁰As you advance, he will surely drive out the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. You will know that the living God is among you

¹¹when the Covenant Box of the Lord of all the earth crosses the Jordan ahead of you.

¹²Now choose twelve men, one from each of the tribes of Israel.

¹³When the priests who carry the Covenant Box of the LORD of all the earth put their feet in the water, the Jordan will stop flowing, and the water coming downstream will pile up in one place.

¹⁴It was harvest time, and the river was in flood. When the people left the camp to cross the Jordan, the priests went

ahead of them, carrying the Covenant Box. As soon as the priests stepped into the river,

¹⁵ (3: 14)

¹⁶ the water stopped flowing and piled up, far upstream at Adam, the city beside Zarethan. The flow downstream to the Dead Sea was completely cut off, and the people were able to cross over near Jericho.

¹⁷ While the people walked across on dry ground, the priests carrying the LORD's Covenant Box stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan until all the people had crossed over.

4 ¹ When the whole nation had crossed the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ² Choose twelve men, one from each tribe,

³ and command them to take twelve stones out of the middle of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests were standing. Tell them to carry these stones with them and to put them down where you camp tonight.

⁴ Then Joshua called the twelve men he had chosen,

⁵and he told them, Go into the Jordan ahead of the Covenant Box of the LORD your God. Each one of you take a stone on your shoulder, one for each of the tribes of Israel.

⁶These stones will remind the people of what the LORD has done. In the future, when your children ask what these stones mean to you,

⁷you will tell them that the water of the Jordan stopped flowing when the LORD's Covenant Box crossed the river. These stones will always remind the people of Israel of what happened here.

⁸The men followed Joshua's orders. As the LORD had commanded Joshua, they took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, one for each of the tribes of Israel, carried them to the camping place, and put them down there.

⁹Joshua also set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, where the priests carrying the Covenant Box had stood. (Those stones are still there.)

¹⁰The priests stood in the middle of the Jordan until everything had been done that the LORD ordered Joshua to tell the people to do. This is what Moses had

commanded. The people hurried across the river.

¹¹When they were all on the other side, the priests with the LORD's Covenant Box went on ahead of the people.

¹²The men of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and of half the tribe of Manasseh, ready for battle, crossed ahead of the rest of the people, as Moses had told them to do.

¹³In the presence of the LORD about forty thousand men ready for war crossed over to the plain near Jericho.

¹⁴What the LORD did that day made the people of Israel consider Joshua a great man. They honored him all his life, just as they had honored Moses.

¹⁵Then the LORD told Joshua

¹⁶to command the priests carrying the Covenant Box to come up out of the Jordan.

¹⁷Joshua did so,

¹⁸and when the priests reached the riverbank, the river began flowing once more and flooded its banks again.

¹⁹The people crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and camped at Gilgal, east of Jericho.

²⁰There Joshua set up the twelve stones taken from the Jordan.

²¹And he said to the people of Israel, In the future, when your children ask you what these stones mean,

²²you will tell them about the time when Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.

²³Tell them that the LORD your God dried up the water of the Jordan for you until you had crossed, just as he dried up the Red Sea for us.

²⁴Because of this everyone on earth will know how great the LORD's power is, and you will honor the LORD your God forever.

5¹All the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the Mediterranean Sea heard that the LORD had dried up the Jordan until the people of Israel had crossed it. They became afraid and lost their courage because of the Israelites.

²Then the LORD told Joshua, Make some knives out of flint and circumcise the Israelites.

³So Joshua did as the LORD had commanded, and he circumcised the

Israelites at a place called Circumcision Hill.

⁴When the people of Israel left Egypt, all the males were already circumcised. However, during the forty years the people spent crossing the desert, none of the baby boys had been circumcised. Also, by the end of that time all the men who were of fighting age when they left Egypt had died because they had disobeyed the LORD. Just as he had sworn, they were not allowed to see the rich and fertile land that he had promised their ancestors.

⁵(5: 4)

⁶(5: 4)

⁷The sons of these men had never been circumcised, and it was this new generation that Joshua circumcised.

⁸After the circumcision was completed, the whole nation stayed in the camp until the wounds had healed.

⁹The LORD said to Joshua, Today I have removed from you the disgrace of being slaves in Egypt. That is why the place was named Gilgal, the name it still has.

¹⁰While the Israelites were camping at Gilgal on the plain near Jericho, they

observed Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month.

¹¹The next day was the first time they ate food grown in Canaan: roasted grain and bread made without yeast.

¹²The manna stopped falling then, and the Israelites no longer had any. From that time on they ate food grown in Canaan.

¹³While Joshua was near Jericho, he suddenly saw a man standing in front of him, holding a sword. Joshua went up to him and asked, Are you one of our soldiers, or an enemy?

¹⁴Neither, the man answered. I am here as the commander of the LORD's army. Joshua threw himself on the ground in worship and said, I am your servant, sir. What do you want me to do?

¹⁵And the commander of the LORD's army told him, Take your sandals off; you are standing on holy ground. And Joshua did as he was told.

6¹The gates of Jericho were kept shut and guarded to keep the Israelites out. No one could enter or leave the city.

²The LORD said to Joshua, I am putting into your hands Jericho, with its king and all its brave soldiers.

³You and your soldiers are to march around the city once a day for six days.

⁴Seven priests, each carrying a trumpet, are to go in front of the Covenant Box. On the seventh day you and your soldiers are to march around the city seven times while the priests blow the trumpets.

⁵Then they are to sound one long note. As soon as you hear it, all the people are to give a loud shout, and the city walls will collapse. Then the whole army will go straight into the city.

⁶Joshua called the priests and told them, Take the Covenant Box, and seven of you go in front of it, carrying trumpets.

⁷Then he ordered the people to start marching around the city, with an advance guard going on ahead of the LORD's Covenant Box.

⁸So, just as Joshua had ordered, an advance guard started out ahead of the priests who were blowing trumpets; behind these came the priests who were

carrying the Covenant Box, followed by a rear guard. All this time the trumpets were sounding.

⁹(6: 8)

¹⁰But Joshua had ordered the people not to shout, not to say a word until he gave the order.

¹¹So he had this group of men take the LORD's Covenant Box around the city one time. Then they came back to camp and spent the night there.

¹²Joshua got up early the next morning, and for the second time the priests and soldiers marched around the city in the same order as the day before: first, the advance guard; next, the seven priests blowing the seven trumpets; then, the priests carrying the LORD's Covenant Box; and finally, the rear guard. All this time the trumpets were sounding.

¹³(6: 12)

¹⁴On this second day they again marched around the city one time and then returned to camp. They did this for six days.

¹⁵On the seventh day they got up at daybreak and marched seven times around the city in the same way -- this

was the only day that they marched around it seven times.

¹⁶The seventh time around, when the priests were about to sound the trumpets, Joshua ordered the people to shout, and he said, The LORD has given you the city!

¹⁷The city and everything in it must be totally destroyed as an offering to the LORD. Only the prostitute Rahab and her household will be spared, because she hid our spies.

¹⁸But you are not to take anything that is to be destroyed; if you do, you will bring trouble and destruction on the Israelite camp.

¹⁹Everything made of silver, gold, bronze, or iron is set apart for the LORD. It is to be put in the LORD's treasury.

²⁰So the priests blew the trumpets. As soon as the people heard it, they gave a loud shout, and the walls collapsed. Then all the army went straight up the hill into the city and captured it.

²¹With their swords they killed everyone in the city, men and women, young and old. They also killed the cattle, sheep, and donkeys.

²² Joshua then told the two men who had served as spies, Go into the prostitute's house, and bring her and her family out, as you promised her.

²³ So they went and brought Rahab out, along with her father and mother, her brothers, and the rest of her family. They took them all, family and slaves, to safety near the Israelite camp.

²⁴ Then they set fire to the city and burned it to the ground, along with everything in it, except the things made of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, which they took and put in the LORD's treasury.

²⁵ But Joshua spared the lives of the prostitute Rahab and all her relatives, because she had hidden the two spies that he had sent to Jericho. (Her descendants have lived in Israel to this day.)

²⁶ At this time Joshua issued a solemn warning: Anyone who tries to rebuild the city of Jericho will be under the LORD's curse. Whoever lays the foundation will lose his oldest son; Whoever builds the gates will lose his youngest.

²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread through the whole country.

7¹ The LORD's command to Israel not to take from Jericho anything that was to be destroyed was not obeyed. A man named Achan disobeyed that order, and so the LORD was furious with the Israelites. (Achan was the son of Carmi and grandson of Zabdi, and belonged to the clan of Zerah, a part of the tribe of Judah.)

² Joshua sent some men from Jericho to Ai, a city east of Bethel, near Bethaven, with orders to go and explore the land. When they had done so,

³ they reported back to Joshua: There is no need for everyone to attack Ai. Send only about two or three thousand men. Don't send the whole army up there to fight; it is not a large city.

⁴ So about three thousand Israelites made the attack, but they were forced to retreat.

⁵ The men of Ai chased them from the city gate as far as some quarries and killed about thirty-six of them on the way down the hill. Then the Israelites lost their courage and were afraid.

⁶ Joshua and the leaders of Israel tore their clothes in grief, threw themselves to

the ground before the LORD's Covenant Box, and lay there till evening, with dust on their heads to show their sorrow.

⁷ And Joshua said, Sovereign LORD! Why did you bring us across the Jordan at all? To turn us over to the Amorites? To destroy us? Why didn't we just stay on the other side of the Jordan?

⁸ What can I say, O Lord, now that Israel has retreated from the enemy?

⁹ The Canaanites and everyone else in the country will hear about it. They will surround us and kill every one of us! And then what will you do to protect your honor?

¹⁰ The LORD said to Joshua, Get up! Why are you lying on the ground like this?

¹¹ Israel has sinned! They have broken the agreement with me that I ordered them to keep. They have taken some of the things condemned to destruction. They stole them, lied about it, and put them with their own things.

¹² This is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. They retreat from them because they themselves have now been condemned to destruction! I

will not stay with you any longer unless you destroy the things you were ordered not to take!

¹³Get up! Purify the people and get them ready to come before me. Tell them to be ready tomorrow, because I, the LORD God of Israel, have this to say: Israel, you have in your possession some things that I ordered you to destroy! You cannot stand against your enemies until you get rid of these things!

¹⁴So tell them that in the morning they will be brought forward, tribe by tribe. The tribe that I pick out will then come forward, clan by clan. The clan that I pick out will come forward, family by family. The family that I pick out will come forward, one by one.

¹⁵The one who is then picked out and found with the condemned goods will be burned, along with his family and everything he owns, for he has brought terrible shame on Israel and has broken my covenant.

¹⁶Early the next morning Joshua brought Israel forward, tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was picked out.

¹⁷ He brought the tribe of Judah forward, clan by clan, and the clan of Zerah was picked out. Then he brought the clan of Zerah forward, family by family, and the family of Zabdi was picked out.

¹⁸ He then brought Zabdi's family forward, one by one, and Achan, the son of Carmi and grandson of Zabdi, was picked out.

¹⁹ Joshua said to him, My son, tell the truth here before the LORD, the God of Israel, and confess. Tell me now what you have done. Don't try to hide it from me.

²⁰ It's true, Achan answered. I have sinned against the LORD, Israel's God, and this is what I did.

²¹ Among the things we seized I saw a beautiful Babylonian cloak, about five pounds of silver, and a bar of gold weighing over one pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. You will find them buried inside my tent, with the silver at the bottom.

²² So Joshua sent some men, who ran to the tent and found that the condemned

things really were buried there, with the silver at the bottom.

²³They brought them out of the tent, took them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and laid them down in the presence of the LORD.

²⁴Joshua, along with all the people of Israel, seized Achan, the silver, the cloak, the bar of gold, together with Achan's sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys, and sheep, his tent, and everything else he owned; and they took them to Trouble Valley.

²⁵And Joshua said, Why have you brought such trouble on us? The LORD will now bring trouble on you! All the people then stoned Achan to death; they also stoned and burned his family and possessions.

²⁶They put a huge pile of stones over him, which is there to this day. That is why that place is still called Trouble Valley. Then the LORD was no longer furious.

8¹The LORD said to Joshua, Take all the soldiers with you and go on up to Ai. Don't be afraid or discouraged. I will

give you victory over the king of Ai; his people, city, and land will be yours.

²You are to do to Ai and its king what you did to Jericho and its king, but this time you may keep its goods and livestock for yourselves. Prepare to attack the city by surprise from the rear.

³So Joshua got ready to go to Ai with all his soldiers. He picked out thirty thousand of his best troops and sent them out at night

⁴with these orders: Hide on the other side of the city, but not too far away from it; be ready to attack.

⁵My men and I will approach the city. When the men of Ai come out against us, we will turn and run, just as we did the first time.

⁶They will pursue us until we have led them away from the city. They will think that we are running from them, as we did before.

⁷Then you will come out of hiding and capture the city. The LORD your God will give it to you.

⁸After you have taken the city, set it on fire, just as the LORD has commanded. These are your orders.

⁹So Joshua sent them out, and they went to their hiding place and waited there, west of Ai, between Ai and Bethel. Joshua spent the night in camp.

¹⁰Early in the morning Joshua got up and called the soldiers together. Then he and the leaders of Israel led them to Ai.

¹¹The soldiers with him went toward the main entrance to the city and set up camp on the north side, with a valley between themselves and Ai.

¹²He took about five thousand men and put them in hiding west of the city, between Ai and Bethel.

¹³The soldiers were arranged for battle with the main camp north of the city and the rest of the men to the west. Joshua spent the night in the valley.

¹⁴When the king of Ai saw Joshua's men, he acted quickly. He and all his men went out toward the Jordan Valley to fight the Israelites at the same place as before, not knowing that he was about to be attacked from the rear.

¹⁵Joshua and his men pretended that they were retreating, and ran away toward the barren country.

¹⁶All the men in the city had been called together to go after them, and as they pursued Joshua, they kept getting farther away from the city.

¹⁷Every man in Ai went after the Israelites, and the city was left wide open, with no one to defend it.

¹⁸Then the LORD said to Joshua, Point your spear at Ai; I am giving it to you. Joshua did as he was told,

¹⁹and as soon as he lifted his hand, the men who had been hiding got up quickly, ran into the city and captured it. They immediately set the city on fire.

²⁰When the men of Ai looked back, they saw the smoke rising to the sky. There was no way for them to escape, because the Israelites who had run toward the barren country now turned around to attack them.

²¹When Joshua and his men saw that the others had taken the city and that it was on fire, they turned around and began killing the men of Ai.

²²The Israelites in the city now came down to join the battle. So the men of Ai found themselves completely surrounded by Israelites, and they were all killed. No

one got away, and no one lived through it

²³ except the king of Ai. He was captured and taken to Joshua.

²⁴ The Israelites killed every one of the enemy in the barren country where they had chased them. Then they went back to Ai and killed everyone there.

²⁵ Joshua kept his spear pointed at Ai and did not put it down until every person there had been killed. The whole population of Ai was killed that day -- twelve thousand men and women.

²⁶ (8: 25)

²⁷ The Israelites kept for themselves the livestock and goods captured in the city, as the LORD had told Joshua.

²⁸ Joshua burned Ai and left it in ruins. It is still like that today.

²⁹ He hanged the king of Ai from a tree and left his body there until evening. At sundown Joshua gave orders for the body to be removed, and it was thrown down at the entrance to the city gate. They covered it with a huge pile of stones, which is still there today.

³⁰ Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel.

³¹ He made it according to the instructions that Moses, the LORD's servant, had given the Israelites, as it says in the Law of Moses: an altar made of stones which have not been cut with iron tools. On it they offered burnt sacrifices to the LORD, and they also presented their fellowship offerings.

³² There, with the Israelites looking on, Joshua made on the stones a copy of the Law which Moses had written.

³³ The Israelites, with their leaders, officers, and judges, as well as the foreigners among them, stood on two sides of the LORD's Covenant Box, facing the levitical priests who carried it. Half of the people stood with their backs to Mount Gerizim and the other half with their backs to Mount Ebal. The LORD's servant Moses had commanded them to do this when the time came for them to receive the blessing.

³⁴ Joshua then read aloud the whole Law, including the blessings and the curses, just as they are written in the book of the Law.

³⁵ Every one of the commandments of Moses was read by Joshua to the whole

gathering, which included women and children, as well as the foreigners living among them.

9¹The victories of Israel became known to all the kings west of the Jordan -- in the hills, in the foothills, and all along the coastal plain of the Mediterranean Sea as far north as Lebanon; these were the kings of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

²They all came together and joined forces to fight against Joshua and the Israelites.

³But the people of Gibeon, who were Hivites, heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,

⁴and they decided to deceive him. They went and got some food and loaded their donkeys with worn-out sacks and patched-up wineskins.

⁵They put on ragged clothes and worn-out sandals that had been mended. The bread they took with them was dry and moldy.

⁶Then they went to the camp at Gilgal and said to Joshua and the Israelites, We

have come from a distant land. We want you to make a treaty with us.

⁷But the Israelites said, Why should we make a treaty with you? Maybe you live nearby.

⁸They said to Joshua, We are at your service. Joshua asked them, Who are you? Where do you come from?

⁹Then they told him this story: We have come from a very distant land, sir, because we have heard of the LORD your God. We have heard about everything that he did in Egypt

¹⁰and what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan: King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth.

¹¹Our leaders and all the people that live in our land told us to get some food ready for a trip and to go and meet you. We were told to put ourselves at your service and ask you to make a treaty with us.

¹²Look at our bread. When we left home with it and started out to meet you, it was still warm. But look! Now it is dry and moldy.

¹³When we filled these wineskins, they were new, but look! They are torn. Our clothes and sandals are worn out from the long trip.

¹⁴The Israelites accepted some food from them, but did not consult the LORD about it.

¹⁵Joshua made a treaty of friendship with the people of Gibeon and allowed them to live. The leaders of the community of Israel gave their solemn promise to keep the treaty.

¹⁶Three days after the treaty had been made, the Israelites learned that these people did indeed live nearby.

¹⁷So the people of Israel started out and three days later arrived at the cities where these people lived: Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim.

¹⁸But the Israelites could not kill them, because their leaders had made a solemn promise to them in the name of the LORD, Israel's God. All the people complained to the leaders about this,

¹⁹but they answered, We have made our solemn promise to them in the name of the LORD God of Israel. Now we cannot harm them.

²⁰We must let them live because of our promise; if we don't, God will punish us.

²¹Let them live, but they will have to cut wood and carry water for us. This was what the leaders suggested.

²²Joshua ordered the people of Gibeon to be brought to him, and he asked them, Why did you deceive us and tell us that you were from far away, when you live right here?

²³Because you did this, God has condemned you. Your people will always be slaves, cutting wood and carrying water for the sanctuary of my God.

²⁴They answered, We did it, sir, because we learned that it was really true that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to kill the people living in it as you advanced. We did it because we were terrified of you; we were in fear of our lives.

²⁵Now we are in your power; do with us what you think is right.

²⁶So this is what Joshua did: he protected them and did not allow the people of Israel to kill them.

²⁷ But at the same time he made them slaves, to cut wood and carry water for the people of Israel and for the LORD's altar. To this day they have continued to do this work in the place where the LORD has chosen to be worshiped.

10¹ Adonizedek, the king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had captured and totally destroyed Ai and had killed its king, just as he had done to Jericho and its king. He also heard that the people of Gibeon had made peace with the Israelites and were living among them.

² The people of Jerusalem were greatly alarmed at this because Gibeon was as large as any of the cities that had a king; it was larger than Ai, and its men were good fighters.

³ So Adonizedek sent the following message to King Hoham of Hebron, King Piram of Jarmuth, King Japhia of Lachish, and to King Debir of Eglon:

⁴ Come and help me attack Gibeon, because its people have made peace with Joshua and the Israelites.

⁵ These five Amorite kings, the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish,

and Eglon, joined forces, surrounded Gibeon, and attacked it.

⁶The men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal: Do not abandon us, sir! Come at once and help us! Save us! All the Amorite kings in the hill country have joined forces and have attacked us!

⁷So Joshua and his whole army, including the best troops, started out from Gilgal.

⁸The LORD said to Joshua, Do not be afraid of them. I have already given you the victory. Not one of them will be able to stand against you.

⁹All night Joshua and his army marched from Gilgal to Gibeon, and they made a surprise attack on the Amorites.

¹⁰The LORD made the Amorites panic at the sight of Israel's army. The Israelites slaughtered them at Gibeon and pursued them down the mountain pass at Beth Horon, keeping up the attack as far south as Azekah and Makkedah.

¹¹While the Amorites were running down the pass from the Israelite army, the LORD made large hailstones fall down on them all the way to Azekah.

More were killed by the hailstones than by the Israelites.

¹²On the day that the LORD gave the men of Israel victory over the Amorites, Joshua spoke to the LORD. In the presence of the Israelites he said, Sun, stand still over Gibeon; Moon, stop over Aijalon Valley.

¹³The sun stood still and the moon did not move until the nation had conquered its enemies. This is written in The Book of Jashar. The sun stood still in the middle of the sky and did not go down for a whole day.

¹⁴Never before, and never since, has there been a day like it, when the LORD obeyed a human being. The LORD fought on Israel's side!

¹⁵After this, Joshua and his army went back to the camp at Gilgal.

¹⁶The five Amorite kings, however, had escaped and were hiding in the cave at Makkedah.

¹⁷Someone found them, and Joshua was told where they were hiding.

¹⁸He said, Roll some big stones in front of the entrance to the cave. Place some guards there,

¹⁹but don't stay there yourselves. Keep on after the enemy and attack them from the rear; don't let them get to their cities! The LORD your God has given you victory over them.

²⁰Joshua and the men of Israel slaughtered them, although some managed to find safety inside their city walls and were not killed.

²¹Then all of Joshua's men came back safe to him at the camp at Makkedah. No one in the land dared even to speak against the Israelites.

²²Then Joshua said, Open the entrance to the cave and bring those five kings out to me.

²³So the cave was opened, and the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon were brought out

²⁴and taken to Joshua. Joshua then called all the men of Israel to him and ordered the officers who had gone with him to come and put their feet on the necks of the kings. They did so.

²⁵Then Joshua said to his officers, Don't be afraid or discouraged. Be determined and confident because this is what the LORD is going to do to all your enemies.

²⁶Then Joshua killed the kings and hanged them on five trees, where their bodies stayed until evening.

²⁷At sundown Joshua gave orders, and their bodies were taken down and thrown into the same cave where they had hidden earlier. Large stones were placed at the entrance to the cave, and they are still there.

²⁸Joshua attacked and captured Makkedah and its king that day. He put everyone in the city to death; no one was left alive. He did to the king of Makkedah what he had done to the king of Jericho.

²⁹After this, Joshua and his army went on from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it.

³⁰The LORD also gave the Israelites victory over this city and its king. They spared no one, but killed every person in it. They did to the king what they had done to the king of Jericho.

³¹After this, Joshua and his army went on from Libnah to Lachish, surrounded it and attacked it.

³²The LORD gave the Israelites victory over Lachish on the second day of the

battle. Just as they had done at Libnah, they spared no one, but killed every person in the city.

³³ King Horam of Gezer came to the aid of Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army and left none of them alive.

³⁴ Next, Joshua and his army went on from Lachish to Eglon, surrounded it and attacked it.

³⁵ They captured it the same day and put everyone there to death, just as they had done at Lachish.

³⁶ After this, Joshua and his army went from Eglon up into the hills to Hebron, attacked it

³⁷ and captured it. They killed the king and everyone else in the city as well as in the nearby towns. Joshua condemned the city to total destruction, just as he had done to Eglon. No one in it was left alive.

³⁸ Then Joshua and his army turned back to Debir and attacked it.

³⁹ He captured it, with its king and all the nearby towns. They put everyone there to death. Joshua did to Debir and its king what he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king.

⁴⁰ Joshua conquered the whole land. He defeated the kings of the hill country, the eastern slopes, and the western foothills, as well as those of the dry country in the south. He spared no one; everyone was put to death. This was what the LORD God of Israel had commanded.

⁴¹ Joshua's campaign took him from Kadesh Barnea in the south to Gaza near the coast, including all the area of Goshen, and as far north as Gibeon.

⁴² Joshua conquered all these kings and their territory in one campaign because the LORD, Israel's God, was fighting for Israel.

⁴³ After this, Joshua and his army went back to the camp at Gilgal.

11 ¹ When the news of Israel's victories reached King Jabin of Hazor, he sent word to King Jobab of Madon, to the kings of Shimron and Achshaph,

² and to the kings in the hill country in the north, in the Jordan Valley south of Lake Galilee, in the foothills, and on the coast near Dor.

³ He also sent word to the Canaanites on both sides of the Jordan, to the

Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites in the hill country, as well as to the Hivites who lived at the foot of Mount Hermon in the land of Mizpah.

⁴They came with all their soldiers -- an army with as many men as there are grains of sand on the seashore. They also had many horses and chariots.

⁵All of these kings joined forces and came together and set up camp at Merom Brook to fight against Israel.

⁶The LORD said to Joshua, Do not be afraid of them. By this time tomorrow I will have killed all of them for Israel. You are to cripple their horses and burn their chariots.

⁷So Joshua and all his men attacked them by surprise at Merom Brook.

⁸The LORD gave the Israelites victory over them; the Israelites attacked and pursued them as far north as Misrephoth Maim and Sidon, and as far east as the valley of Mizpah. The fight continued until none of the enemy was left alive.

⁹Joshua did to them what the LORD had commanded: he crippled their horses and burned their chariots.

¹⁰Joshua then turned back, captured Hazor and killed its king. (At that time Hazor was the most powerful of all those kingdoms.)

¹¹They put everyone there to death; no one was left alive, and the city was burned.

¹²Joshua captured all these cities and their kings, putting everyone to death, just as Moses, the LORD's servant, had commanded.

¹³However, the Israelites did not burn any of the cities built on mounds, except Hazor, which Joshua did burn.

¹⁴The people of Israel took all the valuables and livestock from these cities and kept them for themselves. But they put every person to death; no one was left alive.

¹⁵The LORD had given his commands to his servant Moses, Moses had given them to Joshua, and Joshua obeyed them. He did everything that the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹⁶Joshua captured all the land -- the hill country and foothills, both north and south, all the area of Goshen and the dry

country south of it, as well as the Jordan Valley.

¹⁷The territory extended from Mount Halak in the south near Edom, as far as Baalgad in the north, in the valley of Lebanon south of Mount Hermon. Joshua was at war with the kings of this territory for a long time, but he captured them all and put them to death.

¹⁸(11:17)

¹⁹The only city that made peace with the people of Israel was Gibeon, where some of the Hivites lived. All the others were conquered in battle.

²⁰The LORD had made them determined to fight the Israelites, so that they would be condemned to total destruction and all be killed without mercy. This was what the LORD had commanded Moses.

²¹At this time Joshua went and destroyed the race of giants called the Anakim who lived in the hill country -- in Hebron, Debir, Anab, and in all the hill country of Judah and Israel. Joshua completely destroyed them and their cities.

²²None of the Anakim were left in the land of Israel; a few, however, were left in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

²³Joshua captured the whole land, as the LORD had commanded Moses. Joshua gave it to the Israelites as their own and divided it into portions, one for each tribe. So the people rested from war.

12¹The people of Israel had already conquered and occupied the land east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Valley up the Jordan Valley and as far north as Mount Hermon. They defeated two kings.

²One was Sihon, the Amorite king who ruled at Heshbon. His kingdom included half of Gilead: from Aroer (on the edge of the Arnon Valley) and from the city in the middle of that valley, as far as the Jabbok River, the border of Ammon;

³it included the Jordan Valley from Lake Galilee south to Beth Jeshimoth (east of the Dead Sea) and on toward the foot of Mount Pisgah.

⁴They also defeated King Og of Bashan, who was one of the last of the Rephaim; he ruled at Ashtaroth and Edrei.

⁵ His kingdom included Mount Hermon, Salecah, and all of Bashan as far as the boundaries of Geshur and Maacah, as well as half of Gilead, as far as the territory of King Sihon of Heshbon.

⁶ These two kings were defeated by Moses and the people of Israel. Moses, the LORD's servant, gave their land to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to be their possession.

⁷ Joshua and the people of Israel defeated all the kings in the territory west of the Jordan, from Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak in the south near Edom. Joshua divided this land among the tribes and gave it to them as a permanent possession.

⁸ This portion included the hill country, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley and its foothills, the eastern slopes, and the dry country in the south. This land had been the home of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

⁹ The people of Israel defeated the kings of the following cities: Jericho, Ai (near Bethel),

¹⁰ Jerusalem, Hebron,

¹¹ Jarmuth, Lachish,

¹² Eglon, Gezer,

¹³ Debir, Geder,

¹⁴ Hormah, Arad,

¹⁵ Libnah, Adullam,

¹⁶ Makkedah, Bethel,

¹⁷ Tappuah, Hopher,

¹⁸ Aphek, Lasharon,

¹⁹ Madon, Hazor,

²⁰ Shimron Meron, Achshaph,

²¹ Taanach, Megiddo,

²² Kedesh, Jokneam (in Carmel),

²³ Dor (on the coast), Goiim (in Galilee),

²⁴ and Tirzah -- thirty-one kings in all.

13¹ Joshua was now very old. The LORD said to him, You are very old, but there is still much land to be taken:

² all the territory of Philistia and Geshur,

³ as well as all the territory of the Avvim to the south. (The land from the stream Shihor, at the Egyptian border, as far north as the border of Ekron was considered Canaanite; the kings of the Philistines lived at Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.)

⁴There is still all the Canaanite country, and Mearah (which belonged to the Sidonians), as far as Aphek, at the Amorite border;

⁵the land of the Gebalites; all of Lebanon to the east, from Baalgad, which is south of Mount Hermon, to Hamath Pass.

⁶This includes all the territory of the Sidonians, who live in the hill country between the Lebanon Mountains and Misrephoth Maim. I will drive all these peoples out as the people of Israel advance. You must divide the land among the Israelites, just as I have commanded you to do.

⁷Now then, divide this land among the other nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh, for them to possess as their own.

⁸The tribes of Reuben and Gad and the other half of the tribe of Manasseh had already received the land that Moses, the LORD's servant, had given them; it was on the east side of the Jordan River.

⁹Their territory extended to Aroer (on the edge of the Arnon Valley) and the city in the middle of that valley and

included all of the plateau from Medeba to Dibon.

¹⁰It went as far as the border of Ammon and included all the cities that had been ruled by the Amorite king Sihon, who had ruled at Heshbon.

¹¹It included Gilead, the regions of Geshur and Maacah, all of Mount Hermon, and all of Bashan as far as Salecah.

¹²It included the kingdom of Og, the last of the Rephaim, who had ruled at Ashtaroth and Edrei. Moses had defeated these people and driven them out.

¹³However, the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah; they still live in Israel.

¹⁴Moses had given no land to the tribe of Levi. As the LORD had told Moses, they were to receive as their possession a share of the sacrifices burned on the altar to the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁵Moses had given a part of the land to the families of the tribe of Reuben as their possession.

¹⁶Their territory extended to Aroer (on the edge of the Arnon Valley) and the

city in the middle of that valley and included all the plateau around Medeba.

¹⁷ It included Heshbon and all the cities on the plateau: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baalmeon,

¹⁸ Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath,

¹⁹ Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley,

²⁰ Bethpeor, the slopes of Mount Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth.

²¹ It included all the cities of the plateau and the whole kingdom of the Amorite king Sihon, who had ruled at Heshbon. Moses defeated him, as well as the rulers of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba. All of them had ruled the land for King Sihon.

²² Among those whom the people of Israel killed was the fortune teller Balaam son of Beor.

²³ The Jordan was the western border of the tribe of Reuben. These were the cities and towns given to the families of the tribe of Reuben as their possession.

²⁴ Moses had also given a part of the land to the families of the tribe of Gad as their possession.

²⁵ Their territory included Jazer and all the cities of Gilead, half the land of Ammon as far as Aroer, which is east of Rabbah;

²⁶ their land extended from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpeh and Betonim, from Mahanaim to the border of Lodebar.

²⁷ In the Jordan Valley it included Beth Haram, Bethnimrah, Sukkoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon. Their western border was the Jordan River as far north as Lake Galilee.

²⁸ These were the cities and towns given to the families of the tribe of Gad as their possession.

²⁹ Moses had given a part of the land to the families of half the tribe of Manasseh as their possession.

³⁰ Their territory extended to Mahanaim and included all of Bashan -- the whole kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan, as well as all sixty of the villages of Jair in Bashan.

³¹ It included half of Gilead, as well as Ashtaroth and Edrei, the capital cities of Og's kingdom in Bashan. All this was

given to half the families descended from Machir son of Manasseh.

³²This is how Moses divided the land east of Jericho and the Jordan when he was in the plains of Moab.

³³But Moses did not assign any land to the tribe of Levi. He told them that their possession was to be a share of the offerings to the LORD God of Israel.

14¹What follows is an account of how the land of Canaan west of the Jordan was divided among the people of Israel. Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of the families of the Israelite tribes divided it among the population.

²As the LORD had commanded Moses, the territories of the nine and one-half tribes west of the Jordan were determined by drawing lots.

³Moses had already assigned the land east of the Jordan to the other two and one-half tribes. (The descendants of Joseph were divided into two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim.) However, Moses gave the Levites no portion of the territory. Instead, they received cities

to live in, with fields for their cattle and flocks.

⁴(14: 3)

⁵The people of Israel divided the land as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁶One day some people from the tribe of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. One of them, Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, said to him, You know what the LORD said in Kadesh Barnea about you and me to Moses, the man of God.

⁷I was forty years old when the LORD's servant Moses sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out this land. I brought an honest report back to him.

⁸The men who went with me, however, made our people afraid. But I faithfully obeyed the LORD my God.

⁹Because I did, Moses promised me that my children and I would certainly receive as our possession the land which I walked over.

¹⁰But now, look. It has been forty-five years since the LORD said that to Moses. That was when Israel was going through the desert, and the LORD, as he promised, has kept me alive ever since. Look at me! I am eighty-five years old

¹¹ and am just as strong today as I was when Moses sent me out. I am still strong enough for war or for anything else.

¹² Now then, give me the hill country that the LORD promised me on that day when my men and I reported. We told you then that the race of giants called the Anakim were there in large walled cities. Maybe the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out, just as the LORD said.

¹³ Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him the city of Hebron as his possession.

¹⁴ Hebron still belongs to the descendants of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, because he faithfully obeyed the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁵ Before this, Hebron was called the city of Arba. (Arba had been the greatest of the Anakim.) There was now peace in the land.

15 ¹ The families of the tribe of Judah received a part of the land described as follows: The land reached south to the southernmost point of the wilderness of Zin, at the border of Edom.

²This southern border ran from the south end of the Dead Sea,

³went southward from the Akrabbim Pass and on to Zin. It ran south of Kadesh Barnea, past Hezron and up to Addar, turned toward Karka,

⁴went on to Azmon, and followed the stream on the border of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea, where the border ended. That was the southern border of Judah.

⁵The eastern border was the Dead Sea, all the way up to the inlet where the Jordan empties into it. The northern border began there,

⁶extended up to Beth Hoglah, and went north of the ridge overlooking the Jordan Valley. Then it went up to the Stone of Bohan (Bohan was a son of Reuben),

⁷from Trouble Valley up to Debir, and then turned north toward Gilgal, which faces Adummim Pass on the south side of the valley. It then went on to the springs of Enshemesh, out to Enrogel,

⁸and up through Hinnom Valley on the south side of the hill where the Jebusite city of Jerusalem was located.

The border then proceeded up to the top

of the hill on the west side of Hinnom Valley, at the northern end of Rephaim Valley.

⁹From there it went to the Springs of Nephtoah and out to the cities near Mount Ephron. There it turned toward Baalah (or Kiriath Jearim),

¹⁰where it circled west of Baalah toward the hill country of Edom, went on the north side of Mount Jearim (or Chesalon), down to Beth Shemesh, and on past Timnah.

¹¹The border then went out to the hill north of Ekron, turned toward Shikkeron, past Mount Baalah, and on to Jamnia. It ended at the Mediterranean Sea,

¹²which formed the western border. Within these borders lived the people of the families of Judah.

¹³As the LORD commanded Joshua, part of the territory of Judah was given to Caleb son of Jephunneh, from the tribe of Judah. He received Hebron, the city belonging to Arba, father of Anak.

¹⁴Caleb drove the descendants of Anak out of the city -- the clans of Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi.

¹⁵From there he went to attack the people living in Debir. (This city used to be called Kiriath Sepher.)

¹⁶Caleb said, I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who succeeds in capturing Kiriath Sepher.

¹⁷Othniel, the son of Caleb's brother Kenaz, captured the city, so Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage.

¹⁸On the wedding day Othniel urged her to ask her father for a field. She got down from her donkey, and Caleb asked her what she wanted.

¹⁹She answered, I want some water holes. The land you have given me is in the dry country. So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

²⁰This is the land that the families of the tribe of Judah received as their possession.

²¹The cities farthest south that belonged to them, those that were near the border of Edom, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur,

²²Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah,

²³Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,

²⁴Ziph, Telem, Bealoth,

²⁵ Hazor Hadattah, Keriioth Hezron (or Hazor),

²⁶ Amam, Shema, Moladah,

²⁷ Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Bethpelet,

²⁸ Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah,

²⁹ Baalah, Iim, Ezem,

³⁰ Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah,

³¹ Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah,

³² Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: twenty-nine cities in all, along with the towns around them.

³³ The cities in the foothills were Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah,

³⁴ Zanoah, Engannim, Tappuah, Enam,

³⁵ Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah,

³⁶ Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim: fourteen cities, along with the towns around them.

³⁷ There were also Zenan, Hadashah, Migdalgad,

³⁸ Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel,

³⁹ Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,

⁴⁰ Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish,

⁴¹ Gederoth, Bethdagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities, along with the towns around them.

⁴² There were also Libnah, Ether, Ashan,

⁴³ Iphthah, Ashnah, Nezib,

⁴⁴ Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities, along with the towns around them.

⁴⁵ There was Ekron with its towns and villages,

⁴⁶ and all the cities and towns near Ashdod, from Ekron to the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴⁷ There were Ashdod and Gaza, with their towns and villages, reaching to the stream on the border of Egypt and the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴⁸ In the hill country there were Shamir, Jattir, Socoh,

⁴⁹ Dannah, Kiriath Sepher (or Debir),

⁵⁰ Anab, Eshtemoa, Anim,

⁵¹ Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities, along with the towns around them.

⁵² There were Arab, Dumah, Eshan,

⁵³ Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah,

⁵⁴ Humtah, Hebron, and Zior: nine cities, along with the towns around them.

⁵⁵ There were Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah,

⁵⁶ Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah,

⁵⁷ Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities, along with the towns around them.

⁵⁸ There were Halhul, Bethzur, Gedor,

⁵⁹ Maarath, Bethanath, and Eltekon: six cities, along with the towns around them.

⁶⁰ There were Kiriath Baal (or Kiriath Jearim) and Rabbah: two cities, along with the towns around them.

⁶¹ In the desert there were Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah,

⁶² Nibshan, Salt City, and Engedi: six cities, along with the towns around them.

⁶³ But the people of Judah were not able to drive out the Jebusites, who lived in Jerusalem. The Jebusites still live there with the people of Judah.

16¹ The southern boundary of the land assigned to the descendants of Joseph started from the Jordan near Jericho, at a point east of the springs of Jericho, and went into the desert. It went from Jericho up into the hill country as far as Bethel.

² From Bethel it went to Luz, passing on to Ataroth Addar, where the Archites lived.

³It then went west to the area of the Japhletites, as far as the area of Lower Beth Horon. It went on from there to Gezer and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴The descendants of Joseph, the tribes of Ephraim and West Manasseh, received this land as their possession.

⁵This was the territory of the Ephraimite families: their border ran from Ataroth Addar eastward to Upper Beth Horon,

⁶and from there to the Mediterranean Sea. Michmethath was on their north. East of there the border bent toward Taanath Shiloh and went past it on the east to Janoah.

⁷Then it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Naarah, reaching Jericho and ending at the Jordan.

⁸The border went west from Tappuah to the stream Kanah and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. This was the land given to the families of the tribe of Ephraim as their possession,

⁹along with some towns and villages that were within the borders of Manasseh, but given to the Ephraimites.

¹⁰But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites have lived among the Ephraimites to this day, but they have been forced to work as slaves.

17 ¹A part of the land west of the Jordan was assigned to some of the families descended from Joseph's older son Manasseh. Machir, the father of Gilead, was Manasseh's oldest son and a military hero, so Gilead and Bashan, east of the Jordan, were assigned to him.

²Land west of the Jordan was assigned to the rest of the families of Manasseh: Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hopher, and Shemida. These were male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, and they were heads of families.

³Zelophehad, son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, did not have any sons, but only daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

⁴They went to Eleazar the priest and to Joshua son of Nun and to the leaders, and said, The LORD commanded Moses to give us, as well as our male relatives, a part of the land to possess. So, as the

LORD had commanded, they were given land along with their male relatives.

⁵This is why Manasseh received ten shares in addition to Gilead and Bashan on the east side of the Jordan,

⁶since his female descendants as well as his male descendants were assigned land. The land of Gilead was assigned to the rest of the descendants of Manasseh.

⁷The territory of Manasseh reached from Asher to Michmethath, east of Shechem. The border then went south to include the people of Entappuah.

⁸The land around Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but the town of Tappuah, on the border, belonged to the descendants of Ephraim.

⁹The border then went down to the stream Kanah. The cities south of the stream belonged to Ephraim, even though they were in the territory of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh proceeded along the north side of the stream and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

¹⁰Ephraim was to the south, and Manasseh was to the north, with the Mediterranean Sea as their western

border. Asher was to the northwest, and Issachar to the northeast.

¹¹ Within the territories of Issachar and Asher, Manasseh possessed Beth Shan and Ibleam, along with their surrounding towns, as well as Dor (the one on the coast), Endor, Taanach, Megiddo, and their surrounding towns.

¹² The people of Manasseh, however, were not able to drive out the people living in those cities, so the Canaanites continued to live there.

¹³ Even when the Israelites became stronger, they did not drive out all the Canaanites, but they did force them to work for them.

¹⁴ The descendants of Joseph said to Joshua, Why have you given us only one part of the land to possess as our own? There are very many of us because the LORD has blessed us.

¹⁵ Joshua answered, If there are so many of you and the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, then go into the forests and clear ground for yourselves in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaim.

¹⁶They replied, The hill country is not big enough for us, but the Canaanites in the plains have iron chariots, both those who live in Beth Shan and its surrounding towns and those who live in Jezreel Valley.

¹⁷Joshua said to the tribes of Ephraim and West Manasseh, There are indeed many of you, and you are very powerful. You shall have more than one share.

¹⁸The hill country will be yours. Even though it is a forest, you will clear it and take possession of it from one end to the other. As for the Canaanites, you will drive them out, even though they do have iron chariots and are a strong people.

18¹After they had conquered the land, the entire community of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the Tent of the LORD's presence.

²There were still seven tribes of the people of Israel who had not yet been assigned their share of the land.

³So Joshua said to the people of Israel, How long are you going to wait before you go in and take the land that the

LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you?

⁴Let me have three men from each tribe. I will send them out over the whole country to map out the territory that they would like to have as their possession. Then they are to come back to me.

⁵The land will be divided among them in seven parts; Judah will stay in its territory in the south, and Joseph in its territory in the north.

⁶Write down a description of these seven divisions and bring it to me. Then I will draw lots to consult the LORD our God for you.

⁷The Levites, however, will not receive a share of the land with the rest of you, because their share is to serve as the LORD's priests. And of course, the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and East Manasseh have already received their land east of the Jordan, which Moses, the LORD's servant, gave to them.

⁸The men went on their way to map out the land after Joshua had given them these instructions: Go all over the land and map it out, and come back to me.

And then here in Shiloh I will consult the LORD for you by drawing lots.

⁹So the men went all over the land and set down in writing how they divided it into seven parts, making a list of the towns. Then they went back to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh.

¹⁰Joshua drew lots to consult the LORD for them, and assigned each of the remaining tribes of Israel a certain part of the land.

¹¹The territory belonging to the families of the tribe of Benjamin was the first to be assigned. Their land lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph.

¹²On the north their border began at the Jordan and then went up the slope north of Jericho and westward through the hill country as far as the desert of Bethaven.

¹³The border then went to the slope on the south side of Luz (also called Bethel), then down to Ataroth Addar, on the mountain south of Lower Beth Horon.

¹⁴The border then went in another direction, turning south from the western side of this mountain and going to

Kiriath Baal (or Kiriath Jearim), which belongs to the tribe of Judah. This was the western border.

¹⁵The southern border started on the edge of Kiriath Jearim and went to the Springs of Nephtoah.

¹⁶It then went down to the foot of the mountain that overlooks Hinnom Valley, at the north end of Rephaim Valley. It then went south through Hinnom Valley, south of the Jebusite ridge, toward Enrogel.

¹⁷It then turned north to Enshemesh and then on to Geliloth, opposite Adummim Pass. The border then went down to the Stone of Bohan (Bohan was a son of Reuben)

¹⁸and passed north of the ridge overlooking the Jordan Valley. It then went down into the valley,

¹⁹passing north of the ridge of Beth Hoglah, and ended at the northern inlet on the Dead Sea, where the Jordan River empties into it. This was the southern border.

²⁰The Jordan was the eastern border. These were the borders of the land which

the families of the tribe of Benjamin received as their possession.

²¹ The cities belonging to the families of the tribe of Benjamin were Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz,

²² Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,

²³ Avvim, Parah, Ophrah,

²⁴ Chepharammoni, Ophni, and Geba: twelve cities, along with the towns around them.

²⁵ There were also Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth,

²⁶ Mizpah, Chephirah, Mozah,

²⁷ Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah,

²⁸ Zela, Haeleph, Jebus (or Jerusalem), Gibeah, and Kiriath Jearim: fourteen cities, along with the towns around them. This is the land which the families of the tribe of Benjamin received as their possession.

19¹ The second assignment made was for the families of the tribe of Simeon. Its territory extended into the land assigned to the tribe of Judah.

² It included Beersheba, Sheba, Moladah,

³ Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem,

⁴ Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah,

⁵Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah,
⁶Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhem: thirteen
cities, along with the towns around
them.

⁷There were also Ain, Rimmon, Ether,
and Ashan: four cities, along with the
towns around them.

⁸This included all the towns around
these cities as far as Baalath Beer (or
Ramah), in the south. This was the land
which the families of the tribe of Simeon
received as their possession.

⁹Since Judah's assignment was larger
than was needed, part of its territory
was given to the tribe of Simeon.

¹⁰The third assignment made was for
the families of the tribe of Zebulun. The
land which they received reached as far
as Sarid.

¹¹From there the border went west to
Mareal, touching Dabbesheth and the
stream east of Jokneam.

¹²On the other side of Sarid it went
east to the border of Chisloth Tabor, then
to Daberath and up to Japhia.

¹³It continued east from there to Gath
Hepher and Ethkazin, turning in the
direction of Neah on the way to Rimmon.

¹⁴ On the north the border turned toward Hannathon, ending at Iptahel Valley.

¹⁵ It included Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities, along with the towns around them.

¹⁶ These cities and their towns were in the land which the families of the tribe of Zebulun received as their possession.

¹⁷ The fourth assignment made was for the families of the tribe of Issachar.

¹⁸ Its area included Jezreel, Chesulloth, Shunem,

¹⁹ Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath,

²⁰ Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez,

²¹ Remeth, Engannim, Enhaddah, and Bethpazzez.

²² The border also touched Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth Shemesh, ending at the Jordan. It included sixteen cities along with the towns around them.

²³ These cities and their towns were in the land which the families of the tribe of Issachar received as their possession.

²⁴ The fifth assignment made was for the families of the tribe of Asher.

²⁵ Its area included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph,

²⁶Allam Melech, Amad, and Mishal. On the west it touched Carmel and Shihor Libnath.

²⁷As it turned east, the border went to Bethdagon, touching Zebulun and Iphtahel Valley on the way north to Bethemek and Neiel. It continued north to Cabul,

²⁸Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah, as far as Sidon.

²⁹The border then turned to Ramah, reaching the fortified city of Tyre; then it turned to Hosah and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. It included Mahalab, Achzib,

³⁰Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob: twenty-two cities, along with the towns around them.

³¹These cities and their towns were in the land which the families of the tribe of Asher received as their possession.

³²The sixth assignment made was for the families of the tribe of Naphtali.

³³Its border went from Heleph to the oak in Zaanannim, on to Adaminekeb and to Jamnia, as far as Lakkum, and ended at the Jordan.

³⁴ There the border turned west to Aznoth Tabor, from there to Hukkok, touching Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west, and the Jordan on the east.

³⁵ The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth,

³⁶ Adamah, Ramah, Hazor,

³⁷ Kedesh, Edrei, Enhazor,

³⁸ Yiron, Migdalel, Horem, Bethanath, and Beth Shemesh: nineteen cities, along with the towns around them.

³⁹ These cities and their towns were in the land which the families of the tribe of Naphtali received as their possession.

⁴⁰ The seventh assignment made was for the families of the tribe of Dan.

⁴¹ Its area included Zorah, Eshtaol, Irshemesh,

⁴² Shaalbim, Aijalon, Ithlah,

⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron,

⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath,

⁴⁵ Jehud, Beneberak, Gathrimmon,

⁴⁶ Mejarkon, and Rakkon, as well as the territory around Joppa.

⁴⁷ When the people of Dan lost their land, they went to Laish and attacked it. They captured it, killed its people, and claimed it for themselves. They settled

there and changed the name of the city from Laish to Dan, naming it after their ancestor Dan.

⁴⁸These cities and their towns were in the land which the families of the tribe of Dan received as their possession.

⁴⁹When the people of Israel finished dividing up the land, they gave Joshua son of Nun a part of the land as his own.

⁵⁰As the LORD had commanded, they gave him the city he asked for: Timnath Serah, in the hill country of Ephraim. He rebuilt the city and settled there.

⁵¹Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of the families of the tribes of Israel assigned these parts of the land by drawing lots to consult the LORD at Shiloh, at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence. In this way they finished dividing the land.

20¹ Then the LORD told Joshua² to say to the people of Israel, Choose the cities of refuge that I had Moses tell you about.

³If any of you accidentally kills someone, you can go there and escape the one who is looking for revenge.

⁴You can run away to one of these cities, go to the place of judgment at the entrance to the city, and explain to the leaders what happened. Then they will let you into the city and give you a place to live in, so that you can stay there.

⁵If the one looking for revenge follows you there, the people of the city must not hand you over to that one. They must protect you because you killed the person accidentally and not out of anger.

⁶You may stay in the city until you have received a public trial and until the death of the man who is then the High Priest. Then you may go back home to your own town, from which you had run away.

⁷So, on the west side of the Jordan they set aside Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill country of Naphtali; Shechem, in the hill country of Ephraim; and Hebron, in the hill country of Judah.

⁸East of the Jordan, on the desert plateau east of Jericho, they chose Bezer in the territory of Reuben; Ramoth in Gilead, in the territory of Gad; and Golan in Bashan, in the territory of Manasseh.

⁹These were the cities of refuge chosen for all the people of Israel and for any

foreigner living among them. Any who killed a person accidentally could find protection there from the one looking for revenge; they could not be killed unless they had first received a public trial.

21 ¹The leaders of the Levite families went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and to the heads of the families of all the tribes of Israel.

²There at Shiloh in the land of Canaan they said to them, The LORD commanded through Moses that we were to be given cities to live in, as well as pasture land around them for our livestock.

³So in accordance with the LORD's command the people of Israel gave the Levites certain cities and pasture lands out of their own territories.

⁴The families of the Levite clan of Kohath were the first to be assigned cities. The families who were descended from Aaron the priest were assigned thirteen cities from the territories of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

⁵The rest of the clan of Kohath was assigned ten cities from the territories of Ephraim, Dan, and West Manasseh.

⁶The clan of Gershon was assigned thirteen cities from the territories of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and East Manasseh.

⁷The families of the clan of Merari were assigned twelve cities from the territories of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

⁸By drawing lots, the people of Israel assigned these cities and their pasture lands to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

⁹These are the names of the cities from the territories of Judah and Simeon which were given

¹⁰to the descendants of Aaron who were of the clan of Kohath, which was descended from Levi. Their assignment was the first to be made.

¹¹They were given the city of Arba (Arba was Anak's father), now called Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, along with the pasture land surrounding it.

¹²However, the fields of the city, as well as its towns, had already been given to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his possession.

¹³In addition to Hebron (one of the cities of refuge), the following cities were assigned to the descendants of Aaron the priest: Libnah,

¹⁴Jattir, Eshtemoa,

¹⁵Holon, Debir,

¹⁶Ain, Juttah, and Beth Shemesh, with their pasture lands: nine cities from the tribes of Judah and Simeon.

¹⁷From the territory of Benjamin they were given four cities: Gibeon, Geba,

¹⁸Anathoth, and Almon, with their pasture lands.

¹⁹Thirteen cities in all, with their pasture lands, were given to the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

²⁰The other families of the Levite clan of Kohath were assigned some cities from the territory of Ephraim.

²¹They were given four cities: Shechem and its pasture lands in the hill country of Ephraim (one of the cities of refuge), Gezer,

²²Kibzaim, and Beth Horon, with their pasture lands.

²³From the territory of Dan they were given four cities: Eltekeh, Gibbethon,

²⁴ Aijalon, and Gathrimmon, with their pasture lands.

²⁵ From the territory of West Manasseh they were given two cities: Taanach and Gathrimmon, with their pasture lands.

²⁶ These families of the clan of Kohath received ten cities in all, with their pasture lands.

²⁷ Another group of Levites, the clan of Gershon, received from the territory of East Manasseh two cities: Golan in Bashan (one of the cities of refuge) and Beeshterah, with their pasture lands.

²⁸ From the territory of Issachar they received four cities: Kishion, Daberath,

²⁹ Jarmuth, and Engannim, with their pasture lands.

³⁰ From the territory of Asher they received four cities: Mishal, Abdon,

³¹ Helkath, and Rehob, with their pasture lands.

³² From the territory of Naphtali they received three cities: Kedesh in Galilee, with its pasture lands (one of the cities of refuge), Hammoth Dor, and Kartan, with their pasture lands.

³³The various families of the clan of Gershon received a total of thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

³⁴The rest of the Levites, the clan of Merari, received from the territory of Zebulun four cities: Jokneam, Kartah,

³⁵Dimnah, and Nahalal, with their pasture lands.

³⁶From the territory of Reuben they received four cities: Bezer, Jahaz,

³⁷Kedemoth, and Mephaath, with their pasture lands.

³⁸From the tribe of Gad they received four cities: Ramoth in Gilead, with its pasture lands (one of the cities of refuge), Mahanaim,

³⁹Heshbon, and Jazer, with their pasture lands.

⁴⁰So the clan of Merari was assigned a total of twelve cities.

⁴¹From the land that the people of Israel possessed, a total of forty-eight cities, with the pasture lands around them, was given to the Levites.

⁴²(21:41)

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he had solemnly promised their ancestors he would give them. When

they had taken possession of it, they settled down there.

⁴⁴The LORD gave them peace throughout the land, just as he had promised their ancestors. Not one of all their enemies had been able to stand against them, because the LORD gave the Israelites the victory over all their enemies.

⁴⁵The LORD kept every one of the promises that he had made to the people of Israel.

22¹ Then Joshua called together the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh.

² He said to them, You have done everything that Moses the LORD's servant ordered you to do, and you have obeyed all my commands.

³ All this time you have never once deserted the other Israelites. You have been careful to obey the commands of the LORD your God.

⁴ Now, as he promised, the LORD your God has given the other Israelites peace. So go back home to the land which you claimed for your own, the land on the

east side of the Jordan, that Moses, the LORD's servant, gave you.

⁵Make sure you obey the law that Moses commanded you: love the LORD your God, do his will, obey his commandments, be faithful to him, and serve him with all your heart and soul.

⁶Joshua sent them home with his blessing and with these words: You are going back home very rich, with a lot of livestock, silver, gold, bronze, iron, and many clothes. Share with your fellow tribesmen what you took from your enemies. Then they left for home. Moses had given land east of the Jordan to one half of the tribe of Manasseh, but to the other half Joshua had given land west of the Jordan, along with the other tribes.

⁷ (22: 6)

⁸ (22: 6)

⁹So the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh went back home. They left the rest of the people of Israel at Shiloh in the land of Canaan and started out for their own land, the land of Gilead, which they had taken as the LORD had commanded them through Moses.

¹⁰When the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh arrived at Geliloth, still on the west side of the Jordan, they built a large, impressive altar there by the river.

¹¹The rest of the people of Israel were told, Listen! The people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh have built an altar at Geliloth, on our side of the Jordan!

¹²When the people of Israel heard this, the whole community came together at Shiloh to go to war against the eastern tribes.

¹³Then the people of Israel sent Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, to the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh in the land of Gilead.

¹⁴Ten leading men went with Phinehas, one from each of the western tribes and each one the head of a family among the clans.

¹⁵They came to the land of Gilead, to the people of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh,

¹⁶and speaking for the whole community of the LORD, they said to

them, Why have you done this evil thing against the God of Israel? You have rebelled against the LORD by building this altar for yourselves! You are no longer following him!

¹⁷Remember our sin at Peor, when the LORD punished his own people with an epidemic? We are still suffering because of that. Wasn't that sin enough?

¹⁸Are you going to refuse to follow him now? If you rebel against the LORD today, he will be angry with everyone in Israel tomorrow.

¹⁹Now then, if your land is not fit to worship in, come over into the LORD's land, where his Tent is. Claim some land among us. But don't rebel against the LORD or make rebels out of us by building an altar in addition to the altar of the LORD our God.

²⁰Remember how Achan son of Zerah refused to obey the command about the things condemned to destruction; the whole community of Israel was punished for that. Achan was not the only one who died because of his sin.

²¹The people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh answered the

heads of the families of the western tribes:

²²The Mighty One is God! He is the LORD! The Mighty One is God! He is the LORD! He knows why we did this, and we want you to know too! If we rebelled and did not keep faith with the LORD, do not let us live any longer!

²³If we disobeyed the LORD and built our own altar to burn sacrifices on or to use for grain offerings or fellowship offerings, let the LORD himself punish us.

²⁴No! We did it because we were afraid that in the future your descendants would say to ours, What do you have to do with the LORD, the God of Israel?

²⁵He made the Jordan a boundary between us and you people of Reuben and Gad. You have nothing to do with the LORD. Then your descendants might make our descendants stop worshipping the LORD.

²⁶So we built an altar, not to burn sacrifices or make offerings,

²⁷but instead, as a sign for our people and yours, and for the generations after us, that we do indeed worship the LORD

before his sacred Tent with our offerings to be burned and with sacrifices and fellowship offerings. This was to keep your descendants from saying that ours have nothing to do with the LORD.

²⁸It was our idea that, if this should ever happen, our descendants could say, Look! Our ancestors made an altar just like the LORD's altar. It was not for burning offerings or for sacrifice, but as a sign for our people and yours.

²⁹We would certainly not rebel against the LORD or stop following him now by building an altar to burn offerings on or for grain offerings or sacrifices. We would not build any other altar than the altar of the LORD our God that stands in front of the Tent of his presence.

³⁰Phinehas the priest and the ten leading men of the community who were with him, the heads of families of the western tribes, heard what the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh had to say, and they were satisfied.

³¹Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, said to them, Now we know that the LORD is with us. You have not

rebelled against him, and so you have saved the people of Israel from the LORD's punishment.

³²Then Phinehas and the leaders left the people of Reuben and Gad in the land of Gilead and went back to Canaan, to the people of Israel, and reported to them.

³³The Israelites were satisfied and praised God. They no longer talked about going to war to devastate the land where the people of Reuben and Gad had settled.

³⁴The people of Reuben and Gad said, This altar is a witness to all of us that the LORD is God. And so they named it Witness.

23¹ Much later the LORD gave Israel security from their enemies around them. By that time Joshua was very old,

²so he called all Israel, the elders, leaders, judges, and officers of the people, and said, I am very old now.

³You have seen everything that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you. The LORD your God has been fighting for you.

⁴I have assigned as the possession of your tribes the land of the nations that are still left, as well as of all the nations that I have already conquered, from the Jordan River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

⁵The LORD your God will make them retreat from you, and he will drive them away as you advance. You shall have their land, as the LORD your God has promised you.

⁶So be careful to obey and do everything that is written in the book of the Law of Moses. Do not neglect any part of it,

⁷and then you will not associate with these peoples left among you or speak the names of their gods or use those names in taking vows or worship those gods or bow down to them.

⁸Instead, be faithful to the LORD, as you have been till now.

⁹The LORD has driven great and powerful nations out as you advanced, and no one has ever been able to stand against you.

¹⁰Any one of you can make a thousand men run away, because the LORD your

God is fighting for you, just as he promised.

¹¹ Be careful, then, to love the LORD your God.

¹² If you are disloyal and join with the nations that are still left among you and intermarry with them,

¹³ you may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive these nations out as you advance. Rather, they will be as dangerous for you as a trap or a pit and as painful as a whip on your back or thorns in your eyes. And this will last until none of you are left in this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

¹⁴ Now my time has come to die. Every one of you knows in his heart and soul that the LORD your God has given you all the good things that he promised. Every promise he made has been kept; not one has failed.

¹⁵ But just as he kept every promise that he made to you, so he will carry out every threat.

¹⁶ If you do not keep the covenant which the LORD your God commanded you to keep and if you serve and worship

other gods, then in his anger he will punish you, and soon none of you will be left in this good land that he has given you.

24¹ Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem. He called the elders, the leaders, the judges, and the officers of Israel, and they came into the presence of God.

² Joshua said to all the people, This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, has to say: Long ago your ancestors lived on the other side of the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. One of those ancestors was Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor.

³ Then I took Abraham, your ancestor, from the land across the Euphrates and led him through the whole land of Canaan. I gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac,

⁴ and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the hill country of Edom as his possession, but your ancestor Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

⁵ Later I sent Moses and Aaron, and I brought great trouble on Egypt. But I led you out;

⁶I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and cavalry. But when your ancestors got to the Red Sea

⁷they cried out to me for help, and I put darkness between them and the Egyptians. I made the sea come rolling over the Egyptians and drown them. You know what I did to Egypt. You lived in the desert a long time.

⁸Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the east side of the Jordan. They fought you, but I gave you victory over them. You took their land, and I destroyed them as you advanced.

⁹Then the king of Moab, Balak son of Zippor, fought against you. He sent word to Balaam son of Beor and asked him to put a curse on you.

¹⁰But I would not listen to Balaam, so he blessed you, and in this way I rescued you from Balak.

¹¹You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The men of Jericho fought you, as did the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites,

the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I gave you victory over them all.

¹²As you advanced, I threw them into panic in order to drive out the two Amorite kings. Your swords and bows had nothing to do with it.

¹³I gave you a land that you had never worked and cities that you had not built. Now you are living there and eating grapes from vines that you did not plant, and olives from trees that you did not plant.

¹⁴Now then, Joshua continued, honor the LORD and serve him sincerely and faithfully. Get rid of the gods which your ancestors used to worship in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, and serve only the LORD.

¹⁵If you are not willing to serve him, decide today whom you will serve, the gods your ancestors worshiped in Mesopotamia or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are now living. As for my family and me, we will serve the LORD.

¹⁶The people replied, We would never leave the LORD to serve other gods!

¹⁷The LORD our God brought our fathers and us out of slavery in Egypt, and we saw the miracles that he performed. He kept us safe wherever we went among all the nations through which we passed.

¹⁸As we advanced into this land, the LORD drove out all the Amorites who lived here. So we also will serve the LORD; he is our God.

¹⁹Joshua said to the people, But you may not be able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God and will not forgive your sins. He will tolerate no rivals,

²⁰and if you leave him to serve foreign gods, he will turn against you and punish you. He will destroy you, even though he was good to you before.

²¹The people said to Joshua, No! We will serve the LORD.

²²Joshua told them, You are your own witnesses to the fact that you have chosen to serve the LORD. Yes, they said, we are witnesses.

²³Then get rid of those foreign gods that you have, he demanded, and pledge your loyalty to the LORD, the God of Israel.

²⁴The people then said to Joshua, We will serve the LORD our God. We will obey his commands.

²⁵So Joshua made a covenant for the people that day, and there at Shechem he gave them laws and rules to follow.

²⁶Joshua wrote these commands in the book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up under the oak tree in the LORD's sanctuary.

²⁷He said to all the people, This stone will be our witness. It has heard all the words that the LORD has spoken to us. So it will be a witness against you, to keep you from rebelling against your God.

²⁸Then Joshua sent the people away, and everyone returned to their own part of the land.

²⁹After that, the LORD's servant Joshua son of Nun died at the age of a hundred and ten.

³⁰They buried him on his own land at Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash.

³¹As long as Joshua lived, the people of Israel served the LORD, and after his death they continued to do so as long as

those leaders were alive who had seen for themselves everything that the LORD had done for Israel.

³²The body of Joseph, which the people of Israel had brought from Egypt, was buried at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of silver. This land was inherited by Joseph's descendants.

³³Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, the town in the hill country of Ephraim which had been given to his son Phinehas.

Judges

1 ¹After Joshua's death the people of Israel asked the LORD, Which of our tribes should be the first to go and attack the Canaanites?

²The LORD answered, The tribe of Judah will go first. I am giving them control of the land.

³The people of Judah said to the people of Simeon, Go with us into the territory assigned to us, and we will fight the Canaanites together. Then we will go with you into the territory assigned to you. So the tribes of Simeon

⁴and Judah went into battle together. The LORD gave them victory over the Canaanites and the Perizzites, and they defeated ten thousand men at Bezek.

⁵They found Adonibezek there and fought him.

⁶He ran away, but they chased him, caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

⁷Adonibezek said, Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off have

picked up scraps under my table. God has now done to me what I did to them. He was taken to Jerusalem, where he died.

⁸The people of Judah attacked Jerusalem and captured it. They killed its people and set fire to the city.

⁹After this they went on to fight the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the foothills, and in the dry country to the south.

¹⁰They marched against the Canaanites living in the city of Hebron, which used to be called Kiriath Arba. There they defeated the clans of Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

¹¹From there the men of Judah marched against the city of Debir, at that time called Kiriath Sepher.

¹²One of them, called Caleb, said, I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who succeeds in capturing Kiriath Sepher.

¹³Othniel, the son of Caleb's younger brother Kenaz, captured the city, so Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage.

¹⁴On the wedding day Othniel urged her to ask her father for a field. She got down from her donkey, and Caleb asked her what she wanted.

¹⁵She answered, I want some water holes. The land you have given me is in the dry country. So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

¹⁶The descendants of Moses' father-in-law, the Kenite, went on with the people of Judah from Jericho, the city of palm trees, into the barren country south of Arad in Judah. There they settled among the Amalekites.

¹⁷The people of Judah went with the people of Simeon, and together they defeated the Canaanites who lived in the city of Zephath. They put a curse on the city, destroyed it, and named it Hormah.

¹⁸The LORD helped the people of Judah, and they took possession of the hill country. But they did not capture Gaza, Ashkelon, or Ekron, with their surrounding territories. These people living along the coast had iron chariots, and so the people of Judah were not able to drive them out.

¹⁹(1:18)

²⁰As Moses had commanded, Hebron was given to Caleb, who drove out of the city the three clans descended from Anak.

²¹But the people of the tribe of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites living in Jerusalem, and the Jebusites have continued to live there with the people of Benjamin ever since.

²²The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh went to attack the city of Bethel, at that time called Luz. The LORD helped them. They sent spies to the city,

²³(1: 22)

²⁴who saw a man leaving and said to him, Show us how to get into the city, and we won't hurt you.

²⁵So he showed them, and the people of Ephraim and Manasseh killed everyone in the city, except this man and his family.

²⁶He later went to the land of the Hittites, built a city there, and named it Luz, which is still its name.

²⁷The tribe of Manasseh did not drive out the people living in the cities of Beth Shan, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo,

and the nearby towns; the Canaanites continued to live there.

²⁸When the Israelites became stronger, they forced the Canaanites to work for them, but still they did not drive them all out.

²⁹The tribe of Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites living in the city of Gezer, and so the Canaanites continued to live there with them.

³⁰The tribe of Zebulun did not drive out the people living in the cities of Kitron and Nahalal, and so the Canaanites continued to live there with them and were forced to work for them.

³¹The tribe of Asher did not drive out the people living in the cities of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphek, and Rehob.

³²The people of Asher lived with the local Canaanites, since they had not been driven out.

³³The tribe of Naphtali did not drive out the people living in the cities of Beth Shemesh and Bethanath. The people of Naphtali lived with the local Canaanites, but forced them to work for them.

³⁴The Amorites forced the people of the tribe of Dan into the hill country and did not let them come down to the plain.

³⁵The Amorites continued to live at Aijalon, Shaalbim, and Mount Heres, but the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh kept them under their rule and forced them to work for them.

³⁶North of Sela, the Edomite border ran through Akrabbim Pass.

2¹The angel of the LORD went from Gilgal to Bochim and said to the Israelites, I took you out of Egypt and brought you to the land that I promised to your ancestors. I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

²You must not make any covenant with the people who live in this land. You must tear down their altars. But you have not done what I told you. You have done just the opposite!

³So I tell you now that I will not drive these people out as you advance. They will be your enemies, and you will be trapped by the worship of their gods.

⁴When the angel had said this, all the people of Israel began to cry,

⁵and that is why the place is called Bochim. There they offered sacrifices to the LORD.

⁶Joshua sent the people of Israel on their way, and each man went to take possession of his own share of the land.

⁷As long as Joshua lived, the people of Israel served the LORD, and even after his death they continued to do so as long as the leaders were alive who had seen for themselves all the great things that the LORD had done for Israel.

⁸The LORD's servant Joshua son of Nun died at the age of a hundred and ten.

⁹He was buried in his own part of the land at Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash.

¹⁰That whole generation also died, and the next generation forgot the LORD and what he had done for Israel.

¹¹Then the people of Israel sinned against the LORD and began to serve the Baals.

¹²They stopped worshiping the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God who had brought them out of Egypt, and they began to worship other gods, the gods

of the peoples around them. They bowed down to them and made the LORD angry.

¹³They stopped worshiping the LORD and served the Baals and the Astartes.

¹⁴And so the LORD became furious with Israel and let raiders attack and rob them. He let the enemies all around overpower them, and the Israelites could no longer protect themselves.

¹⁵Every time they would go into battle, the LORD was against them, just as he had said he would be. They were in great distress.

¹⁶Then the LORD gave the Israelites leaders who saved them from the raiders.

¹⁷But the Israelites paid no attention to their leaders. Israel was unfaithful to the LORD and worshiped other gods. Their fathers had obeyed the LORD's commands, but this new generation soon stopped doing so.

¹⁸Whenever the LORD gave Israel a leader, the LORD would help that leader and would save the people from their enemies as long as that leader lived. The LORD would have mercy on

them because they groaned under their suffering and oppression.

¹⁹But when the leader died, the people would return to the old ways and behave worse than the previous generation. They would serve and worship other gods, and stubbornly continue their own evil ways.

²⁰Then the LORD would become furious with Israel and say, This nation has broken the covenant that I commanded their ancestors to keep. Because they have not obeyed me,

²¹I will no longer drive out any of the nations that were still in the land when Joshua died.

²²I will use them to find out whether or not these Israelites will follow my ways, as their ancestors did.

²³So the LORD allowed these nations to remain in the land; he did not give Joshua victory over them, nor did he drive them out soon after Joshua's death.

3¹So then, the LORD left some nations in the land to test the Israelites who had not been through the wars in Canaan.

²He did this only in order to teach each generation of Israelites about war, especially those who had never been in battle before.

³Those left in the land were the five Philistine cities, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived in the Lebanon Mountains from Mount Baal Hermon as far as Hamath Pass.

⁴They were to be a test for Israel, to find out whether or not the Israelites would obey the commands that the LORD had given their ancestors through Moses.

⁵And so the people of Israel settled down among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

⁶They intermarried with them and worshiped their gods.

⁷The people of Israel forgot the LORD their God; they sinned against him and worshiped the idols of Baal and Asherah.

⁸So the LORD became angry with Israel and let King Cushan Rishathaim of Mesopotamia conquer them. They were subject to him for eight years.

⁹Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he sent someone to free them. This was Othniel, the son of Caleb's younger brother Kenaz.

¹⁰The spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he became Israel's leader. Othniel went to war, and the LORD gave him the victory over the king of Mesopotamia.

¹¹There was peace in the land for forty years, and then Othniel died.

¹²The people of Israel sinned against the LORD again. Because of this the LORD made King Eglon of Moab stronger than Israel.

¹³Eglon joined the Ammonites and the Amalekites; they defeated Israel and captured Jericho, the city of palm trees.

¹⁴The Israelites were subject to Eglon for eighteen years.

¹⁵Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he sent someone to free them. This was Ehud, a left-handed man, who was the son of Gera, from the tribe of Benjamin. The people of Israel sent Ehud to King Eglon of Moab with gifts for him.

¹⁶Ehud had made himself a double-edged sword about a foot and a half long. He had it fastened on his right side under his clothes.

¹⁷Then he took the gifts to Eglon, who was a very fat man.

¹⁸When Ehud had given him the gifts, he told the men who had carried them to go back home.

¹⁹But Ehud himself turned back at the carved stones near Gilgal, went back to Eglon, and said, Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you. So the king ordered his servants, Leave us alone! And they all went out.

²⁰Then, as the king was sitting there alone in his cool room on the roof, Ehud went over to him and said, I have a message from God for you. The king stood up.

²¹With his left hand Ehud took the sword from his right side and plunged it into the king's belly.

²²The whole sword went in, handle and all, and the fat covered it up. Ehud did not pull it out of the king's belly, and it stuck out behind, between his legs.

²³ Then Ehud went outside, closed the doors behind him, locked them,

²⁴ and left. The servants came and saw that the doors were locked, but they only thought that the king was inside, relieving himself.

²⁵ They waited as long as they thought they should, but when he still did not open the door, they took the key and opened it. And there was their master, lying dead on the floor.

²⁶ Ehud got away while they were waiting. He went past the carved stones and escaped to Seirah.

²⁷ When he arrived there in the hill country of Ephraim, he blew a trumpet to call the people of Israel to battle; then he led them down from the hills.

²⁸ He told them, Follow me! The LORD has given you victory over your enemies, the Moabites. So they followed Ehud down and captured the place where the Moabites were to cross the Jordan; they did not allow anyone to cross.

²⁹ That day they killed about ten thousand of the best Moabite soldiers; none of them escaped.

³⁰That day the Israelites defeated Moab, and there was peace in the land for eighty years.

³¹The next leader was Shamgar son of Anath. He too rescued Israel, and did so by killing six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad.

4¹ After Ehud died, the people of Israel sinned against the LORD again.

²So the LORD let them be conquered by Jabin, a Canaanite king who ruled in the city of Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived at Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles.

³Jabin had nine hundred iron chariots, and he ruled the people of Israel with cruelty and violence for twenty years. Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help.

⁴Now Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet, and she was serving as a judge for the Israelites at that time.

⁵She would sit under a certain palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel would go there for her decisions.

⁶One day she sent for Barak son of Abinoam from the city of Kedesh in

Naphtali and said to him, The LORD, the God of Israel, has given you this command: Take ten thousand men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them to Mount Tabor.

⁷I will bring Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, to fight you at the Kishon River. He will have his chariots and soldiers, but I will give you victory over him.

⁸Then Barak replied, I will go if you go with me, but if you don't go with me, I won't go either.

⁹She answered, All right, I will go with you, but you won't get any credit for the victory, because the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman. So Deborah set off for Kedesh with Barak.

¹⁰Barak called the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and ten thousand men followed him. Deborah went with him.

¹¹In the meantime Heber the Kenite had set up his tent close to Kedesh near the oak tree at Zaananim. He had moved away from the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses.

¹²When Sisera learned that Barak had gone up to Mount Tabor,

¹³he called out his nine hundred iron chariots and all his men, and sent them from Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles to the Kishon River.

¹⁴Then Deborah said to Barak, Go! The LORD is leading you! Today he has given you victory over Sisera. So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with his ten thousand men.

¹⁵When Barak attacked with his army, the LORD threw Sisera into confusion together with all his chariots and men. Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.

¹⁶Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles, and Sisera's whole army was killed. Not a man was left.

¹⁷Sisera ran away to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because King Jabin of Hazor was at peace with Heber's family.

¹⁸Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, Come in, sir; come into my tent. Don't be afraid. So he went in, and she hid him behind a curtain.

¹⁹He said to her, Please give me a drink of water; I'm thirsty. She opened a leather bag of milk, gave him a drink, and hid him again.

²⁰Then he told her, Stand at the door of the tent, and if anyone comes and asks you if anyone is here, say no.

²¹Sisera was so tired that he fell sound asleep. Then Jael took a hammer and a tent peg, quietly went up to him, and killed him by driving the peg right through the side of his head and into the ground.

²²When Barak came looking for Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, Come here! I'll show you the man you're looking for. So he went in with her, and there was Sisera on the ground, dead, with the tent peg through his head.

²³That day God gave the Israelites victory over Jabin, the Canaanite king.

²⁴They pressed harder and harder against him until they destroyed him.

5¹On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song:

²Praise the LORD! The Israelites were determined to fight; the people gladly volunteered.

³Listen, you kings! Pay attention, you rulers! I will sing and play music to Israel's God, the LORD.

⁴LORD, when you left the mountains of Seir, when you came out of the region of Edom, the earth shook, and rain fell from the sky. Yes, water poured down from the clouds.

⁵The mountains quaked before the LORD of Sinai, before the LORD, the God of Israel.

⁶In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, caravans no longer went through the land, and travelers used the back roads.

⁷The towns of Israel stood abandoned, Deborah; they stood empty until you came, came like a mother for Israel.

⁸Then there was war in the land when the Israelites chose new gods. Of the forty thousand men in Israel, did anyone carry shield or spear?

⁹My heart is with the commanders of Israel, with the people who gladly volunteered. Praise the LORD!

¹⁰Tell of it, you that ride on white donkeys, sitting on saddles, and you that must walk wherever you go.

¹¹Listen! The noisy crowds around the wells are telling of the LORD's victories, the victories of Israel's people! Then the LORD's people marched down from their cities.

¹²Lead on, Deborah, lead on! Lead on! Sing a song! Lead on! Forward, Barak son of Abinoam, lead your captives away!

¹³Then the faithful ones came down to their leaders; the LORD's people came to him ready to fight.

¹⁴They came from Ephraim into the valley, behind the tribe of Benjamin and its people. The commanders came down from Machir, the officers down from Zebulun.

¹⁵The leaders of Issachar came with Deborah; yes, Issachar came and Barak too, and they followed him into the valley. But the tribe of Reuben was divided; they could not decide to come.

¹⁶Why did they stay behind with the sheep? To listen to shepherds calling

the flocks? Yes, the tribe of Reuben was divided; they could not decide to come.

¹⁷The tribe of Gad stayed east of the Jordan, and the tribe of Dan remained by the ships. The tribe of Asher stayed by the seacoast; they remained along the shore.

¹⁸But the people of Zebulun and Naphtali risked their lives on the battlefield.

¹⁹At Taanach, by the stream of Megiddo, the kings came and fought; the kings of Canaan fought, but they took no silver away.

²⁰The stars fought from the sky; as they moved across the sky, they fought against Sisera.

²¹A flood in the Kishon swept them away -- the onrushing Kishon River. I shall march, march on, with strength!

²²Then the horses came galloping on, stamping the ground with their hoofs.

²³Put a curse on Meroz, says the angel of the LORD, a curse, a curse on those who live there. They did not come to help the LORD, come as soldiers to fight for him.

²⁴ The most fortunate of women is Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite -- the most fortunate of women who live in tents.

²⁵ Sisera asked for water, but she gave him milk; she brought him cream in a beautiful bowl.

²⁶ She took a tent peg in one hand, a worker's hammer in the other; she struck Sisera and crushed his skull; she pierced him through the head.

²⁷ He sank to his knees, fell down and lay still at her feet. At her feet he sank to his knees and fell; he fell to the ground, dead.

²⁸ Sisera's mother looked out of the window; she gazed from behind the lattice. Why is his chariot so late in coming? she asked. Why are his horses so slow to return?

²⁹ Her wisest friends answered her, and she told herself over and over,

³⁰ They are only finding things to capture and divide, a woman or two for every soldier, rich cloth for Sisera, embroidered pieces for the neck of the queen.

³¹ So may all your enemies die like that, O LORD, but may your friends shine like

the rising sun! And there was peace in the land for forty years.

6¹ Once again the people of Israel sinned against the LORD, so he let the people of Midian rule them for seven years.

²The Midianites were stronger than Israel, and the people of Israel hid from them in caves and other safe places in the hills.

³Whenever the Israelites would plant their crops, the Midianites would come with the Amalekites and the desert tribes and attack them.

⁴They would camp on the land and destroy the crops as far south as the area around Gaza. They would take all the sheep, cattle, and donkeys, and leave nothing for the Israelites to live on.

⁵They would come with their livestock and tents, as thick as locusts. They and their camels were too many to count.

They came and devastated the land,

⁶and Israel was helpless against them.

⁷Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help against the Midianites,

⁸and he sent them a prophet who brought them this message from the

LORD, the God of Israel: I brought you out of slavery in Egypt.

⁹I rescued you from the Egyptians and from the people who fought you here in this land. I drove them out as you advanced, and I gave you their land.

¹⁰I told you that I am the LORD your God and that you should not worship the gods of the Amorites, whose land you are now living in. But you have not listened to me.

¹¹Then the LORD's angel came to the village of Ophrah and sat under the oak tree that belonged to Joash, a man of the clan of Abiezer. His son Gideon was threshing some wheat secretly in a wine press, so that the Midianites would not see him.

¹²The LORD's angel appeared to him there and said, The LORD is with you, brave and mighty man!

¹³Gideon said to him, If I may ask, sir, why has all this happened to us if the LORD is with us? What happened to all the wonderful things that our fathers told us the LORD used to do -- how he brought them out of Egypt? The LORD

has abandoned us and left us to the mercy of the Midianites.

¹⁴Then the LORD ordered him, Go with all your great strength and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I myself am sending you.

¹⁵Gideon replied, But Lord, how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least important member of my family.

¹⁶The LORD answered, You can do it because I will help you. You will crush the Midianites as easily as if they were only one man.

¹⁷Gideon replied, If you are pleased with me, give me some proof that you are really the LORD.

¹⁸Please do not leave until I bring you an offering of food. He said, I will stay until you come back.

¹⁹So Gideon went into his house and cooked a young goat and used a bushel of flour to make bread without any yeast. He put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, brought them to the LORD's angel under the oak tree, and gave them to him.

²⁰The angel told him, Put the meat and the bread on this rock, and pour the broth over them. Gideon did so.

²¹Then the LORD's angel reached out and touched the meat and the bread with the end of the stick he was holding. Fire came out of the rock and burned up the meat and the bread. Then the angel disappeared.

²²Gideon then realized that it was the LORD's angel he had seen, and he said in terror, Sovereign LORD! I have seen your angel face-to-face!

²³But the LORD told him, Peace. Don't be afraid. You will not die.

²⁴Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and named it The LORD is Peace. (It is still standing at Ophrah, which belongs to the clan of Abiezer.)

²⁵That night the LORD told Gideon, Take your father's bull and another bull seven years old, tear down your father's altar to Baal, and cut down the symbol of the goddess Asherah, which is beside it.

²⁶Build a well-constructed altar to the LORD your God on top of this mound. Then take the second bull and burn it whole as an offering, using for firewood

the symbol of Asherah you have cut down.

²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants and did what the LORD had told him. He was too afraid of his family and the people in town to do it by day, so he did it at night.

²⁸ When the people in town got up early the next morning, they found that the altar to Baal and the symbol of Asherah had been cut down, and that the second bull had been burned on the altar that had been built there.

²⁹ They asked each other, Who did this? They investigated and found out that Gideon son of Joash had done it.

³⁰ Then they said to Joash, Bring your son out here, so that we can kill him! He tore down the altar to Baal and cut down the symbol of Asherah beside it.

³¹ But Joash said to all those who confronted him, Are you arguing for Baal? Are you defending him? Anyone who argues for him will be killed before morning. If Baal is a god, let him defend himself. It is his altar that was torn down.

³²From then on Gideon was known as Jerubbaal, because Joash said, Let Baal defend himself; it is his altar that was torn down.

³³Then all the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the desert tribes assembled, crossed the Jordan River, and camped in Jezreel Valley.

³⁴The spirit of the LORD took control of Gideon, and he blew a trumpet to call the men of the clan of Abiezer to follow him.

³⁵He sent messengers throughout the territory of both parts of Manasseh to call them to follow him. He sent messengers to the tribes of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they also came to join him.

³⁶Then Gideon said to God, You say that you have decided to use me to rescue Israel.

³⁷Well, I am putting some wool on the ground where we thresh the wheat. If in the morning there is dew only on the wool but not on the ground, then I will know that you are going to use me to rescue Israel.

³⁸That is exactly what happened. When Gideon got up early the next morning,

he squeezed the wool and wrung enough dew out of it to fill a bowl with water.

³⁹Then Gideon said to God, Don't be angry with me; let me speak just once more. Please let me make one more test with the wool. This time let the wool be dry, and the ground be wet.

⁴⁰That night God did that very thing. The next morning the wool was dry, but the ground was wet with dew.

7¹One day Gideon and all his men got up early and camped beside Harod Spring. The Midianite camp was in the valley to the north of them by Moreh Hill.

²The LORD said to Gideon, The men you have are too many for me to give them victory over the Midianites. They might think that they had won by themselves, and so give me no credit.

³Announce to the people, Anyone who is afraid should go back home, and we will stay here at Mount Gilead. So twenty-two thousand went back, but ten thousand stayed.

⁴Then the LORD said to Gideon, You still have too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will separate them for you there. If I tell you a man

should go with you, he will go. If I tell you a man should not go with you, he will not go.

⁵Gideon took the men down to the water, and the LORD told him, Separate everyone who laps up the water with his tongue like a dog, from everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.

⁶There were three hundred men who scooped up water in their hands and lapped it; all the others got down on their knees to drink.

⁷The LORD said to Gideon, I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites with the three hundred men who lapped the water. Tell everyone else to go home.

⁸So Gideon sent all the Israelites home, except the three hundred, who kept all the supplies and trumpets. The Midianite camp was below them in the valley.

⁹That night the LORD commanded Gideon, Get up and attack the camp; I am giving you victory over it.

¹⁰But if you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah.

¹¹ You will hear what they are saying, and then you will have the courage to attack. So Gideon and his servant Purah went down to the edge of the enemy camp.

¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites, and the desert tribesmen were spread out in the valley like a swarm of locusts, and they had as many camels as there are grains of sand on the seashore.

¹³ When Gideon arrived, he heard a man telling a friend about a dream. He was saying, I dreamed that a loaf of barley bread rolled into our camp and hit a tent. The tent collapsed and lay flat on the ground.

¹⁴ His friend replied, It's the sword of the Israelite, Gideon son of Joash! It can't mean anything else! God has given him victory over Midian and our whole army!

¹⁵ When Gideon heard about the man's dream and what it meant, he fell to his knees and worshiped the LORD. Then he went back to the Israelite camp and said, Get up! The LORD is giving you victory over the Midianite army!

¹⁶He divided his three hundred men into three groups and gave each man a trumpet and a jar with a torch inside it.

¹⁷He told them, When I get to the edge of the camp, watch me, and do what I do.

¹⁸When my group and I blow our trumpets, then you blow yours all around the camp and shout, For the LORD and for Gideon!

¹⁹Gideon and his one hundred men came to the edge of the camp a while before midnight, just after the guard had been changed. Then they blew the trumpets and broke the jars they were holding,

²⁰and the other two groups did the same. They all held the torches in their left hands, the trumpets in their right, and shouted, A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!

²¹Every man stood in his place around the camp, and the whole enemy army ran away yelling.

²²While Gideon's men were blowing their trumpets, the LORD made the enemy troops attack each other with their swords. They ran toward Zarethan

as far as Beth Shittah, as far as the town of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

²³Then men from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, and both parts of Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites.

²⁴Gideon sent messengers through all the hill country of Ephraim to say, Come down and fight the Midianites. Hold the Jordan River and the streams as far as Bethbarah, to keep the Midianites from crossing them. The men of Ephraim were called together, and they held the Jordan River and the streams as far as Bethbarah.

²⁵They captured the two Midianite chiefs, Oreb and Zeeb; they killed Oreb at Oreb Rock, and Zeeb at the Winepress of Zeeb. They continued to pursue the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was now east of the Jordan.

8¹Then the people of Ephraim said to Gideon, Why didn't you call us when you went to fight the Midianites? Why did you treat us like this? They complained bitterly about it.

²But he told them, What I was able to do is nothing compared with what you have done. Even the little that you people of Ephraim did is worth more than what my whole clan has done.

³After all, through the power of God you killed the two Midianite chiefs, Oreb and Zeeb. What have I done to compare with that? When he said this, they were no longer so angry.

⁴By this time Gideon and his three hundred men had come to the Jordan River and had crossed it. They were exhausted, but were still pursuing the enemy.

⁵When they arrived at Sukkoth, he said to the men of the town, Please give my men some loaves of bread. They are exhausted, and I am chasing Zebah and Zalmunna, the Midianite kings.

⁶But the leaders of Sukkoth said, Why should we give your army any food? You haven't captured Zebah and Zalmunna yet.

⁷So Gideon said, All right! When the LORD has handed Zebah and Zalmunna over to me, I will beat you with thorns and briars from the desert!

⁸Gideon went on to Penuel and made the same request of the people there, but the men of Penuel gave the same answer as the men of Sukkoth.

⁹So he said to them, I am going to come back safe and sound, and when I do, I will tear this tower down!

¹⁰Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor with their army. Of the whole army of desert tribesmen, only about 15,000 were left; 120,000 soldiers had been killed.

¹¹Gideon went on the road along the edge of the desert, east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and attacked the army by surprise.

¹²The two Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, ran away, but he pursued them and captured them, and caused their whole army to panic.

¹³When Gideon was returning from the battle by way of Heres Pass,

¹⁴he captured a young man from Sukkoth and questioned him. The young man wrote down for Gideon the names of the seventy-seven leading men of Sukkoth.

¹⁵Then Gideon went to the men of Sukkoth and said, Remember when you refused to help me? You said that you couldn't give any food to my exhausted army because I hadn't captured Zebah and Zalmunna yet. Well, here they are!

¹⁶He then took thorns and briers from the desert and used them to punish the leaders of Sukkoth.

¹⁷He also tore down the tower at Penuel and killed the men of that city.

¹⁸Then Gideon asked Zebah and Zalmunna, What about the men you killed at Tabor? They answered, They looked like you -- every one of them like the son of a king.

¹⁹Gideon said, They were my brothers, my own mother's sons. I solemnly swear that if you had not killed them, I would not kill you.

²⁰Then he said to Jether, his oldest son, Go ahead, kill them! But the boy did not draw his sword. He hesitated, because he was still only a boy.

²¹Then Zebah and Zalmunna said to Gideon, Come on, kill us yourself. It takes a man to do a man's job. So Gideon

killed them and took the ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.

²²After that, the Israelites said to Gideon, Be our ruler -- you and your descendants after you. You have saved us from the Midianites.

²³Gideon answered, I will not be your ruler, nor will my son. The LORD will be your ruler.

²⁴But he went on to say, Let me ask one thing of you. Every one of you give me the earrings you took. (The Midianites, like other desert people, wore gold earrings.)

²⁵The people answered, We'll be glad to give them to you. They spread out a cloth, and everyone put on it the earrings that he had taken.

²⁶The gold earrings that Gideon got weighed over forty pounds, and this did not include the ornaments, necklaces, and purple clothes that the kings of Midian wore, nor the collars that were around the necks of their camels.

²⁷Gideon made an idol from the gold and put it in his hometown, Ophrah. All the Israelites abandoned God and went

there to worship the idol. It was a trap for Gideon and his family.

²⁸So Midian was defeated by the Israelites and was no longer a threat. The land was at peace for forty years, until Gideon died.

²⁹Gideon went back to his own home and lived there.

³⁰He had seventy sons, because he had many wives.

³¹He also had a concubine in Shechem; she bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech.

³²Gideon son of Joash died at a ripe old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash, at Ophrah, the town of the clan of Abiezer.

³³After Gideon's death the people of Israel were unfaithful to God again and worshiped the Baals. They made Baal-of-the-Covenant their god,

³⁴and no longer served the LORD their God, who had saved them from all their enemies around them.

³⁵They were not grateful to the family of Gideon for all the good that he had done for Israel.

9¹ Gideon's son Abimelech went to the town of Shechem, where all his mother's relatives lived, and told them² to ask the men of Shechem, Which would you prefer? To have all seventy of Gideon's sons govern you or to have just one man? Remember that Abimelech is your own flesh and blood.

³ His mother's relatives talked to the men of Shechem about this for him, and the men of Shechem decided to follow Abimelech because he was their relative.

⁴ They gave him seventy pieces of silver from the temple of Baal-of-the-Covenant, and with this money he hired a bunch of worthless scoundrels to join him.

⁵ He went to his father's house at Ophrah, and there on top of a single stone he killed his seventy brothers, Gideon's sons. But Jotham, Gideon's youngest son, hid and was not killed.

⁶ Then all the men of Shechem and Bethmillo got together and went to the sacred oak tree at Shechem, where they made Abimelech king.

⁷ When Jotham heard about this, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim

and shouted out to them, Listen to me, you men of Shechem, and God may listen to you!

⁸Once upon a time the trees went out to choose a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, Be our king.

⁹The olive tree answered, In order to govern you, I would have to stop producing my oil, which is used to honor gods and human beings.

¹⁰Then the trees said to the fig tree, You come and be our king.

¹¹But the fig tree answered, In order to govern you, I would have to stop producing my good sweet fruit.

¹²So the trees then said to the grapevine, You come and be our king.

¹³But the vine answered, In order to govern you, I would have to stop producing my wine, that makes gods and human beings happy.

¹⁴So then all the trees said to the thorn bush, You come and be our king.

¹⁵The thorn bush answered, If you really want to make me your king, then come and take shelter in my shade. If you don't, fire will blaze out of my

thorny branches and burn up the cedars of Lebanon.

¹⁶Now then, Jotham continued, were you really honest and sincere when you made Abimelech king? Did you respect Gideon's memory and treat his family properly, as his actions deserved?

¹⁷Remember that my father fought for you. He risked his life to save you from the Midianites.

¹⁸But today you turned against my father's family. You killed his sons -- seventy men on a single stone -- and just because Abimelech, his son by his servant woman, is your relative, you have made him king of Shechem.

¹⁹Now then, if what you did today to Gideon and his family was sincere and honest, then be happy with Abimelech and let him be happy with you.

²⁰But if not, may fire blaze out from Abimelech and burn up the men of Shechem and Bethmillo. May fire blaze out from the men of Shechem and Bethmillo and burn Abimelech up.

²¹Then because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech, Jotham ran away and went to live at Beer.

²²Abimelech ruled Israel for three years.

²³Then God made Abimelech and the men of Shechem hostile to each other, and they rebelled against Abimelech.

²⁴This happened so that Abimelech and the men of Shechem, who encouraged him to murder Gideon's seventy sons, would pay for their crime.

²⁵The men of Shechem put men in ambush against Abimelech on the mountaintops, and they robbed everyone who passed their way. Abimelech was told about this.

²⁶Then Gaal son of Ebed came to Shechem with his brothers, and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.

²⁷They all went out into their vineyards and picked the grapes, made wine from them, and held a festival. They went into the temple of their god, where they ate and drank and made fun of Abimelech.

²⁸Gaal said, What kind of men are we in Shechem? Why are we serving Abimelech? Who is he, anyway? The son of Gideon! And Zebul takes orders from him, but why should we serve him?

Be loyal to your ancestor Hamor, who founded your clan!

²⁹I wish I were leading this people! I would get rid of Abimelech! I would tell him, Reinforce your army, come on out and fight!

³⁰Zebul, the ruler of the city, became angry when he heard what Gaal had said.

³¹He sent messengers to Abimelech at Arumah to say, Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem, and they are not going to let you into the city.

³²Now then, you and your men should move by night and hide in the fields.

³³Get up tomorrow morning at sunrise and make a sudden attack on the city. Then when Gaal and his men come out against you, hit them with all you've got!

³⁴So Abimelech and all his men made their move at night and hid outside Shechem in four groups.

³⁵When Abimelech and his men saw Gaal come out and stand at the city gate, they got up from their hiding places.

³⁶Gaal saw them and said to Zebul, Look! There are men coming down from

the mountaintops! Those are not men, Zebul answered. They are just shadows on the mountains.

³⁷ Gaal said again, Look! There are men coming down the crest of the mountain and one group is coming along the road from the oak tree of the fortunetellers!

³⁸ Then Zebul said to him, Where is all your big talk now? You were the one who asked why we should serve this man Abimelech. These are the men you were making fun of. Go on out now and fight them.

³⁹ Gaal led the men of Shechem out and fought Abimelech.

⁴⁰ Abimelech started after Gaal, and Gaal ran. Many were wounded, even at the city gate.

⁴¹ Abimelech lived in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem, so that they could no longer live there.

⁴² The next day Abimelech found out that the people of Shechem were planning to go out into the fields,

⁴³ so he took his men, divided them into three groups, and hid in the fields, waiting. When he saw the people coming

out of the city, he came out of hiding to kill them.

⁴⁴ While Abimelech and his group hurried forward to guard the city gate, the other two companies attacked the people in the fields and killed them all.

⁴⁵ The fighting continued all day long. Abimelech captured the city, killed its people, tore it down, and covered the ground with salt.

⁴⁶ When all the leading men in the fort at Shechem heard about this, they sought safety in the stronghold of the temple of Baal-of-the-Covenant.

⁴⁷ Abimelech was told that they had gathered there,

⁴⁸ so he went up to Mount Zalmon with his men. There he took an ax, cut a limb off a tree, and put it on his shoulder. He told his men to hurry and do the same thing.

⁴⁹ So everyone cut off a tree limb; then they followed Abimelech and piled the wood up against the stronghold. They set it on fire, with the people inside, and all the people of the fort died -- about a thousand men and women.

⁵⁰ Then Abimelech went to Thebez, surrounded that city, and captured it.

⁵¹ There was a strong tower there, and every man and woman in the city, including the leaders, ran to it. They locked themselves in and went up to the roof.

⁵² When Abimelech came to attack the tower, he went up to the door to set the tower on fire.

⁵³ But a woman threw a millstone down on his head and fractured his skull.

⁵⁴ Then he quickly called the young man who was carrying his weapons and told him, Draw your sword and kill me. I don't want it said that a woman killed me. So the young man ran him through, and he died.

⁵⁵ When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they all went home.

⁵⁶ And so it was that God paid Abimelech back for the crime that he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers.

⁵⁷ God also made the men of Shechem suffer for their wickedness, just as

Jotham, Gideon's son, said they would when he cursed them.

10¹ After Abimelech's death Tola, the son of Puah and grandson of Dodo, came to free Israel. He was from the tribe of Issachar and lived at Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim.

² He was Israel's leader for twenty-three years. Then he died and was buried at Shamir.

³ After Tola came Jair from Gilead. He led Israel for twenty-two years.

⁴ He had thirty sons who rode thirty donkeys. They had thirty cities in the land of Gilead, which are still called the villages of Jair.

⁵ Jair died and was buried at Kamon.

⁶ Once again the Israelites sinned against the LORD by worshiping the Baals and the Astartes, as well as the gods of Syria, of Sidon, of Moab, of Ammon, and of Philistia. They abandoned the LORD and stopped worshiping him.

⁷ So the LORD became angry with the Israelites, and let the Philistines and the Ammonites conquer them.

⁸ For eighteen years they oppressed and persecuted all the Israelites who lived in

Amorite country east of the Jordan River in Gilead.

⁹The Ammonites even crossed the Jordan to fight the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. Israel was in great distress.

¹⁰Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD and said, We have sinned against you, for we left you, our God, and worshiped the Baals.

¹¹The LORD gave them this answer: The Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines,

¹²the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites oppressed you in the past, and you cried out to me. Did I not save you from them?

¹³But you still left me and worshiped other gods, so I am not going to rescue you again.

¹⁴Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them rescue you when you get in trouble.

¹⁵But the people of Israel said to the LORD, We have sinned. Do whatever you like, but please, save us today.

¹⁶So they got rid of their foreign gods and worshiped the LORD; and he became troubled over Israel's distress.

¹⁷Then the Ammonite army prepared for battle and camped in Gilead. The people of Israel came together and camped at Mizpah in Gilead.

¹⁸There the people and the leaders of the Israelite tribes asked one another, Who will lead the fight against the Ammonites? Whoever does will be the leader of everyone in Gilead.

11 ¹Jephthah, a brave soldier from Gilead, was the son of a prostitute. His father Gilead

²had other sons by his wife, and when they grew up, they forced Jephthah to leave home. They told him, You will not inherit anything from our father; you are the son of another woman.

³Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. There he attracted a group of worthless men, and they went around with him.

⁴It was some time later that the Ammonites went to war against Israel.

⁵When this happened, the leaders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah back from the land of Tob.

⁶They told him, Come and lead us, so that we can fight the Ammonites.

⁷But Jephthah answered, You hated me so much that you forced me to leave my father's house. Why come to me now that you're in trouble?

⁸They said to Jephthah, We are turning to you now because we want you to go with us and fight the Ammonites and lead all the people of Gilead.

⁹Jephthah said to them, If you take me back home to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives me victory, I will be your ruler.

¹⁰They replied, We agree. The LORD is our witness.

¹¹So Jephthah went with the leaders of Gilead, and the people made him their ruler and leader. Jephthah stated his terms at Mizpah in the presence of the LORD.

¹²Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon to say, What is your quarrel with us? Why have you invaded our country?

¹³The king of Ammon answered Jephthah's messengers, When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they took away my land from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River and the Jordan River. Now you must give it back peacefully.

¹⁴Jephthah sent messengers back to the king of Ammon

¹⁵with this answer: It is not true that Israel took away the land of Moab or the land of Ammon.

¹⁶This is what happened: when the Israelites left Egypt, they went through the desert to the Gulf of Aqaba and came to Kadesh.

¹⁷Then they sent messengers to the king of Edom to ask permission to go through his land. But the king of Edom would not let them. They also asked the king of Moab, but neither would he let them go through his land. So the Israelites stayed at Kadesh.

¹⁸Then they went on through the desert, going around the land of Edom and the land of Moab until they came to the east side of Moab, on the other side of the Arnon River. They camped there,

but they did not cross the Arnon because it was the boundary of Moab.

¹⁹Then the Israelites sent messengers to Sihon, the Amorite king of Heshbon, and asked him for permission to go through his country to their own land.

²⁰But Sihon would not let Israel do it. He brought his whole army together, camped at Jahaz, and attacked Israel.

²¹But the LORD, the God of Israel, gave the Israelites victory over Sihon and his army. So the Israelites took possession of all the territory of the Amorites who lived in that country.

²²They occupied all the Amorite territory from the Arnon in the south to the Jabbok in the north and from the desert on the east to the Jordan on the west.

²³So it was the LORD, the God of Israel, who drove out the Amorites for his people, the Israelites.

²⁴Are you going to try to take it back? You can keep whatever your god Chemosh has given you. But we are going to keep everything that the LORD, our God, has taken for us.

²⁵ Do you think you are any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? He never challenged Israel, did he? Did he ever go to war against us?

²⁶ For three hundred years Israel has occupied Heshbon and Aroer, and the towns around them, and all the cities on the banks of the Arnon River. Why haven't you taken them back in all this time?

²⁷ No, I have not done you any wrong. You are doing wrong by making war on me. The LORD is the judge. He will decide today between the Israelites and the Ammonites.

²⁸ But the king of Ammon paid no attention to this message from Jephthah.

²⁹ Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah. He went through Gilead and Manasseh and returned to Mizpah in Gilead and went on to Ammon.

³⁰ Jephthah promised the LORD: If you will give me victory over the Ammonites,

³¹ I will burn as an offering the first person that comes out of my house to meet me, when I come back from the victory. I will offer that person to you as a sacrifice.

³² So Jephthah crossed the river to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave him victory.

³³ He struck at them from Aroer to the area around Minnith, twenty cities in all, and as far as Abel Keramim. There was a great slaughter, and the Ammonites were defeated by Israel.

³⁴ When Jephthah went back home to Mizpah, there was his daughter coming out to meet him, dancing and playing the tambourine. She was his only child.

³⁵ When he saw her, he tore his clothes in sorrow and said, Oh, my daughter! You are breaking my heart! Why must it be you that causes me pain? I have made a solemn promise to the LORD, and I cannot take it back!

³⁶ She told him, If you have made a promise to the LORD, do what you said you would do to me, since the LORD has given you revenge on your enemies, the Ammonites.

³⁷ But she asked her father, Do this one thing for me. Leave me alone for two months, so that I can go with my friends to wander in the mountains and grieve that I must die a virgin.

³⁸He told her to go and sent her away for two months. She and her friends went up into the mountains and grieved because she was going to die unmarried and childless.

³⁹After two months she came back to her father. He did what he had promised the LORD, and she died still a virgin. This was the origin of the custom in Israel

⁴⁰that the Israelite women would go out for four days every year to grieve for the daughter of Jephthah of Gilead.

12¹The men of Ephraim prepared for battle; they crossed the Jordan River to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, Why did you cross the border to fight the Ammonites without calling us to go with you? We'll burn the house down over your head!

²But Jephthah told them, My people and I had a serious quarrel with the Ammonites. I did call you, but you would not rescue me from them.

³When I saw that you were not going to, I risked my life and crossed the border to fight them, and the LORD gave me victory over them. So why are you coming up to fight me now?

⁴Then Jephthah brought all the men of Gilead together, fought the men of Ephraim and defeated them. (The Ephraimites had said, You Gileadites in Ephraim and Manasseh, you are deserters from Ephraim!)

⁵In order to keep the Ephraimites from escaping, the Gileadites captured the places where the Jordan could be crossed. When any Ephraimite who was trying to escape would ask permission to cross, the men of Gilead would ask, Are you an Ephraimite? If he said, No,

⁶they would tell him to say Shibboleth. But he would say Sibboleth, because he could not pronounce it correctly. Then they would grab him and kill him there at one of the Jordan River crossings. At that time forty-two thousand of the Ephraimites were killed.

⁷Jephthah led Israel for six years. Then he died and was buried in his hometown in Gilead.

⁸After Jephthah, Ibzan from Bethlehem led Israel.

⁹He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He gave his daughters in marriage outside the clan and brought

thirty young women from outside the clan for his sons to marry. Ibzan led Israel for seven years,

¹⁰ then he died and was buried at Bethlehem.

¹¹ After Ibzan, Elon from Zebulun led Israel for ten years.

¹² Then he died and was buried at Aijalon in the territory of Zebulun.

¹³ After Elon, Abdon son of Hillel from Pirathon led Israel.

¹⁴ He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. Abdon led Israel for eight years,

¹⁵ then he died and was buried at Pirathon in the territory of Ephraim in the hill country of the Amalekites.

13¹ The Israelites sinned against the LORD again, and he let the Philistines rule them for forty years.

² At that time there was a man named Manoah from the town of Zorah. He was a member of the tribe of Dan. His wife had never been able to have children.

³ The LORD's angel appeared to her and said, You have never been able to have

children, but you will soon be pregnant and have a son.

⁴Be sure not to drink any wine or beer, or eat any forbidden food;

⁵and after your son is born, you must never cut his hair, because from the day of his birth he will be dedicated to God as a nazirite. He will begin the work of rescuing Israel from the Philistines.

⁶Then the woman went and told her husband, A man of God has come to me, and he looked as frightening as the angel of God. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name.

⁷But he did tell me that I would become pregnant and have a son. He told me not to drink any wine or beer, or eat any forbidden food, because the boy is to be dedicated to God as a nazirite as long as he lives.

⁸Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, Please, LORD, let the man of God that you sent come back to us and tell us what we must do with the boy when he is born.

⁹God did what Manoah asked, and his angel came back to the woman while

she was sitting in the field. Her husband Manoah was not with her,

¹⁰so she ran at once and told him, Look! The man who came to me the other day has appeared to me again.

¹¹Manoah got up and followed his wife. He went to the man and asked, Are you the man who talked to my wife? Yes, he answered.

¹²Then Manoah said, Now then, when your words come true, what must the boy do? What kind of a life must he lead?

¹³The LORD's angel answered, Your wife must be sure to do everything that I have told her.

¹⁴She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine; she must not drink any wine or beer, or eat any forbidden food. She must do everything that I have told her.

¹⁵Not knowing that it was the LORD's angel, Manoah said to him, Please do not go yet. Let us cook a young goat for you. But the angel said, If I do stay, I will not eat your food. But if you want to prepare it, burn it as an offering to the LORD.

¹⁶(13: 15)

¹⁷ Manoah replied, Tell us your name, so that we can honor you when your words come true.

¹⁸ The angel asked, Why do you want to know my name? It is a name of wonder.

¹⁹ So Manoah took a young goat and some grain, and offered them on the rock altar to the LORD who works wonders.

²⁰ While the flames were going up from the altar, Manoah and his wife saw the LORD's angel go up toward heaven in the flames. Manoah realized then that the man had been the LORD's angel, and he and his wife threw themselves face downward on the ground. They never saw the angel again.

²¹ (13: 20)

²² Manoah said to his wife, We are sure to die, because we have seen God!

²³ But his wife answered, If the LORD had wanted to kill us, he would not have accepted our offerings; he would not have shown us all this or told us such things at this time.

²⁴ The woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson. The child grew and the LORD blessed him.

²⁵And the LORD's power began to strengthen him while he was between Zorah and Eshtaol in the Camp of Dan.

14¹One day Samson went down to Timnah, where he noticed a certain young Philistine woman.

²He went back home and told his father and mother, There is a Philistine woman down at Timnah who caught my attention. Get her for me; I want to marry her.

³But his father and mother asked him, Why do you have to go to those heathen Philistines to get a wife? Can't you find someone in our own clan, among all our people? But Samson told his father, She is the one I want you to get for me. I like her.

⁴His parents did not know that it was the LORD who was leading Samson to do this, for the LORD was looking for a chance to fight the Philistines. At this time the Philistines were ruling Israel.

⁵So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother. As they were going through the vineyards there, he heard a young lion roaring.

⁶Suddenly the power of the LORD made Samson strong, and he tore the lion apart with his bare hands, as if it were a young goat. But he did not tell his parents what he had done.

⁷Then he went and talked to the young woman, and he liked her.

⁸A few days later Samson went back to marry her. On the way he left the road to look at the lion he had killed, and he was surprised to find a swarm of bees and some honey inside the dead body.

⁹He scraped the honey out into his hands and ate it as he walked along. Then he went to his father and mother and gave them some. They ate it, but Samson did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the dead body of a lion.

¹⁰His father went to the woman's house, and Samson gave a banquet there. This was a custom among the young men.

¹¹When the Philistines saw him, they sent thirty young men to stay with him.

¹²Samson said to them, Let me tell you a riddle. I'll bet each one of you a piece of fine linen and a change of fine clothes

that you can't tell me its meaning before the seven days of the wedding feast are over. Tell us your riddle, they said. Let's hear it.

¹³(14:12)

¹⁴He said, Out of the eater came something to eat; Out of the strong came something sweet. Three days later they had still not figured out what the riddle meant.

¹⁵On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, Trick your husband into telling us what the riddle means. If you don't, we'll set fire to your father's house and burn you with it. You two invited us so that you could rob us, didn't you?

¹⁶So Samson's wife went to him in tears and said, You don't love me! You just hate me! You told my friends a riddle and didn't tell me what it means! He said, Look, I haven't even told my father and mother. Why should I tell you?

¹⁷She cried about it for the whole seven days of the feast. But on the seventh day he told her what the riddle meant, for she nagged him so about it. Then she told the Philistines.

¹⁸So on the seventh day, before Samson went into the bedroom, the men of the city said to him, What could be sweeter than honey? What could be stronger than a lion? Samson replied, If you hadn't been plowing with my cow, You wouldn't know the answer now.

¹⁹Suddenly the power of the LORD made him strong, and he went down to Ashkelon, where he killed thirty men, stripped them, and gave their fine clothes to the men who had solved the riddle. After that, he went back home, furious about what had happened,

²⁰and his wife was given to the man that had been his best man at the wedding.

15¹Some time later Samson went to visit his wife during the wheat harvest and took her a young goat. He told her father, I want to go to my wife's room. But he wouldn't let him go in.

²He told Samson, I really thought that you hated her, so I gave her to your friend. But her younger sister is prettier, anyway. You can have her, instead.

³Samson said, This time I'm not going to be responsible for what I do to the Philistines!

⁴So he went and caught three hundred foxes. Two at a time, he tied their tails together and put torches in the knots.

⁵Then he set fire to the torches and turned the foxes loose in the Philistine wheat fields. In this way he burned up not only the wheat that had been harvested but also the wheat that was still in the fields. The olive orchards were also burned.

⁶When the Philistines asked who had done this, they learned that Samson had done it because his father-in-law, a man from Timnah, had given Samson's wife to a friend of Samson's. So the Philistines went and burned the woman to death and burned down her father's house.

⁷Samson told them, So this is how you act! I swear that I won't stop until I pay you back!

⁸He attacked them fiercely and killed many of them. Then he went and stayed in the cave in the cliff at Etam.

⁹The Philistines came and camped in Judah, and attacked the town of Lehi.

¹⁰The men of Judah asked them, Why are you attacking us? They answered, We came to take Samson prisoner and to treat him as he treated us.

¹¹So these three thousand men of Judah went to the cave in the cliff at Etam and said to Samson, Don't you know that the Philistines are our rulers? What have you done to us? He answered, I did to them just what they did to me.

¹²They told him, We have come here to tie you up, so we can hand you over to them. Samson said, Give me your word that you won't kill me yourselves.

¹³All right, they said, we are only going to tie you up and hand you over to them. We won't kill you. So they tied him up with two new ropes and brought him back from the cliff.

¹⁴When he got to Lehi, the Philistines came running toward him, shouting at him. Suddenly the power of the LORD made him strong, and he broke the ropes around his arms and hands as if they were burnt thread.

¹⁵Then he found a jawbone of a donkey that had recently died. He reached down and picked it up, and killed a thousand men with it.

¹⁶So Samson sang, With the jawbone of a donkey I killed a thousand men; With the jawbone of a donkey I piled them up in piles.

¹⁷After that, he threw the jawbone away. The place where this happened was named Ramath Lehi.

¹⁸Then Samson became very thirsty, so he called to the LORD and said, You gave me this great victory; am I now going to die of thirst and be captured by these heathen Philistines?

¹⁹Then God opened a hollow place in the ground there at Lehi, and water came out of it. Samson drank it and began to feel much better. So the spring was named Hakkore; it is still there at Lehi.

²⁰Samson led Israel for twenty years while the Philistines ruled the land.

16¹ One day Samson went to the Philistine city of Gaza, where he met a prostitute and went to bed with her.

²The people of Gaza found out that Samson was there, so they surrounded the place and waited for him all night long at the city gate. They were quiet all night, thinking to themselves, We'll wait until daybreak, and then we'll kill him.

³But Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up and took hold of the city gate and pulled it up -- doors, posts, lock, and all. He put them on his shoulders and carried them far off to the top of the hill overlooking Hebron.

⁴After this, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who lived in Sorek Valley.

⁵The five Philistine kings went to her and said, Trick Samson into telling you why he is so strong and how we can overpower him, tie him up, and make him helpless. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.

⁶So Delilah said to Samson, Please tell me what makes you so strong. If someone wanted to tie you up and make you helpless, how could he do it?

⁷Samson answered, If they tie me up with seven new bowstrings that are not

dried out, I'll be as weak as anybody else.

⁸So the Philistine kings brought Delilah seven new bowstrings that were not dried out, and she tied Samson up.

⁹She had some men waiting in another room, so she shouted, Samson! The Philistines are coming! But he snapped the bowstrings just as thread breaks when fire touches it. So they still did not know the secret of his strength.

¹⁰Delilah told Samson, Look, you've been making a fool of me and not telling me the truth. Please tell me how someone could tie you up.

¹¹He told her, If they tie me with new ropes that have never been used, I'll be as weak as anybody else.

¹²So Delilah got some new ropes and tied him up. Then she shouted, Samson! The Philistines are coming! The men were waiting in another room. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like thread.

¹³Delilah said to Samson, You're still making a fool of me and not telling me the truth. Tell me how someone could tie you up. He told her, If you weave

my seven locks of hair into a loom, and make it tight with a peg, I'll be as weak as anybody else.

¹⁴Delilah then lulled him to sleep, took his seven locks of hair, and wove them into the loom. She made it tight with a peg and shouted, Samson! The Philistines are coming! But he woke up and pulled his hair loose from the loom.

¹⁵So she said to him, How can you say you love me, when you don't mean it? You've made a fool of me three times, and you still haven't told me what makes you so strong.

¹⁶She kept on asking him, day after day. He got so sick and tired of her bothering him about it

¹⁷that he finally told her the truth. My hair has never been cut, he said. I have been dedicated to God as a nazirite from the time I was born. If my hair were cut, I would lose my strength and be as weak as anybody else.

¹⁸When Delilah realized that he had told her the truth, she sent a message to the Philistine kings and said, Come back one more time. He has told me the

truth. Then they came and brought the money with them.

¹⁹Delilah lulled Samson to sleep in her lap and then called a man, who cut off Samson's seven locks of hair. Then she began to torment him, for he had lost his strength.

²⁰Then she shouted, Samson! The Philistines are coming! He woke up and thought, I'll get loose and go free, as always. He did not know that the LORD had left him.

²¹The Philistines captured him and put his eyes out. They took him to Gaza, chained him with bronze chains, and put him to work grinding at the mill in the prison.

²²But his hair started growing back.

²³The Philistine kings met together to celebrate and offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They sang, Our god has given us victory over our enemy Samson!

²⁴They were enjoying themselves, and so they said, Call Samson, and let's make him entertain us! When they brought Samson out of the prison, they made him entertain them and made him

stand between the columns. When the people saw him, they sang praise to their god: Our god has given us victory over our enemy, who devastated our land and killed so many of us!

²⁵ (16: 24)

²⁶ Samson said to the boy who was leading him by the hand, Let me touch the columns that hold up the building. I want to lean on them.

²⁷ The building was crowded with men and women. All five Philistine kings were there, and there were about three thousand men and women on the roof, watching Samson entertain them.

²⁸ Then Samson prayed, Sovereign LORD, please remember me; please, God, give me my strength just this one time more, so that with this one blow I can get even with the Philistines for putting out my two eyes.

²⁹ So Samson took hold of the two middle columns holding up the building. Putting one hand on each column, he pushed against them

³⁰ and shouted, Let me die with the Philistines! He pushed with all his might, and the building fell down on the five

kings and everyone else. Samson killed more people at his death than he had killed during his life.

³¹ His brothers and the rest of his family came down to get his body. They took him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had been Israel's leader for twenty years.

17 ¹ There was once a man named Micah, who lived in the hill country of Ephraim.

² He told his mother, When someone stole those eleven hundred pieces of silver from you, you put a curse on the robber. I heard you do it. Look, I have the money. I am the one who took it. His mother said, May the LORD bless you, my son!

³ He gave the money back to his mother, and she said, To keep the curse from falling on my son, I myself am solemnly dedicating the silver to the LORD. It will be used to make a wooden idol covered with silver. So now I will give the pieces of silver back to you.

⁴ Then he gave them back to his mother. She took two hundred of the pieces of

silver and gave them to a metalworker, who made an idol, carving it from wood and covering it with the silver. It was placed in Micah's house.

⁵This man Micah had his own place of worship. He made some idols and an ephod, and appointed one of his sons as his priest.

⁶There was no king in Israel at that time; everyone did whatever they wanted.

⁷At that same time there was a young Levite who had been living in the town of Bethlehem in Judah.

⁸He left Bethlehem to find another place to live. While he was traveling, he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim.

⁹Micah asked him, Where do you come from? He answered, I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah. I am looking for a place to live.

¹⁰Micah said, Stay with me. Be my adviser and priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, some clothes, and your food.

¹¹The young Levite agreed to stay with Micah and became like a son to him.

¹² Micah appointed him as his priest, and he lived in Micah's home.

¹³ Micah said, Now that I have a Levite as my priest, I know that the LORD will make things go well for me.

18¹ There was no king in Israel at that time. In those days the tribe of Dan was looking for territory to claim and settle in because they had not yet received any land of their own among the tribes of Israel.

² So the people of Dan chose five qualified men out of all the families in the tribe and sent them from the towns of Zorah and Eshtaol with instructions to explore the land and spy on it.

When they arrived in the hill country of Ephraim, they stayed at Micah's house.

³ While they were there, they recognized the accent of the young Levite, so they went up to him and asked, What are you doing here? Who brought you here?

⁴ He answered, I have an arrangement with Micah, who pays me to serve as his priest.

⁵ They said to him, Please ask God if we are going to be successful on our trip.

⁶The priest answered, You have nothing to worry about. The LORD is taking care of you on this trip.

⁷So the five men left and went to the town of Laish. They saw how the people there lived in security like the Sidonians. They were a peaceful, quiet people, with no argument with anyone; they had all they needed. They lived far away from the Sidonians and had no dealings with any other people.

⁸When the five men returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, the people asked them what they had found out.

⁹Come on, they replied. Let's attack Laish. We saw the land, and it's very good. Don't stay here doing nothing; hurry! Go on in and take it over!

¹⁰When you get there, you will find that the people don't suspect a thing. It is a big country; it has everything a person could want, and God has given it to you.

¹¹So six hundred men from the tribe of Dan left Zorah and Eshtaol, ready for battle.

¹²They went up and camped west of Kiriath Jearim in Judah. That is why the place is still called Camp of Dan.

¹³They went on from there and came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim.

¹⁴Then the five men who had gone to spy on the country around Laish said to their companions, Did you know that here in one of these houses there is a wooden idol covered with silver? There are also other idols and an ephod. What do you think we should do?

¹⁵So they went into Micah's house, where the young Levite lived, and asked the Levite how he was getting along.

¹⁶Meanwhile the six hundred Danite soldiers, ready for battle, were standing at the gate.

¹⁷The five spies went straight on into the house and took the wooden idol covered with silver, the other idols, and the ephod, while the priest stayed at the gate with the six hundred armed men.

¹⁸When the men went into Micah's house and took the sacred objects, the priest asked them, What are you doing?

¹⁹They told him, Keep quiet. Don't say a word. Come with us and be our priest and adviser. Wouldn't you rather be a

priest for a whole Israelite tribe than for the family of one man?

²⁰This made the priest very happy, so he took the sacred objects and went along with them.

²¹They turned around and started off, with their children, their livestock, and their belongings going ahead.

²²They had traveled a good distance from the house when Micah called his neighbors out for battle. They caught up with the Danites

²³and shouted at them. The Danites turned around and asked Micah, What's the matter? Why all this mob?

²⁴Micah answered, What do you mean, What's the matter? You take my priest and the gods that I made, and walk off! What have I got left?

²⁵The Danites told him, You had better not say anything else unless you want these men to get angry and attack you. You and your whole family would die.

²⁶Then the Danites went on. Micah saw that they were too strong for him, so he turned and went back home.

²⁷After the Danites had taken the priest and the things that Micah had made,

they went and attacked Laish, that town of peaceful, quiet people which was in the same valley as Bethrehab. They killed the inhabitants and burned the town. There was no one to save them, because Laish was a long way from Sidon, and they had no dealings with any other people. The Danites rebuilt the town and settled down there.

²⁸ (18: 27)

²⁹ They changed its name from Laish to Dan, after their ancestor Dan, the son of Jacob.

³⁰ The Danites set up the idol to be worshiped, and Jonathan, the son of Gershom and grandson of Moses, served as a priest for the Danites, and his descendants served as their priests until the people were taken away into exile.

³¹ Micah's idol remained there as long as the Tent where God was worshiped remained at Shiloh.

19¹ In those days before Israel had a king, there was a Levite living far back in the hill country of Ephraim. He took a young woman from Bethlehem in Judah to be his concubine.

²But she became angry with him, went back to her father's house in Bethlehem, and stayed there four months.

³Then the man decided to go after her and try to persuade her to return to him. He took his servant and two donkeys with him. The woman showed the Levite into the house, and when her father saw him, he gave him a hearty greeting.

⁴The father insisted that he stay, and so he stayed for three days. The couple had their meals and spent the nights there.

⁵On the morning of the fourth day they woke up early and got ready to go. But the woman's father said to the Levite, Have something to eat first. You'll feel better. You can go later.

⁶So the two men sat down and ate and drank together. Then the woman's father told him, Please spend the night and enjoy yourself.

⁷The Levite got up to go, but the father urged him to stay, so he spent another night there.

⁸Early in the morning of the fifth day he started to leave, but the woman's father said, Eat something, please. Wait

until later in the day. So the two men ate together.

⁹When the man, his concubine, and the servant once more started to leave, the father said, Look, it's almost evening now; you might as well stay all night. It will be dark soon; stay here and have a good time. Tomorrow you can get up early for the trip and go home.

¹⁰But the man did not want to spend another night there, so he and his concubine started on their way, with their servant and two donkeys with pack saddles. It was late in the day when they came near Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), so the servant said to his master, Why don't we stop and spend the night here in this Jebusite city?

¹¹ (19: 10)

¹²But his master said, We're not going to stop in a city where the people are not Israelites. We'll pass on by and go a little farther and spend the night at Gibeah or Ramah.

¹³ (19: 12)

¹⁴So they passed by Jebus and continued on their way. It was sunset

when they came to Gibeah in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

¹⁵They turned off the road to go and spend the night there. They went into town and sat down in the city square, but no one offered to take them home for the night.

¹⁶While they were there, an old man came by at the end of a day's work on the farm. He was originally from the hill country of Ephraim, but he was now living in Gibeah. (The other people there were from the tribe of Benjamin.)

¹⁷The old man noticed the traveler in the city square and asked him, Where do you come from? Where are you going?

¹⁸The Levite answered, We have been in Bethlehem in Judah, and now we are on our way home deep in the hill country of Ephraim. No one will put us up for the night,

¹⁹even though we have fodder and straw for our donkeys, as well as bread and wine for my concubine and me and for my servant. We have everything we need.

²⁰The old man said, You are welcome in my home! I'll take care of you; you don't have to spend the night in the square.

²¹So he took them home with him and fed their donkeys. His guests washed their feet and had a meal.

²²They were enjoying themselves when all of a sudden some sexual perverts from the town surrounded the house and started beating on the door. They said to the old man, Bring out that man that came home with you! We want to have sex with him!

²³But the old man went outside and said to them, No, my friends! Please! Don't do such an evil, immoral thing! This man is my guest.

²⁴Look! Here is his concubine and my own virgin daughter. I'll bring them out now, and you can have them. Do whatever you want to with them. But don't do such an awful thing to this man!

²⁵But the men would not listen to him. So the Levite took his concubine and put her outside with them. They raped her and abused her all night long and didn't stop until morning.

²⁶At dawn the woman came and fell down at the door of the old man's house, where her husband was. She was still there when daylight came.

²⁷Her husband got up that morning, and when he opened the door to go on his way, he found his concubine lying in front of the house with her hands reaching for the door.

²⁸He said, Get up. Let's go. But there was no answer. So he put her body across the donkey and started on his way home.

²⁹When he arrived, he went in the house and got a knife. He took his concubine's body, cut it into twelve pieces, and sent one piece to each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

³⁰Everyone who saw it said, We have never heard of such a thing! Nothing like this has ever happened since the Israelites left Egypt! We have to do something about this! What will it be?

20¹All the people of Israel from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, as well as from the land of Gilead in the east, answered the call.

They gathered in one body in the LORD's presence at Mizpah.

²The leaders of all the tribes of Israel were present at this gathering of God's people, and there were 400,000 foot soldiers.

³Meanwhile the people of Benjamin heard that all the other Israelites had gathered at Mizpah. The Israelites asked, Tell us, how was this crime committed?

⁴The Levite whose concubine had been murdered answered, My concubine and I went to Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin to spend the night.

⁵The men of Gibeah came to get me and surrounded the house at night. They intended to kill me; instead they raped my concubine, and she died.

⁶I took her body, cut it in pieces, and sent one piece to each of the twelve tribes of Israel. These people have committed an evil and immoral act among us.

⁷All of you here are Israelites. What are we going to do about this?

⁸All the people stood up together and said, None of us, whether he lives in a tent or in a house, will go home.

⁹This is what we will do: we will draw lots and choose some men to attack Gibeah.

¹⁰One tenth of the men in Israel will provide food for the army, and the others will go and punish Gibeah for this immoral act that they have committed in Israel.

¹¹So all the men in Israel assembled with one purpose -- to attack the town.

¹²The Israelite tribes sent messengers all through the territory of the tribe of Benjamin to say, What is this crime that you have committed?

¹³Now hand over those perverts in Gibeah, so that we can kill them and remove this evil from Israel. But the people of Benjamin paid no attention to the other Israelites.

¹⁴From all the cities of Benjamin they came to Gibeah to fight the other people of Israel.

¹⁵They called out twenty-six thousand soldiers from their cities that day. Besides these, the citizens of Gibeah gathered seven hundred specially chosen men who were left-handed. Every one of

them could sling a stone at a strand of hair and never miss.

¹⁶(20: 15)

¹⁷Not counting the tribe of Benjamin, the Israelites gathered 400,000 trained soldiers.

¹⁸The Israelites went to the place of worship at Bethel, and there they asked God, Which tribe should attack the Benjaminites first? The LORD answered, The tribe of Judah.

¹⁹So the Israelites started out the next morning and camped near the city of Gibeah.

²⁰They went to attack the army of Benjamin, and placed the soldiers in position facing the city.

²¹The army of Benjamin came out of the city, and before the day was over they had killed twenty-two thousand Israelite soldiers.

²²Then the Israelites went to the place of worship and mourned in the presence of the LORD until evening. They asked him, Should we go again into battle against our brothers the Benjaminites? The LORD answered, Yes. So the Israelite army was encouraged, and they placed

their soldiers in position again, where they had been the day before.

²³ (20: 22)

²⁴ They marched against the army of Benjamin a second time.

²⁵ And for the second time the Benjaminites came out of Gibeah, and this time they killed eighteen thousand trained Israelite soldiers.

²⁶ Then all the people of Israel went up to Bethel and mourned. They sat there in the LORD's presence and did not eat until evening. They offered fellowship sacrifices and burned some sacrifices whole -- all in the presence of the LORD.

²⁷ God's Covenant Box was there at Bethel in those days, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron, was in charge of it. The people asked the LORD, Should we go out to fight our brothers the Benjaminites again, or should we give up? The LORD answered, Fight. Tomorrow I will give you victory over them.

²⁸ (20: 27)

²⁹ So the Israelites put some soldiers in hiding around Gibeah.

³⁰Then for the third straight day they marched against the army of Benjamin and placed their soldiers in battle position facing Gibeah, as they had done before.

³¹The Benjaminites came out to fight and were led away from the city. As they had before, they began killing some Israelites in the open country, on the road to Bethel and on the road to Gibeah. They killed about thirty Israelites.

³²The Benjaminites said, We've beaten them just as before. But the Israelites had planned to retreat and lead them away from the city onto the roads.

³³So when the main army of the Israelites pulled back and regrouped at Baaltamar, the men surrounding Gibeah suddenly rushed out of their hiding places in the rocky country around the city.

³⁴Ten thousand men, specially chosen out of all Israel, attacked Gibeah, and the fighting was hard. The Benjaminites had not realized that they were about to be destroyed.

³⁵The LORD gave Israel victory over the army of Benjamin. The Israelites killed 25,100 of the enemy that day,

³⁶and the Benjaminites realized they were defeated. The main body of the Israelite army had retreated from the Benjaminites because they were relying on the men that they had put in hiding around Gibeah.

³⁷These men ran quickly toward Gibeah; they spread out in the city and killed everyone there.

³⁸The main Israelite army and the men in hiding had arranged a signal. When they saw a big cloud of smoke going up from the town,

³⁹the Israelites out on the battlefield were to turn around. By this time the Benjaminites had already killed the thirty Israelites. They told themselves, Yes, we've beaten them just as before.

⁴⁰Then the signal appeared; a cloud of smoke began to go up from the town. The Benjaminites looked behind them and were amazed to see the whole city going up in flames.

⁴¹Then the Israelites turned around, and the Benjaminites were thrown into

panic because they realized that they were about to be destroyed.

⁴²They retreated from the Israelites and ran toward the open country, but they could not escape. They were caught between the main army and the men who were now coming out of the city, and they were destroyed.

⁴³The Israelites had the enemy trapped, and without stopping they pursued them as far as a point east of Gibeah, killing them as they went.

⁴⁴Eighteen thousand of the best Benjaminite soldiers were killed.

⁴⁵The others turned and ran toward the open country to Rimmon Rock. Five thousand of them were killed on the roads. The Israelites continued to pursue the rest to Gidom, killing two thousand.

⁴⁶In all, twenty-five thousand Benjaminites were killed that day -- all of them brave soldiers.

⁴⁷But six hundred men were able to escape to the open country to Rimmon Rock, and they stayed there four months.

⁴⁸The Israelites turned back against the rest of the Benjaminites and killed them all -- men, women, and children,

and animals as well. They burned every town in the area.

21 ¹When the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, they had made a solemn promise to the LORD: None of us will allow a Benjaminite to marry a daughter of ours.

²So now the people of Israel went to Bethel and sat there in the presence of God until evening. Loudly and bitterly they mourned:

³LORD God of Israel, why has this happened? Why is the tribe of Benjamin about to disappear from Israel?

⁴Early the next morning the people got up and built an altar there. They offered fellowship sacrifices and burned some sacrifices whole.

⁵They asked, Is there any group out of all the tribes of Israel that did not go to the gathering in the LORD's presence at Mizpah? (They had taken a solemn oath that anyone who had not gone to Mizpah would be put to death.)

⁶The people of Israel felt sorry for their brothers the Benjaminites and said, Today Israel has lost one of its tribes.

⁷ What shall we do to provide wives for the men of Benjamin who are left? We have made a solemn promise to the LORD that we will not give them any of our daughters.

⁸ When they asked if there was some group out of the tribes of Israel that had not gone to the gathering at Mizpah, they found out that no one from Jabesh in Gilead had been there;

⁹ at the roll call of the army no one from Jabesh had responded.

¹⁰ So the assembly sent twelve thousand of their bravest men with the orders, Go and kill everyone in Jabesh, including women and children.

¹¹ Kill all the males, and also every woman who is not a virgin.

¹² They found four hundred young virgins among the people in Jabesh, so they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

¹³ Then the whole assembly sent word to the Benjaminites who were at Rimmon Rock and offered to end the war.

¹⁴ The Benjaminites came back, and the other Israelites gave them the young women from Jabesh whom they had not

killed. But there were not enough of them.

¹⁵The people felt sorry for the Benjaminites because the LORD had broken the unity of the tribes of Israel.

¹⁶So the leaders of the gathering said, There are no more women in the tribe of Benjamin. What shall we do to provide wives for the men who are left?

¹⁷Israel must not lose one of its twelve tribes. We must find a way for the tribe of Benjamin to survive,

¹⁸but we cannot allow them to marry our daughters, because we have put a curse on anyone who allows a Benjaminite to marry one of our daughters.

¹⁹Then they thought, The yearly festival of the LORD at Shiloh is coming soon. (Shiloh is north of Bethel, south of Lebonah, and east of the road between Bethel and Shechem.)

²⁰They told the Benjaminites, Go and hide in the vineyards

²¹and watch. When the young women of Shiloh come out to dance during the festival, you come out of the vineyards. Each of you take a wife by force from

among them and take her back to the territory of Benjamin with you.

²²If their fathers or brothers come to you and protest, you can tell them, Please let us keep them, because we did not take them from you in battle to be our wives. And since you did not give them to us, you are not guilty of breaking your promise.

²³The Benjaminites did this; each of them chose a wife from the young women who were dancing at Shiloh and carried her away. Then they went back to their own territory, rebuilt their towns, and lived there.

²⁴At the same time the rest of the Israelites left, and every man went back to his own tribe and family and to his own property.

²⁵There was no king in Israel at that time. Everyone did whatever they pleased.

Ruth

1 ¹ Long ago, in the days before Israel had a king, there was a famine in the land. So a man named Elimelech, who belonged to the clan of Ephrath and who lived in Bethlehem in Judah, went with his wife Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion to live for a while in the country of Moab. While they were living there,

² (1: 1)

³ Elimelech died, and Naomi was left alone with her two sons,

⁴ who married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. About ten years later

⁵ Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left all alone, without husband or sons.

⁶ Some time later Naomi heard that the LORD had blessed his people by giving them good crops; so she got ready to leave Moab with her daughters-in-law.

⁷ They started out together to go back to Judah, but on the way

⁸she said to them, Go back home and stay with your mothers. May the LORD be as good to you as you have been to me and to those who have died.

⁹And may the LORD make it possible for each of you to marry again and have a home. So Naomi kissed them good-bye. But they started crying

¹⁰and said to her, No! We will go with you to your people.

¹¹You must go back, my daughters, Naomi answered. Why do you want to come with me? Do you think I could have sons again for you to marry?

¹²Go back home, for I am too old to get married again. Even if I thought there was still hope, and so got married tonight and had sons,

¹³would you wait until they had grown up? Would this keep you from marrying someone else? No, my daughters, you know that's impossible. The LORD has turned against me, and I feel very sorry for you.

¹⁴Again they started crying. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye and went back home, but Ruth held on to her.

¹⁵ So Naomi said to her, Ruth, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. Go back home with her.

¹⁶ But Ruth answered, Don't ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. May the LORD's worst punishment come upon me if I let anything but death separate me from you!

¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

¹⁹ They went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived, the whole town became excited, and the women there exclaimed, Is this really Naomi?

²⁰ Don't call me Naomi, she answered; call me Marah, because Almighty God has made my life bitter.

²¹ When I left here, I had plenty, but the LORD has brought me back without a thing. Why call me Naomi when the

LORD Almighty has condemned me and sent me trouble?

²²This, then, was how Naomi came back from Moab with Ruth, her Moabite daughter-in-law. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the barley harvest was just beginning.

2¹ Naomi had a relative named Boaz, a rich and influential man who belonged to the family of her husband Elimelech.

²One day Ruth said to Naomi, Let me go to the fields to gather the grain that the harvest workers leave. I am sure to find someone who will let me work with him. Naomi answered, Go ahead, daughter.

³So Ruth went out to the fields and walked behind the workers, picking up the heads of grain which they left. It so happened that she was in a field that belonged to Boaz.

⁴Some time later Boaz himself arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the workers. The LORD be with you! he said. The LORD bless you! they answered.

⁵Boaz asked the man in charge, Who is that young woman?

⁶The man answered, She is the foreigner who came back from Moab with Naomi.

⁷She asked me to let her follow the workers and gather grain. She has been working since early morning and has just now stopped to rest for a while under the shelter.

⁸Then Boaz said to Ruth, Let me give you some advice. Don't gather grain anywhere except in this field. Work with the women here;

⁹watch them to see where they are reaping and stay with them. I have ordered my men not to molest you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and drink from the water jars that they have filled.

¹⁰Ruth bowed down with her face touching the ground, and said to Boaz, Why should you be so concerned about me? Why should you be so kind to a foreigner?

¹¹Boaz answered, I have heard about everything that you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband died. I know how you left your father and mother and your own country and how

you came to live among a people you had never known before.

¹²May the LORD reward you for what you have done. May you have a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, to whom you have come for protection!

¹³Ruth answered, You are very kind to me, sir. You have made me feel better by speaking gently to me, even though I am not the equal of one of your servants.

¹⁴At mealtime Boaz said to Ruth, Come and have a piece of bread, and dip it in the sauce. So she sat with the workers, and Boaz passed some roasted grain to her. She ate until she was satisfied, and she still had some food left over.

¹⁵After she had left to go and gather grain, Boaz ordered the workers, Let her gather grain even where the bundles are lying, and don't say anything to stop her. Besides that, pull out some heads of grain from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up.

¹⁶(2:15)

¹⁷So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening, and when she had beaten it out, she found she had nearly twenty-five pounds.

¹⁸She took the grain back into town and showed her mother-in-law how much she had gathered. She also gave her the food left over from the meal.

¹⁹Naomi asked her, Where did you gather all this grain today? Whose field have you been working in? May God bless the man who took an interest in you! So Ruth told Naomi that she had been working in a field belonging to a man named Boaz.

²⁰May the LORD bless Boaz! Naomi exclaimed. The LORD always keeps his promises to the living and the dead. And she went on, That man is a close relative of ours, one of those responsible for taking care of us.

²¹Then Ruth said, Best of all, he told me to keep gathering grain with his workers until they finish the harvest.

²²Naomi said to Ruth, Yes, daughter, it will be better for you to work with the women in Boaz field. You might be molested if you went to someone else's field.

²³So Ruth worked with them and gathered grain until all the barley and

wheat had been harvested. And she continued to live with her mother-in-law.

3¹ Some time later Naomi said to Ruth, I must find a husband for you, so that you will have a home of your own.

² Remember that this man Boaz, whose women you have been working with, is our relative. Now listen. This evening he will be threshing the barley.

³ So wash yourself, put on some perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go where he is threshing, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking.

⁴ Be sure to notice where he lies down, and after he falls asleep, go and lift the covers and lie down at his feet. He will tell you what to do.

⁵ Ruth answered, I will do everything you say.

⁶ So Ruth went to the threshing place and did just what her mother-in-law had told her.

⁷ When Boaz had finished eating and drinking, he was in a good mood. He went to the pile of barley and lay down

to sleep. Ruth slipped over quietly, lifted the covers and lay down at his feet.

⁸During the night he woke up suddenly, turned over, and was surprised to find a woman lying at his feet.

⁹Who are you? he asked. It's Ruth, sir, she answered. Because you are a close relative, you are responsible for taking care of me. So please marry me.

¹⁰The LORD bless you, he said. You are showing even greater family loyalty in what you are doing now than in what you did for your mother-in-law. You might have gone looking for a young man, either rich or poor, but you haven't.

¹¹Now don't worry, Ruth. I will do everything you ask; as everyone in town knows, you are a fine woman.

¹²It is true that I am a close relative and am responsible for you, but there is a man who is a closer relative than I am.

¹³Stay here the rest of the night, and in the morning we will find out whether or not he will take responsibility for you. If so, well and good; if not, then I swear by the living LORD that I will take the responsibility. Now lie down and stay here till morning.

¹⁴ So she lay there at his feet, but she got up before it was light enough for her to be seen, because Boaz did not want anyone to know that she had been there.

¹⁵ Boaz said to her, Take off your cloak and spread it out here. She did, and he poured out almost fifty pounds of barley and helped her lift it to her shoulder. Then she returned to town with it.

¹⁶ When she arrived home, her mother-in-law asked her, How did you get along, daughter? Ruth told her everything that Boaz had done for her.

¹⁷ She added, He told me I must not come back to you empty-handed, so he gave me all this barley.

¹⁸ Naomi said to her, Now be patient, Ruth, until you see how this all turns out. Boaz will not rest today until he settles the matter.

4¹ Boaz went to the meeting place at the town gate and sat down there. Then Elimelech's nearest relative, the man whom Boaz had mentioned, came by, and Boaz called to him, Come over here, my friend, and sit down. So he went over and sat down.

²Then Boaz got ten of the leaders of the town and asked them to sit down there too. When they were seated,

³he said to his relative, Now that Naomi has come back from Moab, she wants to sell the field that belonged to our relative Elimelech,

⁴and I think you ought to know about it. Now then, if you want it, buy it in the presence of these men sitting here. But if you don't want it, say so, because the right to buy it belongs first to you and then to me. The man said, I will buy it.

⁵Boaz said, Very well, if you buy the field from Naomi, then you are also buying Ruth, the Moabite widow, so that the field will stay in the dead man's family.

⁶The man answered, In that case I will give up my right to buy the field, because it would mean that my own children would not inherit it. You buy it; I would rather not.

⁷Now in those days, to settle a sale or an exchange of property, it was the custom for the seller to take off his sandal and give it to the buyer. In

this way the Israelites showed that the matter was settled.

⁸So when the man said to Boaz, You buy it, he took off his sandal and gave it to Boaz.

⁹Then Boaz said to the leaders and all the others there, You are all witnesses today that I have bought from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech and to his sons Chilion and Mahlon.

¹⁰In addition, Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, becomes my wife. This will keep the property in the dead man's family, and his family line will continue among his people and in his hometown. You are witnesses to this today.

¹¹The leaders and the others said, Yes, we are witnesses. May the LORD make your wife become like Rachel and Leah, who bore many children to Jacob. May you become rich in the clan of Ephrath and famous in Bethlehem.

¹²May the children that the LORD will give you by this young woman make your family like the family of Perez, the son of Judah and Tamar.

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth home as his wife. The LORD blessed her, and she became pregnant and had a son.

¹⁴ The women said to Naomi, Praise the LORD! He has given you a grandson today to take care of you. May the boy become famous in Israel!

¹⁵ Your daughter-in-law loves you, and has done more for you than seven sons. And now she has given you a grandson, who will bring new life to you and give you security in your old age.

¹⁶ Naomi took the child, held him close, and took care of him.

¹⁷ The women of the neighborhood named the boy Obed. They told everyone, A son has been born to Naomi! Obed became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

¹⁸ This is the family line from Perez to David: Perez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David.

¹⁹ (4: 18)

²⁰ (4: 18)

²¹ (4: 18)

²² (4: 18)

1 Samuel

1 ¹ There was a man named Elkanah, from the tribe of Ephraim, who lived in the town of Ramah in the hill country of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham and grandson of Elihu, and belonged to the family of Tohu, a part of the clan of Zuph.

² Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not.

³ Every year Elkanah went from Ramah to worship and offer sacrifices to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD.

⁴ Each time Elkanah offered his sacrifice, he would give one share of the meat to Peninnah and one share to each of her children.

⁵ And even though he loved Hannah very much he would give her only one share, because the LORD had kept her from having children.

⁶Peninnah, her rival, would torment and humiliate her, because the LORD had kept her childless.

⁷This went on year after year; whenever they went to the house of the LORD, Peninnah would upset Hannah so much that she would cry and refuse to eat anything.

⁸Her husband Elkanah would ask her, Hannah, why are you crying? Why won't you eat? Why are you always so sad? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?

⁹One time, after they had finished their meal in the house of the LORD at Shiloh, Hannah got up. She was deeply distressed, and she cried bitterly as she prayed to the LORD. Meanwhile, Eli the priest was sitting in his place by the door.

¹⁰(1: 9)

¹¹Hannah made a solemn promise: LORD Almighty, look at me, your servant! See my trouble and remember me! Don't forget me! If you give me a son, I promise that I will dedicate him to you for his whole life and that he will never have his hair cut.

¹²Hannah continued to pray to the LORD for a long time, and Eli watched her lips.

¹³She was praying silently; her lips were moving, but she made no sound. So Eli thought that she was drunk,

¹⁴and he said to her, Stop making a drunken show of yourself! Stop your drinking and sober up!

¹⁵No, I'm not drunk, sir, she answered. I haven't been drinking! I am desperate, and I have been praying, pouring out my troubles to the LORD.

¹⁶Don't think I am a worthless woman. I have been praying like this because I'm so miserable.

¹⁷Go in peace, Eli said, and may the God of Israel give you what you have asked him for.

¹⁸May you always think kindly of me, she replied. Then she went away, ate some food, and was no longer sad.

¹⁹The next morning Elkanah and his family got up early, and after worshipping the LORD, they went back home to Ramah. Elkanah had intercourse with his wife Hannah, and the LORD answered her prayer.

²⁰ So it was that she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, and explained, I asked the LORD for him.

²¹ The time came again for Elkanah and his family to go to Shiloh and offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and the special sacrifice he had promised.

²² But this time Hannah did not go. She told her husband, As soon as the child is weaned, I will take him to the house of the LORD, where he will stay all his life.

²³ Elkanah answered, All right, do whatever you think best; stay at home until you have weaned him. And may the LORD make your promise come true. So Hannah stayed at home and nursed her child.

²⁴ After she had weaned him, she took him to Shiloh, taking along a three-year-old bull, a bushel of flour, and a leather bag full of wine. She took Samuel, young as he was, to the house of the LORD at Shiloh.

²⁵ After they had killed the bull, they took the child to Eli.

²⁶ Hannah said to him, Excuse me, sir. Do you remember me? I am the woman

you saw standing here, praying to the LORD.

²⁷ I asked him for this child, and he gave me what I asked for.

²⁸ So I am dedicating him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he will belong to the LORD. Then they worshiped the LORD there.

2¹ Hannah prayed: The LORD has filled my heart with joy; how happy I am because of what he has done! I laugh at my enemies; how joyful I am because God has helped me!

² No one is holy like the LORD; there is none like him, no protector like our God.

³ Stop your loud boasting; silence your proud words. For the LORD is a God who knows, and he judges all that people do.

⁴ The bows of strong soldiers are broken, but the weak grow strong.

⁵ The people who once were well fed now hire themselves out to get food, but the hungry are hungry no more. The childless wife has borne seven children, but the mother of many is left with none.

⁶ The LORD kills and restores to life; he sends people to the world of the dead and brings them back again.

⁷ He makes some people poor and others rich; he humbles some and makes others great.

⁸ He lifts the poor from the dust and raises the needy from their misery. He makes them companions of princes and puts them in places of honor. The foundations of the earth belong to the LORD; on them he has built the world.

⁹ He protects the lives of his faithful people, but the wicked disappear in darkness; a man does not triumph by his own strength.

¹⁰ The LORD's enemies will be destroyed; he will thunder against them from heaven. The LORD will judge the whole world; he will give power to his king, he will make his chosen king victorious.

¹¹ Then Elkanah went back home to Ramah, but the boy Samuel stayed in Shiloh and served the LORD under the priest Eli.

¹² The sons of Eli were scoundrels. They paid no attention to the LORD

¹³ or to the regulations concerning what the priests could demand from the people. Instead, when someone was

offering a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork. While the meat was still cooking,

¹⁴he would stick the fork into the cooking pot, and whatever the fork brought out belonged to the priest. All the Israelites who came to Shiloh to offer sacrifices were treated like this.

¹⁵In addition, even before the fat was taken off and burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the one offering the sacrifice, Give me some meat for the priest to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, only raw meat.

¹⁶If the person answered, Let us do what is right and burn the fat first; then take what you want, the priest's servant would say, No! Give it to me now! If you don't, I will have to take it by force!

¹⁷This sin of the sons of Eli was extremely serious in the LORD's sight, because they treated the offerings to the LORD with such disrespect.

¹⁸In the meantime the boy Samuel continued to serve the LORD, wearing a sacred linen apron.

¹⁹Each year his mother would make a little robe and take it to him when she

accompanied her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say to Elkanah, May the LORD give you other children by this woman to take the place of the one you dedicated to him. After that they would go back home.

²¹The LORD did bless Hannah, and she had three more sons and two daughters. The boy Samuel grew up in the service of the LORD.

²²Eli was now very old. He kept hearing about everything his sons were doing to the Israelites and that they were even sleeping with the women who worked at the entrance to the Tent of the LORD's presence.

²³So he said to them, Why are you doing these things? Everybody tells me about the evil you are doing.

²⁴Stop it, my sons! This is an awful thing the people of the LORD are talking about!

²⁵If anyone sins against someone else, God can defend the one who is wrong; but who can defend someone who sins against the LORD? But they would not

listen to their father, for the LORD had decided to kill them.

²⁶The boy Samuel continued to grow and to gain favor both with the LORD and with people.

²⁷A prophet came to Eli with this message from the LORD: When your ancestor Aaron and his family were slaves of the king of Egypt, I revealed myself to Aaron.

²⁸From all the tribes of Israel I chose his family to be my priests, to serve at the altar, to burn the incense, and to wear the ephod to consult me. And I gave them the right to keep a share of the sacrifices burned on the altar.

²⁹Why, then, do you look with greed at the sacrifices and offerings which I require from my people? Why, Eli, do you honor your sons more than me by letting them fatten themselves on the best parts of all the sacrifices my people offer to me?

³⁰I, the LORD God of Israel, promised in the past that your family and your clan would serve me as priests for all time. But now I say that I won't have it any longer! Instead, I will honor those who

honor me, and I will treat with contempt those who despise me.

³¹ Listen, the time is coming when I will kill all the young men in your family and your clan, so that no man in your family will live to be old.

³² You will be troubled and look with envy on all the blessings I will give to the other people of Israel, but no one in your family will ever again live to old age.

³³ Yet I will keep one of your descendants alive, and he will serve me as priest. But he will become blind and lose all hope, and all your other descendants will die a violent death.

³⁴ When your two sons Hophni and Phinehas both die on the same day, this will show you that everything I have said will come true.

³⁵ I will choose a priest who will be faithful to me and do everything I want him to. I will give him descendants, who will always serve in the presence of my chosen king.

³⁶ Any of your descendants who survive will have to go to that priest and ask him for money and food, and beg to be

allowed to help the priests, in order to have something to eat.

3¹In those days, when the boy Samuel was serving the LORD under the direction of Eli, there were very few messages from the LORD, and visions from him were quite rare.

²One night Eli, who was now almost blind, was sleeping in his own room;

³Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary, where the sacred Covenant Box was. Before dawn, while the lamp was still burning,

⁴the LORD called Samuel. He answered, Yes, sir!

⁵and ran to Eli and said, You called me, and here I am. But Eli answered, I didn't call you; go back to bed. So Samuel went back to bed.

⁶The LORD called Samuel again. The boy did not know that it was the LORD, because the LORD had never spoken to him before. So he got up, went to Eli, and said, You called me, and here I am. But Eli answered, My son, I didn't call you; go back to bed.

⁷(3: 6)

⁸The LORD called Samuel a third time; he got up, went to Eli, and said, You called me, and here I am. Then Eli realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy,

⁹so he said to him, Go back to bed; and if he calls you again, say, Speak, LORD, your servant is listening. So Samuel went back to bed.

¹⁰The LORD came and stood there, and called as he had before, Samuel! Samuel! Samuel answered, Speak; your servant is listening.

¹¹The LORD said to him, Some day I am going to do something to the people of Israel that is so terrible that everyone who hears about it will be stunned.

¹²On that day I will carry out all my threats against Eli's family, from beginning to end.

¹³I have already told him that I am going to punish his family forever because his sons have spoken evil things against me. Eli knew they were doing this, but he did not stop them.

¹⁴So I solemnly declare to the family of Eli that no sacrifice or offering will ever

be able to remove the consequences of this terrible sin.

¹⁵Samuel stayed in bed until morning; then he got up and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli about the vision.

¹⁶Eli called him, Samuel, my boy! Yes, sir, answered Samuel.

¹⁷What did the LORD tell you? Eli asked. Don't keep anything from me. God will punish you severely if you don't tell me everything he said.

¹⁸So Samuel told him everything; he did not keep anything back. Eli said, He is the LORD; he will do whatever seems best to him.

¹⁹As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and made come true everything that Samuel said.

²⁰So all the people of Israel, from one end of the country to the other, knew that Samuel was indeed a prophet of the LORD.

²¹The LORD continued to reveal himself at Shiloh, where he had appeared to Samuel and had spoken to him. And when Samuel spoke, all Israel listened.

4¹ At that time the Philistines gathered to go to war against Israel, so the Israelites set out to fight them. The Israelites set up their camp at Ebenezer and the Philistines at Aphek.

²The Philistines attacked, and after fierce fighting they defeated the Israelites and killed about four thousand men on the battlefield.

³When the survivors came back to camp, the leaders of Israel said, Why did the LORD let the Philistines defeat us today? Let's go and bring the LORD's Covenant Box from Shiloh, so that he will go with us and save us from our enemies.

⁴So they sent messengers to Shiloh and got the Covenant Box of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned above the winged creatures. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, came along with the Covenant Box.

⁵When the Covenant Box arrived, the Israelites gave such a loud shout of joy that the earth shook.

⁶The Philistines heard the shouting and said, Listen to all that shouting in the Hebrew camp! What does it mean? When

they found out that the LORD's Covenant Box had arrived in the Hebrew camp,
⁷ they were afraid, and said, A god has come into their camp! We're lost! Nothing like this has ever happened to us before!

⁸Who can save us from those powerful gods? They are the gods who slaughtered the Egyptians in the desert!

⁹Be brave, Philistines! Fight like men, or we will become slaves to the Hebrews, just as they were our slaves. So fight like men!

¹⁰The Philistines fought hard and defeated the Israelites, who went running to their homes. There was a great slaughter: thirty thousand Israelite soldiers were killed.

¹¹God's Covenant Box was captured, and Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were both killed.

¹²A man from the tribe of Benjamin ran all the way from the battlefield to Shiloh and arrived there the same day. To show his grief, he had torn his clothes and put dirt on his head.

¹³Eli, who was very worried about the Covenant Box, was sitting in his

seat beside the road, staring. The man spread the news throughout the town, and everyone cried out in fear.

¹⁴Eli heard the noise and asked, What is all this noise about? The man hurried to Eli to tell him the news.

¹⁵(Eli was now ninety-eight years old and almost completely blind.)

¹⁶The man said, I have escaped from the battle and have run all the way here today. Eli asked him, What happened, my son?

¹⁷The messenger answered, Israel ran away from the Philistines; it was a terrible defeat for us! Besides that, your sons Hophni and Phinehas were killed, and God's Covenant Box was captured!

¹⁸When the man mentioned the Covenant Box, Eli fell backward from his seat beside the gate. He was so old and fat that the fall broke his neck, and he died. He had been a leader in Israel for forty years.

¹⁹Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, and it was almost time for her baby to be born. When she heard that God's Covenant Box had been captured and that her

father-in-law and her husband were dead, she suddenly went into labor and gave birth.

²⁰As she was dying, the women helping her said to her, Be brave! You have a son! But she paid no attention and did not answer.

²¹She named the boy Ichabod, explaining, God's glory has left Israel -- referring to the capture of the Covenant Box and the death of her father-in-law and her husband.

²²God's glory has left Israel, she said, because God's Covenant Box has been captured.

5¹After the Philistines captured the Covenant Box, they carried it from Ebenezer to their city of Ashdod,

²took it into the temple of their god Dagon, and set it up beside his statue.

³Early the next morning the people of Ashdod saw that the statue of Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground in front of the LORD's Covenant Box. So they lifted it up and put it back in its place.

⁴Early the following morning they saw that the statue had again fallen down in

front of the Covenant Box. This time its head and both its arms were broken off and were lying in the doorway; only the body was left.

⁵(That is why even today the priests of Dagon and all his worshipers in Ashdod step over that place and do not walk on it.)

⁶The LORD punished the people of Ashdod severely and terrified them. He punished them and the people in the surrounding territory by causing them to have tumors.

⁷When they saw what was happening, they said, The God of Israel is punishing us and our god Dagon. We can't let the Covenant Box stay here any longer.

⁸So they sent messengers and called together all five of the Philistine kings and asked them, What shall we do with the Covenant Box of the God of Israel? Take it over to Gath, they answered; so they took it to Gath, another Philistine city.

⁹But after it arrived there, the LORD punished that city too and caused a great panic. He punished them with

tumors which developed in all the people of the city, young and old alike.

¹⁰So they sent the Covenant Box to Ekron, another Philistine city; but when it arrived there, the people cried out, They have brought the Covenant Box of the God of Israel here, in order to kill us all!

¹¹So again they sent for all the Philistine kings and said, Send the Covenant Box of Israel back to its own place, so that it won't kill us and our families. There was panic throughout the city because God was punishing them so severely.

¹²Even those who did not die developed tumors and the people cried out to their gods for help.

6¹After the LORD's Covenant Box had been in Philistia for seven months,

²the people called the priests and the magicians and asked, What shall we do with the Covenant Box of the LORD? If we send it back where it belongs, what shall we send with it?

³They answered, If you return the Covenant Box of the God of Israel, you must, of course, send with it a gift to him to pay for your sin. The Covenant Box

must not go back without a gift. In this way you will be healed, and you will find out why he has kept on punishing you.

⁴What gift shall we send him? the people asked. They answered, Five gold models of tumors and five gold mice, one of each for each Philistine king. The same plague was sent on all of you and on the five kings.

⁵You must make these models of the tumors and of the mice that are ravaging your country, and you must give honor to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will stop punishing you, your gods, and your land.

⁶Why should you be stubborn, as the king of Egypt and the Egyptians were? Don't forget how God made fools of them until they let the Israelites leave Egypt.

⁷So prepare a new wagon and two cows that have never been yoked; hitch them to the wagon and drive their calves back to the barn.

⁸Take the LORD's Covenant Box, put it on the wagon, and place in a box beside it the gold models that you are sending to him as a gift to pay for your sins. Start the wagon on its way and let it go by itself.

⁹Then watch it go; if it goes toward the town of Beth Shemesh, this means that it is the God of the Israelites who has sent this terrible disaster on us. But if it doesn't, then we will know that he did not send the plague; it was only a matter of chance.

¹⁰They did what they were told: they took two cows and hitched them to the wagon, and shut the calves in the barn.

¹¹They put the Covenant Box in the wagon, together with the box containing the gold models of the mice and of the tumors.

¹²The cows started off on the road to Beth Shemesh and headed straight toward it, without turning off the road. They were mooing as they went. The five Philistine kings followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.

¹³The people of Beth Shemesh were reaping wheat in the valley, when suddenly they looked up and saw the Covenant Box. They were overjoyed at the sight.

¹⁴The wagon came to a field belonging to a man named Joshua, who lived in Beth Shemesh, and it stopped there near

a large rock. The people chopped up the wooden wagon and killed the cows and burned them as a burnt sacrifice to the LORD.

¹⁵The Levites lifted off the Covenant Box of the LORD and the box with the gold models in it, and placed them on the large rock. Then the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt sacrifices and other sacrifices to the LORD.

¹⁶The five Philistine kings watched them do this and then went back to Ekron that same day.

¹⁷The Philistines sent the five gold tumors to the LORD as a gift to pay for their sins, one each for the cities of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.

¹⁸They also sent gold mice, one for each of the cities ruled by the five Philistine kings, both the fortified towns and the villages without walls. The large rock in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, on which they placed the LORD's Covenant Box, is still there as a witness to what happened.

¹⁹The LORD killed seventy of the men of Beth Shemesh because they looked

inside the Covenant Box. And the people mourned because the LORD had caused such a great slaughter among them.

²⁰So the men of Beth Shemesh said, Who can stand before the LORD, this holy God? Where can we send him to get him away from us?

²¹They sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim to say, The Philistines have returned the LORD's Covenant Box. Come down and get it.

7¹ So the people of Kiriath Jearim got the LORD's Covenant Box and took it to the house of a man named Abinadab, who lived on a hill. They consecrated his son Eleazar to be in charge of it.

²The Covenant Box of the LORD stayed in Kiriath Jearim a long time, some twenty years. During this time all the Israelites cried to the LORD for help.

³Samuel said to the people of Israel, If you are going to turn to the LORD with all your hearts, you must get rid of all the foreign gods and the images of the goddess Astarte. Dedicate yourselves completely to the LORD and worship only him, and he will rescue you from the power of the Philistines.

⁴ So the Israelites got rid of their idols of Baal and Astarte, and worshiped only the LORD.

⁵ Then Samuel called for all the Israelites to meet at Mizpah, telling them, I will pray to the LORD for you there.

⁶ So they all gathered at Mizpah. They drew some water and poured it out as an offering to the LORD and fasted that whole day. They said, We have sinned against the LORD. (It was at Mizpah where Samuel settled disputes among the Israelites.)

⁷ When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, the five Philistine kings started out with their men to attack them. The Israelites heard about it and were afraid,

⁸ and said to Samuel, Keep praying to the LORD our God to save us from the Philistines.

⁹ Samuel killed a young lamb and burned it whole as a sacrifice to the LORD. Then he prayed to the LORD to help Israel, and the LORD answered his prayer.

¹⁰While Samuel was offering the sacrifice, the Philistines moved forward to attack; but just then the LORD thundered from heaven against them. They became completely confused and fled in panic.

¹¹The Israelites marched out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines almost as far as Bethcar, killing them along the way.

¹²Then Samuel took a stone, set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and said, The LORD has helped us all the way -- and he named it Stone of Help.

¹³So the Philistines were defeated, and the LORD prevented them from invading Israel's territory as long as Samuel lived.

¹⁴All the cities which the Philistines had captured between Ekron and Gath were returned to Israel, and so Israel got back all its territory. And there was peace also between the Israelites and the Canaanites.

¹⁵Samuel ruled Israel as long as he lived.

¹⁶Every year he would go around to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and in these places he would settle disputes.

¹⁷ Then he would go back to his home in Ramah, where also he would serve as judge. In Ramah he built an altar to the LORD.

8¹ When Samuel grew old, he made his sons judges in Israel.

² The older son was named Joel and the younger one Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba.

³ But they did not follow their father's example; they were interested only in making money, so they accepted bribes and did not decide cases honestly.

⁴ Then all the leaders of Israel met together, went to Samuel in Ramah,

⁵ and said to him, Look, you are getting old and your sons don't follow your example. So then, appoint a king to rule over us, so that we will have a king, as other countries have.

⁶ Samuel was displeased with their request for a king; so he prayed to the LORD,

⁷ and the LORD said, Listen to everything the people say to you. You are not the one they have rejected; I am the one they have rejected as their king.

⁸Ever since I brought them out of Egypt, they have turned away from me and worshiped other gods; and now they are doing to you what they have always done to me.

⁹So then, listen to them, but give them strict warnings and explain how their kings will treat them.

¹⁰Samuel told the people who were asking him for a king everything that the LORD had said to him.

¹¹This is how your king will treat you, Samuel explained. He will make soldiers of your sons; some of them will serve in his war chariots, others in his cavalry, and others will run before his chariots.

¹²He will make some of them officers in charge of a thousand men, and others in charge of fifty men. Your sons will have to plow his fields, harvest his crops, and make his weapons and the equipment for his chariots.

¹³Your daughters will have to make perfumes for him and work as his cooks and his bakers.

¹⁴He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his officials.

¹⁵He will take a tenth of your grain and of your grapes for his court officers and other officials.

¹⁶He will take your servants and your best cattle and donkeys, and make them work for him.

¹⁷He will take a tenth of your flocks. And you yourselves will become his slaves.

¹⁸When that time comes, you will complain bitterly because of your king, whom you yourselves chose, but the LORD will not listen to your complaints.

¹⁹The people paid no attention to Samuel, but said, No! We want a king,

²⁰so that we will be like other nations, with our own king to rule us and to lead us out to war and to fight our battles.

²¹Samuel listened to everything they said and then went and told it to the LORD.

²²The LORD answered, Do what they want and give them a king. Then Samuel told all the men of Israel to go back home.

9¹There was a wealthy and influential man named Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin; he was the son of Abiel and

grandson of Zeror, and belonged to the family of Becorath, a part of the clan of Aphiah.

²He had a son named Saul, a handsome man in the prime of life. Saul was a foot taller than anyone else in Israel and more handsome as well.

³Some donkeys belonging to Kish had wandered off, so he said to Saul, Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.

⁴They went through the hill country of Ephraim and the region of Shalishah, but did not find them; so they went on through the region of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then they went through the territory of Benjamin, but still did not find them.

⁵When they came into the region of Zuph, Saul said to his servant, Let's go back home, or my father might stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.

⁶The servant answered, Wait! In this town there is a holy man who is highly respected because everything he says comes true. Let's go to him, and maybe

he can tell us where we can find the donkeys.

⁷If we go to him, what can we give him? Saul asked. There is no food left in our packs, and we don't have a thing to give him, do we?

⁸The servant answered, I have a small silver coin. I can give him that, and then he will tell us where we can find them.

⁹Saul replied, A good idea! Let's go. So they went to the town where the holy man lived. As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some young women who were coming out to draw water. They asked these women, Is the seer in town? (At that time a prophet was called a seer, and so whenever someone wanted to ask God a question, he would say, Let's go to the seer.)

¹⁰(9: 9)

¹¹(9: 9)

¹²Yes, he is, the young women answered. In fact, he is just ahead of you. If you hurry, you will catch up with him. As soon as you go into town, you will find him. He arrived in town today because the people are going to offer a sacrifice on the altar on the hill. The

people who are invited won't start eating until he gets there, because he has to bless the sacrifice first. If you go now, you will find him before he goes up the hill to eat.

¹³ (9:12)

¹⁴ So Saul and his servant went on to the town, and as they were going in, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way to the place of worship.

¹⁵ Now on the previous day the LORD had told Samuel,

¹⁶ Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the tribe of Benjamin; anoint him as ruler of my people Israel, and he will rescue them from the Philistines. I have seen the suffering of my people and have heard their cries for help.

¹⁷ When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the LORD said to him, This is the man I told you about. He will rule my people.

¹⁸ Then Saul went over to Samuel, who was near the gate, and asked, Tell me, where does the seer live?

¹⁹ Samuel answered, I am the seer. Go on ahead of me to the place of worship. Both of you are to eat with me today.

Tomorrow morning I will answer all your questions and send you on your way.

²⁰As for the donkeys that were lost three days ago, don't worry about them; they have already been found. But who is it that the people of Israel want so much? It is you -- you and your father's family.

²¹Saul answered, I belong to the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel, and my family is the least important one in the tribe. Why, then, do you talk like this to me?

²²Then Samuel led Saul and his servant into the large room and gave them a place at the head of the table where the guests, about thirty in all, were seated.

²³Samuel said to the cook, Bring the piece of meat I gave you, which I told you to set aside.

²⁴So the cook brought the choice piece of the leg and placed it before Saul. Samuel said, Look, here is the piece that was kept for you. Eat it. I saved it for you to eat at this time with the people I invited. So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

²⁵When they went down from the place of worship to the town, they fixed up a bed for Saul on the roof,

²⁶and he slept there. At dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, Get up, and I will send you on your way. Saul got up, and he and Samuel went out to the street together.

²⁷When they arrived at the edge of town, Samuel said to Saul, Tell the servant to go on ahead of us. The servant left, and Samuel continued, Stay here a minute, and I will tell you what God has said.

10¹Then Samuel took a jar of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head, kissed him, and said, The LORD anoints you as ruler of his people Israel. You will rule his people and protect them from all their enemies. And this is the proof to you that the LORD has chosen you to be the ruler of his people:

²When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb at Zelzah in the territory of Benjamin. They will tell you that the donkeys you were looking for have been found, so that your father isn't worried any more

about them but about you, and he keeps asking, What shall I do about my son?

³You will go on from there until you come to the sacred tree at Tabor, where you will meet three men on their way to offer a sacrifice to God at Bethel. One of them will be leading three young goats, another one will be carrying three loaves of bread, and the third one will have a leather bag full of wine.

⁴They will greet you and offer you two of the loaves, which you are to accept.

⁵Then you will go to the Hill of God in Gibeah, where there is a Philistine camp. At the entrance to the town you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the altar on the hill, playing harps, drums, flutes, and lyres. They will be dancing and shouting.

⁶Suddenly the spirit of the LORD will take control of you, and you will join in their religious dancing and shouting and will become a different person.

⁷When these things happen, do whatever God leads you to do.

⁸You will go ahead of me to Gilgal, where I will meet you and offer burnt sacrifices and fellowship sacrifices. Wait

there seven days until I come and tell you what to do.

⁹When Saul turned to leave Samuel, God gave Saul a new nature. And everything Samuel had told him happened that day.

¹⁰When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a group of prophets met him. Suddenly the spirit of God took control of him, and he joined in their ecstatic dancing and shouting.

¹¹People who had known him before saw him doing this and asked one another, What has happened to the son of Kish? Has Saul become a prophet?

¹²A man who lived there asked, How about these other prophets -- who do you think their fathers are? This is how the saying originated, Has even Saul become a prophet?

¹³When Saul finished his ecstatic dancing and shouting, he went to the altar on the hill.

¹⁴Saul's uncle saw him and the servant, and he asked them, Where have you been? Looking for the donkeys, Saul answered. When we couldn't find them, we went to see Samuel.

¹⁵And what did he tell you? Saul's uncle asked.

¹⁶He told us that the animals had been found, Saul answered -- but he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about his becoming king.

¹⁷Samuel called the people together for a religious gathering at Mizpah

¹⁸and said to them, The LORD, the God of Israel, says, I brought you out of Egypt and rescued you from the Egyptians and all the other peoples who were oppressing you.

¹⁹I am your God, the one who rescues you from all your troubles and difficulties, but today you have rejected me and have asked me to give you a king. Very well, then, gather yourselves before the LORD by tribes and by clans.

²⁰Then Samuel had each tribe come forward, and the LORD picked the tribe of Benjamin.

²¹Then Samuel had the families of the tribe of Benjamin come forward, and the family of Matri was picked out. Then the men of the family of Matri came forward, and Saul son of Kish was picked

out. They looked for him, but when they could not find him,

²² they asked the LORD, Is there still someone else? The LORD answered, Saul is over there, hiding behind the supplies.

²³ So they ran and brought Saul out to the people, and they could see that he was a foot taller than anyone else.

²⁴ Samuel said to the people, Here is the man the LORD has chosen! There is no one else among us like him. All the people shouted, Long live the king!

²⁵ Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of a king, and then wrote them in a book, which he deposited in a holy place. Then he sent everyone home.

²⁶ Saul also went back home to Gibeah. Some powerful men, whose hearts God had touched, went with him.

²⁷ But some worthless people said, How can this fellow do us any good? They despised Saul and did not bring him any gifts.

11 ¹ About a month later King Nahash of Ammon led his army against the town of Jabesh in the territory of Gilead and besieged it. The men of

Jabesh said to Nahash, Make a treaty with us, and we will accept you as our ruler.

²Nahash answered, I will make a treaty with you on one condition: I will put out everyone's right eye and so bring disgrace on all Israel.

³The leaders of Jabesh said, Give us seven days to send messengers throughout the land of Israel. If no one will help us, then we will surrender to you.

⁴The messengers arrived at Gibeah, where Saul lived, and when they told the news, the people started crying in despair.

⁵Saul was just then coming in from the field with his oxen, and he asked, What's wrong? Why is everyone crying? They told him what the messengers from Jabesh had reported.

⁶When Saul heard this, the spirit of God took control of him, and he became furious.

⁷He took two oxen, cut them in pieces, and had messengers carry the pieces throughout the land of Israel with this warning: Whoever does not follow Saul

and Samuel into battle will have this done to his oxen! The people of Israel were afraid of what the LORD might do, and all of them, without exception, came out together.

⁸Saul gathered them at Bezek: there were 300,000 from Israel and 30,000 from Judah.

⁹They said to the messengers from Jabesh, Tell your people that before noon tomorrow they will be rescued. When the people of Jabesh received the message, they were overjoyed

¹⁰and said to Nahash, Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do with us whatever you wish.

¹¹That night Saul divided his men into three groups, and at dawn the next day they rushed into the enemy camp and attacked the Ammonites. By noon they had slaughtered them. The survivors scattered, each man running off by himself.

¹²Then the people of Israel said to Samuel, Where are the people who said that Saul should not be our king? Hand them over to us, and we will kill them!

¹³But Saul said, No one will be put to death today, for this is the day the LORD rescued Israel.

¹⁴And Samuel said to them, Let us all go to Gilgal and once more proclaim Saul as our king.

¹⁵So they all went to Gilgal, and there at the holy place they proclaimed Saul king. They offered fellowship sacrifices, and Saul and all the people of Israel celebrated the event.

12¹Then Samuel said to the people of Israel, I have done what you asked me to do. I have given you a king to rule you,

²and now you have him to lead you. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are with you. I have been your leader from my youth until now.

³Here I am. If I have done anything wrong, accuse me now in the presence of the LORD and the king he has chosen. Have I taken anybody's cow or anybody's donkey? Have I cheated or oppressed anyone? Have I accepted a bribe from anyone? If I have done any of these things, I will pay back what I have taken.

⁴The people answered, No, you have not cheated us or oppressed us; you have not taken anything from anyone.

⁵Samuel replied, The LORD and the king he has chosen are witnesses today that you have found me to be completely innocent. Yes, the LORD is our witness, they answered.

⁶Samuel continued, The LORD is the one who chose Moses and Aaron and who brought your ancestors out of Egypt.

⁷Now stand where you are, and I will accuse you before the LORD by reminding you of all the mighty actions the LORD did to save you and your ancestors.

⁸When Jacob and his family went to Egypt and the Egyptians oppressed them, your ancestors cried to the LORD for help, and he sent Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt and settled them in this land.

⁹But the people forgot the LORD their God, and so he let the Philistines and the king of Moab and Sisera, commander of the army of the city of Hazor, fight

against your ancestors and conquer them.

¹⁰Then they cried to the LORD for help and said, We have sinned, because we turned away from you, LORD, and worshiped the idols of Baal and Astarte. Rescue us from our enemies, and we will worship you!

¹¹And the LORD sent Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, and finally me. Each of us rescued you from your enemies, and you lived in safety.

¹²But when you saw that King Nahash of Ammon was about to attack you, you rejected the LORD as your king and said to me, We want a king to rule us.

¹³Now here is the king you chose; you asked for him, and now the LORD has given him to you.

¹⁴All will go well with you if you honor the LORD your God, serve him, listen to him, and obey his commands, and if you and your king follow him.

¹⁵But if you do not listen to the LORD but disobey his commands, he will be against you and your king.

¹⁶So then, stand where you are, and you will see the great thing which the LORD is going to do.

¹⁷It's the dry season, isn't it? But I will pray, and the LORD will send thunder and rain. When this happens, you will realize that you committed a great sin against the LORD when you asked him for a king.

¹⁸So Samuel prayed, and on that same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. Then all the people became afraid of the LORD and of Samuel,

¹⁹and they said to Samuel, Please, sir, pray to the LORD your God for us, so that we won't die. We now realize that, besides all our other sins, we have sinned by asking for a king.

²⁰Don't be afraid, Samuel answered. Even though you have done such an evil thing, do not turn away from the LORD, but serve him with all your heart.

²¹Don't go after false gods; they cannot help you or save you, for they are not real.

²²The LORD has made a solemn promise, and he will not abandon you,

for he has decided to make you his own people.

²³As for me, the LORD forbid that I should sin against him by no longer praying for you. Instead, I will teach you what is good and right for you to do.

²⁴Obey the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. Remember the great things he has done for you.

²⁵But if you continue to sin, you and your king will be destroyed.

13¹ [KOSONG]
²Saul picked three thousand men, keeping two thousand of them with him in Michmash and in the hill country of Bethel and sending one thousand with his son Jonathan to Gibeah, in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. The rest of the men Saul sent home.

³Jonathan killed the Philistine commander in Geba, and all the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul sent messengers to call the Hebrews to war by blowing a trumpet throughout the whole country.

⁴All the Israelites were told that Saul had killed the Philistine commander and that the Philistines hated them. So the

people answered the call to join Saul at Gilgal.

⁵The Philistines assembled to fight the Israelites; they had thirty thousand war chariots, six thousand cavalry troops, and as many soldiers as there are grains of sand on the seashore. They went to Michmash, east of Bethaven, and camped there.

⁶Then they launched a strong attack against the Israelites, putting them in a desperate situation. Some of the Israelites hid in caves and holes or among the rocks or in pits and wells;

⁷others crossed the Jordan River into the territories of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and the people with him were trembling with fear.

⁸He waited seven days for Samuel, as Samuel had instructed him to do, but Samuel still had not come to Gilgal. The people began to desert Saul,

⁹so he said to them, Bring me the burnt sacrifices and the fellowship sacrifices. He offered a burnt sacrifice,

¹⁰and just as he was finishing, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet him and welcome him,

¹¹ but Samuel said, What have you done? Saul answered, The people were deserting me, and you had not come when you said you would; besides that, the Philistines are gathering at Michmash.

¹² So I thought, The Philistines are going to attack me here in Gilgal, and I have not tried to win the LORD's favor. So I felt I had to offer a sacrifice.

¹³ That was a foolish thing to do, Samuel answered. You have not obeyed the command the LORD your God gave you. If you had obeyed, he would have let you and your descendants rule over Israel forever.

¹⁴ But now your rule will not continue. Because you have disobeyed him, the LORD will find the kind of man he wants and make him ruler of his people.

¹⁵ Samuel left Gilgal and went on his way. The rest of the people followed Saul as he went to join his soldiers. They went from Gilgal to Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin. Saul inspected his troops, about six hundred men.

¹⁶ Saul, his son Jonathan, and their men camped in Geba in the territory of

Benjamin; the Philistine camp was at Michmash.

¹⁷The Philistine soldiers went out on raids from their camp in three groups: one group went toward Ophrah in the territory of Shual,

¹⁸another went toward Beth Horon, and the other one went to the border overlooking Zeboim Valley and the wilderness.

¹⁹There were no blacksmiths in Israel because the Philistines were determined to keep the Hebrews from making swords and spears.

²⁰(The Israelites had to go to the Philistines to get their plows, hoes, axes, and sickles sharpened;

²¹the charge was one small coin for sharpening axes and for fixing goads, and two coins for sharpening plows or hoes.)

²²And so on the day of battle none of the Israelite soldiers except Saul and his son Jonathan had swords or spears.

²³The Philistines sent a group of soldiers to defend Michmash Pass.

14¹One day Jonathan said to the young man who carried his

weapons, Let's go across to the Philistine camp. But Jonathan did not tell his father Saul,

²who was camping under a pomegranate tree in Migron, not far from Gibeah; he had about six hundred men with him.

³(The priest carrying the ephod was Ahijah, the son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub, who was the son of Phinehas and grandson of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh.) The men did not know that Jonathan had left.

⁴In Michmash Pass, which Jonathan had to go through to get over to the Philistine camp, there were two large jagged rocks, one on each side of the pass: one was called Bozez and the other Seneh.

⁵One was on the north side of the pass, facing Michmash, and the other was on the south side, facing Geba.

⁶Jonathan said to the young man, Let's cross over to the camp of those heathen Philistines. Maybe the LORD will help us; if he does, nothing can keep him from giving us the victory, no matter how few of us there are.

⁷The young man answered, Whatever you want to do, I'm with you.

⁸All right, Jonathan said. We will go across and let the Philistines see us.

⁹If they tell us to wait for them to come to us, then we will stay where we are.

¹⁰But if they tell us to go to them, then we will, because that will be the sign that the LORD has given us victory over them.

¹¹So they let the Philistines see them, and the Philistines said, Look! Some Hebrews are coming out of the holes they have been hiding in!

¹²Then they called out to Jonathan and the young man, Come on up here! We have something to tell you! Jonathan said to the young man, Follow me. The LORD has given Israel victory over them.

¹³Jonathan climbed up out of the pass on his hands and knees, and the young man followed him. Jonathan attacked the Philistines and knocked them down, and the young man killed them.

¹⁴In that first slaughter Jonathan and the young man killed about twenty men in an area of about half an acre.

¹⁵All the Philistines in the countryside were terrified; the raiders and the soldiers in the camp trembled with fear; the earth shook, and there was great panic.

¹⁶Saul's men on watch at Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin saw the Philistines running in confusion.

¹⁷So Saul said to his men, Count the soldiers and find out who is missing. They did so and found that Jonathan and the young man who carried his weapons were missing.

¹⁸Bring the ephod here, Saul said to Ahijah the priest. (On that day Ahijah was carrying it in front of the people of Israel.)

¹⁹As Saul was speaking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp kept getting worse, so Saul said to him, There's no time to consult the LORD!

²⁰Then he and his men marched into battle against the Philistines, who were fighting each other in complete confusion.

²¹Some Hebrews, who had been on the Philistine side and had gone with them

to the camp, changed sides again and joined Saul and Jonathan.

²²Others, who had been hiding in the hills of Ephraim, heard that the Philistines were running away, so they also joined in and attacked the Philistines,

²³fighting all the way beyond Bethaven. The LORD saved Israel that day.

²⁴The Israelites were weak with hunger that day, because Saul, with a solemn oath, had given the order: A curse be on anyone who eats any food today before I take revenge on my enemies. So nobody had eaten anything all day.

²⁵They all came into a wooded area and found honey everywhere.

²⁶The woods were full of honey, but no one ate any of it because they were all afraid of Saul's curse.

²⁷But Jonathan had not heard his father threaten the people with a curse; so he reached out with the stick he was carrying, dipped it in a honeycomb, and ate some honey. At once he felt much better.

²⁸But one of the men told him, We are all weak from hunger, but your father

threatened us and said, A curse be on anyone who eats any food today.

²⁹Jonathan answered, What a terrible thing my father has done to our people! See how much better I feel because I ate some honey!

³⁰How much better it would have been today if our people had eaten the food they took when they defeated the enemy. Just think how many more Philistines they would have killed!

³¹That day the Israelites defeated the Philistines, fighting all the way from Michmash to Aijalon. By this time the Israelites were very weak from hunger,

³²and so they rushed over to what they had captured from the enemy, took sheep and cattle, slaughtered them on the spot, and ate the meat with the blood still in it.

³³Saul was told, Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with the blood in it. You are traitors! Saul cried out. Roll a big stone over here to me.

³⁴Then he gave another order: Go among the people and tell them all to bring their cattle and sheep here. They

are to slaughter them and eat them here; they must not sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood in it. So that night they all brought their cattle and slaughtered them there.

³⁵ Saul built an altar to the LORD, the first one that he built.

³⁶ Saul said to his men, Let's go down and attack the Philistines in the night, plunder them until dawn, and kill them all. Do whatever you think best, they answered. But the priest said, Let's consult God first.

³⁷ So Saul asked God, Shall I attack the Philistines? Will you give us victory? But God did not answer that day.

³⁸ Then Saul said to the leaders of the people, Come here and find out what sin was committed today.

³⁹ I promise by the living LORD, who gives Israel victory, that the guilty one will be put to death, even if he is my son Jonathan. But no one said anything.

⁴⁰ Then Saul said to them, All of you stand over there, and Jonathan and I will stand over here. Do whatever you think best, they answered.

⁴¹ Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, LORD, why have you not answered me today? LORD, God of Israel, answer me by the sacred stones. If the guilt is Jonathan's or mine, answer by the Urim; but if it belongs to your people Israel, answer by the Thummim. The answer indicated Jonathan and Saul; and the people were cleared.

⁴² Then Saul said, Decide between my son Jonathan and me. And Jonathan was indicated.

⁴³ Then Saul asked Jonathan, What have you done? Jonathan answered, I ate a little honey with the stick I was holding. Here I am -- I am ready to die.

⁴⁴ Saul said to him, May God strike me dead if you are not put to death!

⁴⁵ But the people said to Saul, Will Jonathan, who won this great victory for Israel, be put to death? No! We promise by the living LORD that he will not lose even a hair from his head. What he did today was done with God's help. So the people saved Jonathan from being put to death.

⁴⁶After that, Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they went back to their own territory.

⁴⁷After Saul became king of Israel, he fought all his enemies everywhere: the people of Moab, of Ammon, and of Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he fought he was victorious.

⁴⁸He fought heroically and defeated even the people of Amalek. He saved the Israelites from all attacks.

⁴⁹Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. His older daughter was named Merab, and the younger one Michal.

⁵⁰His wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; his army commander was his cousin Abner, the son of his uncle Ner.

⁵¹Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel.

⁵²As long as he lived, Saul had to fight fiercely against the Philistines. So whenever he found a man who was strong or brave, he would enlist him in his army.

15¹Samuel said to Saul, I am the one whom the LORD sent to

anoint you king of his people Israel. Now listen to what the LORD Almighty says.

²He is going to punish the people of Amalek because their ancestors opposed the Israelites when they were coming from Egypt.

³Go and attack the Amalekites and completely destroy everything they have. Don't leave a thing; kill all the men, women, children, and babies; the cattle, sheep, camels, and donkeys.

⁴Saul called his forces together and inspected them at Telem: there were 200,000 soldiers from Israel and 10,000 from Judah.

⁵Then he and his men went to the city of Amalek and waited in ambush in a dry riverbed.

⁶He sent a warning to the Kenites, a people whose ancestors had been kind to the Israelites when they came from Egypt: Go away and leave the Amalekites, so that I won't kill you along with them. So the Kenites left.

⁷Saul defeated the Amalekites, fighting all the way from Havilah to Shur, east of Egypt;

⁸ he captured King Agag of Amalek alive and killed all the people.

⁹ But Saul and his men spared Agag's life and did not kill the best sheep and cattle, the best calves and lambs, or anything else that was good; they destroyed only what was useless or worthless.

¹⁰ The LORD said to Samuel,

¹¹ I am sorry that I made Saul king; he has turned away from me and disobeyed my commands. Samuel was angry, and all night long he pleaded with the LORD.

¹² Early the following morning he went off to find Saul. He heard that Saul had gone to the town of Carmel, where he had built a monument to himself, and then had gone on to Gilgal.

¹³ Samuel went up to Saul, who greeted him, saying, The LORD bless you, Samuel! I have obeyed the LORD's command.

¹⁴ Samuel asked, Why, then, do I hear cattle mooing and sheep bleating?

¹⁵ Saul answered, My men took them from the Amalekites. They kept the best sheep and cattle to offer as a sacrifice

to the LORD your God, and the rest we have destroyed completely.

¹⁶Stop, Samuel ordered, and I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night. Tell me, Saul said.

¹⁷Samuel answered, Even though you consider yourself of no importance, you are the leader of the tribes of Israel. The LORD anointed you king of Israel,

¹⁸and he sent you out with orders to destroy those wicked people of Amalek. He told you to fight until you had killed them all.

¹⁹Why, then, did you not obey him? Why did you rush to grab the loot, and so do what displeases the LORD?

²⁰I did obey the LORD, Saul replied. I went out as he told me to, brought back King Agag, and killed all the Amalekites.

²¹But my men did not kill the best sheep and cattle that they captured; instead, they brought them here to Gilgal to offer as a sacrifice to the LORD your God.

²²Samuel said, Which does the LORD prefer: obedience or offerings and sacrifices? It is better to obey him than to sacrifice the best sheep to him.

²³ Rebellion against him is as bad as witchcraft, and arrogance is as sinful as idolatry. Because you rejected the LORD's command, he has rejected you as king.

²⁴ Yes, I have sinned, Saul replied. I disobeyed the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of my men and did what they wanted.

²⁵ But now I beg you, forgive my sin and go back with me, so that I can worship the LORD.

²⁶ I will not go back with you, Samuel answered. You rejected the LORD's command, and he has rejected you as king of Israel.

²⁷ Then Samuel turned to leave, but Saul caught hold of his cloak, and it tore.

²⁸ Samuel said to him, The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel away from you today and given it to someone who is a better man than you.

²⁹ Israel's majestic God does not lie or change his mind. He is not a human being -- he does not change his mind.

³⁰ I have sinned, Saul replied. But at least show me respect in front of the leaders of my people and all of Israel.

Go back with me so that I can worship the LORD your God.

³¹ So Samuel went back with him, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

³² Bring King Agag here to me, Samuel ordered. Agag came to him, trembling with fear, thinking to himself, What a bitter thing it is to die!

³³ Samuel said, As your sword has made many mothers childless, so now your mother will become childless. And he cut Agag to pieces in front of the altar in Gilgal.

³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah, and King Saul went home to Gibeah.

³⁵ As long as Samuel lived, he never again saw the king; but he grieved over him. The LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king of Israel.

16¹ The LORD said to Samuel, How long will you go on grieving over Saul? I have rejected him as king of Israel. But now get some olive oil and go to Bethlehem, to a man named Jesse, because I have chosen one of his sons to be king.

² How can I do that? Samuel asked. If Saul hears about it, he will kill me! The

LORD answered, Take a calf with you and say that you are there to offer a sacrifice to the LORD.

³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will tell you what to do. You will anoint as king the man I tell you to.

⁴Samuel did what the LORD told him to do and went to Bethlehem, where the city leaders came trembling to meet him and asked, Is this a peaceful visit, seer?

⁵Yes, he answered. I have come to offer a sacrifice to the LORD. Purify yourselves and come with me. He also told Jesse and his sons to purify themselves, and he invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they arrived, Samuel saw Jesse's son Eliab and said to himself, This man standing here in the LORD's presence is surely the one he has chosen.

⁷But the LORD said to him, Pay no attention to how tall and handsome he is. I have rejected him, because I do not judge as people judge. They look at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart.

⁸Then Jesse called his son Abinadab and brought him to Samuel. But Samuel

said, No, the LORD hasn't chosen him either.

⁹Jesse then brought Shammah. No, the LORD hasn't chosen him either, Samuel said.

¹⁰In this way Jesse brought seven of his sons to Samuel. And Samuel said to him, No, the LORD hasn't chosen any of these.

¹¹Then he asked him, Do you have any more sons? Jesse answered, There is still the youngest, but he is out taking care of the sheep. Tell him to come here, Samuel said. We won't offer the sacrifice until he comes.

¹²So Jesse sent for him. He was a handsome, healthy young man, and his eyes sparkled. The LORD said to Samuel, This is the one -- anoint him!

¹³Samuel took the olive oil and anointed David in front of his brothers. Immediately the spirit of the LORD took control of David and was with him from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

¹⁴The LORD's spirit left Saul, and an evil spirit sent by the LORD tormented him.

¹⁵ His servants said to him, We know that an evil spirit sent by God is tormenting you.

¹⁶ So give us the order, sir, and we will look for a man who knows how to play the harp. Then when the evil spirit comes on you, the man can play his harp, and you will be all right again.

¹⁷ Saul ordered them, Find me a man who plays well and bring him to me.

¹⁸ One of his attendants said, Jesse of the town of Bethlehem has a son who is a good musician. He is also a brave and handsome man, a good soldier, and an able speaker. The LORD is with him.

¹⁹ So Saul sent messengers to Jesse to say, Send me your son David, the one who takes care of the sheep.

²⁰ Jesse sent David to Saul with a young goat, a donkey loaded with bread, and a leather bag full of wine.

²¹ David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much and chose him as the man to carry his weapons.

²² Then Saul sent a message to Jesse: I like David. Let him stay here in my service.

²³From then on, whenever the evil spirit sent by God came on Saul, David would get his harp and play it. The evil spirit would leave, and Saul would feel better and be all right again.

17 ¹The Philistines gathered for battle in Socoh, a town in Judah; they camped at a place called Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah.

²Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in Elah Valley, where they got ready to fight the Philistines.

³The Philistines lined up on one hill and the Israelites on another, with a valley between them.

⁴A man named Goliath, from the city of Gath, came out from the Philistine camp to challenge the Israelites. He was over nine feet tall

⁵and wore bronze armor that weighed about 125 pounds and a bronze helmet.

⁶His legs were also protected by bronze armor, and he carried a bronze javelin slung over his shoulder.

⁷His spear was as thick as the bar on a weaver's loom, and its iron head weighed about fifteen pounds. A soldier walked in front of him carrying his shield.

⁸Goliath stood and shouted at the Israelites, What are you doing there, lined up for battle? I am a Philistine, you slaves of Saul! Choose one of your men to fight me.

⁹If he wins and kills me, we will be your slaves; but if I win and kill him, you will be our slaves.

¹⁰Here and now I challenge the Israelite army. I dare you to pick someone to fight me!

¹¹When Saul and his men heard this, they were terrified.

¹²David was the son of Jesse, who was an Ephrathite from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and at the time Saul was king, he was already a very old man.

¹³His three oldest sons had gone with Saul to war. The oldest was Eliab, the next was Abinadab, and the third was Shammah.

¹⁴David was the youngest son, and while the three oldest brothers stayed with Saul,

¹⁵David would go back to Bethlehem from time to time, to take care of his father's sheep.

¹⁶Goliath challenged the Israelites every morning and evening for forty days.

¹⁷One day Jesse said to David, Take a half-bushel of this roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread, and hurry with them to your brothers in the camp.

¹⁸And take these ten cheeses to the commanding officer. Find out how your brothers are getting along and bring back something to show that you saw them and that they are well.

¹⁹King Saul, your brothers, and all the other Israelites are in Elah Valley fighting the Philistines.

²⁰David got up early the next morning, left someone else in charge of the sheep, took the food, and went as Jesse had told him to. He arrived at the camp just as the Israelites were going out to their battle line, shouting the war cry.

²¹The Philistine and the Israelite armies took positions for battle, facing each other.

²²David left the food with the officer in charge of the supplies, ran to the battle line, went to his brothers, and asked how they were getting along.

²³As he was talking with them, Goliath came forward and challenged the Israelites as he had done before. And David heard him.

²⁴When the Israelites saw Goliath, they ran away in terror.

²⁵Look at him! they said to each other. Listen to his challenge! King Saul has promised to give a big reward to the man who kills him; the king will also give him his daughter to marry and will not require his father's family to pay taxes.

²⁶David asked the men who were near him, What will the man get who kills this Philistine and frees Israel from this disgrace? After all, who is this heathen Philistine to defy the army of the living God?

²⁷They told him what would be done for the man who killed Goliath.

²⁸Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard David talking to the men. He became angry with David and said, What are you doing here? Who is taking care of those sheep of yours out there in the wilderness? You smart aleck, you! You just came to watch the fighting!

²⁹ Now what have I done? David asked. Can't I even ask a question?

³⁰ He turned to another man and asked him the same question, and every time he asked, he got the same answer.

³¹ Some men heard what David had said, and they told Saul, who sent for him.

³² David said to Saul, Your Majesty, no one should be afraid of this Philistine! I will go and fight him.

³³ No, answered Saul. How could you fight him? You're just a boy, and he has been a soldier all his life!

³⁴ Your Majesty, David said, I take care of my father's sheep. Any time a lion or a bear carries off a lamb,

³⁵ I go after it, attack it, and rescue the lamb. And if the lion or bear turns on me, I grab it by the throat and beat it to death.

³⁶ I have killed lions and bears, and I will do the same to this heathen Philistine, who has defied the army of the living God.

³⁷ The LORD has saved me from lions and bears; he will save me from this

Philistine. All right, Saul answered. Go, and the LORD be with you.

³⁸He gave his own armor to David for him to wear: a bronze helmet, which he put on David's head, and a coat of armor.

³⁹David strapped Saul's sword over the armor and tried to walk, but he couldn't, because he wasn't used to wearing them. I can't fight with all this, he said to Saul. I'm not used to it. So he took it all off.

⁴⁰He took his shepherd's stick and then picked up five smooth stones from the stream and put them in his bag. With his sling ready, he went out to meet Goliath.

⁴¹The Philistine started walking toward David, with his shield bearer walking in front of him. He kept coming closer,

⁴²and when he got a good look at David, he was filled with scorn for him because he was just a nice, good-looking boy.

⁴³He said to David, What's that stick for? Do you think I'm a dog? And he called down curses from his god on David.

⁴⁴ Come on, he challenged David, and I will give your body to the birds and animals to eat.

⁴⁵ David answered, You are coming against me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the Israelite armies, which you have defied.

⁴⁶ This very day the LORD will put you in my power; I will defeat you and cut off your head. And I will give the bodies of the Philistine soldiers to the birds and animals to eat. Then the whole world will know that Israel has a God,

⁴⁷ and everyone here will see that the LORD does not need swords or spears to save his people. He is victorious in battle, and he will put all of you in our power.

⁴⁸ Goliath started walking toward David again, and David ran quickly toward the Philistine battle line to fight him.

⁴⁹ He reached into his bag and took out a stone, which he slung at Goliath. It hit him on the forehead and broke his skull, and Goliath fell face downward on the ground.

⁵⁰And so, without a sword, David defeated and killed Goliath with a sling and a stone!

⁵¹He ran to him, stood over him, took Goliath's sword out of its sheath, and cut off his head and killed him. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they ran away.

⁵²The men of Israel and Judah shouted and ran after them, pursuing them all the way to Gath and to the gates of Ekron. The Philistines fell wounded all along the road that leads to Shaaraim, as far as Gath and Ekron.

⁵³When the Israelites came back from pursuing the Philistines, they looted their camp.

⁵⁴David got Goliath's head and took it to Jerusalem, but he kept Goliath's weapons in his own tent.

⁵⁵When Saul saw David going out to fight Goliath, he asked Abner, the commander of his army, Abner, whose son is he? I have no idea, Your Majesty, Abner answered.

⁵⁶Then go and find out, Saul ordered.

⁵⁷So when David returned to camp after killing Goliath, Abner took him to

Saul. David was still carrying Goliath's head.

⁵⁸Saul asked him, Young man, whose son are you? I am the son of your servant Jesse from Bethlehem, David answered.

18¹Saul and David finished their conversation. After that, Saul's son Jonathan was deeply attracted to David and came to love him as much as he loved himself.

²Saul kept David with him from that day on and did not let him go back home.

³Jonathan swore eternal friendship with David because of his deep affection for him.

⁴He took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, together with his armor and also his sword, bow, and belt.

⁵David was successful in all the missions on which Saul sent him, and so Saul made him an officer in his army. This pleased all of Saul's officers and men.

⁶As David was returning after killing Goliath and as the soldiers were coming back home, women from every town in

Israel came out to meet King Saul. They were singing joyful songs, dancing, and playing tambourines and lyres.

⁷In their celebration the women sang, Saul has killed thousands, but David tens of thousands.

⁸Saul did not like this, and he became very angry. He said, For David they claim tens of thousands, but only thousands for me. They will be making him king next!

⁹And so he was jealous and suspicious of David from that day on.

¹⁰The next day an evil spirit from God suddenly took control of Saul, and he raved in his house like a madman. David was playing the harp, as he did every day, and Saul was holding a spear.

¹¹I'll pin him to the wall, Saul said to himself, and he threw the spear at him twice; but David dodged each time.

¹²Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with David but had abandoned him.

¹³So Saul sent him away and put him in command of a thousand men. David led his men in battle

¹⁴and was successful in all he did, because the LORD was with him.

¹⁵Saul noticed David's success and became even more afraid of him.

¹⁶But everyone in Israel and Judah loved David because he was such a successful leader.

¹⁷Then Saul said to David, Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you as your wife on condition that you serve me as a brave and loyal soldier, and fight the LORD's battles. (Saul was thinking that in this way the Philistines would kill David, and he would not have to do it himself.)

¹⁸David answered, Who am I and what is my family that I should become the king's son-in-law?

¹⁹But when the time came for Merab to be given to David, she was given instead to a man named Adriel from Meholah.

²⁰Saul's daughter Michal, however, fell in love with David, and when Saul heard of this, he was pleased.

²¹He said to himself, I'll give Michal to David; I will use her to trap him, and he will be killed by the Philistines. So for the

second time Saul said to David, You will be my son-in-law.

²²He ordered his officials to speak privately with David and tell him, The king is pleased with you and all his officials like you; now is a good time for you to marry his daughter.

²³So they told this to David, and he answered, It's a great honor to become the king's son-in-law, too great for someone poor and insignificant like me.

²⁴The officials told Saul what David had said,

²⁵and Saul ordered them to tell David: All the king wants from you as payment for the bride are the foreskins of a hundred dead Philistines, as revenge on his enemies. (This was how Saul planned to have David killed by the Philistines.)

²⁶Saul's officials reported to David what Saul had said, and David was delighted with the thought of becoming the king's son-in-law. Before the day set for the wedding,

²⁷David and his men went and killed two hundred Philistines. He took their foreskins to the king and counted them all out to him, so that he might become

his son-in-law. So Saul had to give his daughter Michal in marriage to David.

²⁸Saul realized clearly that the LORD was with David and also that his daughter Michal loved him.

²⁹So he became even more afraid of David and was his enemy as long as he lived.

³⁰The Philistine armies would come and fight, but in every battle David was more successful than any of Saul's other officers. As a result David became very famous.

19¹ Saul told his son Jonathan and all his officials that he planned to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David,

²and so he told him, My father is trying to kill you. Please be careful tomorrow morning; hide in some secret place and stay there.

³I will go and stand by my father in the field where you are hiding, and I will speak to him about you. If I find out anything, I will let you know.

⁴Jonathan praised David to Saul and said, Sir, don't do wrong to your servant David. He has never done you any

wrong; on the contrary, everything he has done has been a great help to you.

⁵He risked his life when he killed Goliath, and the LORD won a great victory for Israel. When you saw it, you were glad. Why, then, do you now want to do wrong to an innocent man and kill David for no reason at all?

⁶Saul was convinced by what Jonathan said and made a vow in the LORD's name that he would not kill David.

⁷So Jonathan called David and told him everything; then he took him to Saul, and David served the king as he had before.

⁸War with the Philistines broke out again. David attacked them and defeated them so thoroughly that they fled.

⁹One day an evil spirit from the LORD took control of Saul. He was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was there, playing his harp.

¹⁰Saul tried to pin David to the wall with his spear, but David dodged, and the spear stuck in the wall. David ran away and escaped.

¹¹That same night Saul sent some men to watch David's house and kill

him the next morning. Michal, David's wife, warned him, If you don't get away tonight, tomorrow you will be dead.

¹²She let him down from a window, and he ran away and escaped.

¹³Then she took the household idol, laid it on the bed, put a pillow made of goats' hair at its head, and put a cover over it.

¹⁴When Saul's men came to get David, Michal told them that he was sick.

¹⁵But Saul sent them back to see David for themselves. He ordered them, Carry him here in his bed, and I will kill him.

¹⁶They went inside and found the household idol in the bed and the goats' hair pillow at its head.

¹⁷Saul asked Michal, Why have you tricked me like this and let my enemy escape? She answered, He said he would kill me if I didn't help him escape.

¹⁸David escaped and went to Samuel in Ramah and told him everything that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there.

¹⁹Saul was told that David was in Naioth in Ramah,

²⁰so he sent some men to arrest him. They saw the group of prophets dancing and shouting, with Samuel as their leader. Then the spirit of God took control of Saul's men, and they also began to dance and shout.

²¹When Saul heard of this, he sent more messengers, and they also began to dance and shout. He sent messengers the third time, and the same thing happened to them.

²²Then he himself started out to Ramah. When he came to the large well in Secu, he asked where Samuel and David were and was told that they were at Naioth.

²³As he was going there, the spirit of God took control of him also, and he danced and shouted all the way to Naioth.

²⁴He took off his clothes and danced and shouted in Samuel's presence, and lay naked all that day and all that night. (This is how the saying originated, Has even Saul become a prophet?)

20¹Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and went to Jonathan. What have I done? he asked. What crime

have I committed? What wrong have I done to your father to make him want to kill me?

²Jonathan answered, God forbid that you should die! My father tells me everything he does, important or not, and he would not hide this from me. It just isn't so!

³But David answered, Your father knows very well how much you like me, and he has decided not to let you know what he plans to do, because you would be deeply hurt. I swear to you by the living LORD that I am only a step away from death!

⁴Jonathan said, I'll do anything you want.

⁵Tomorrow is the New Moon Festival, David replied, and I am supposed to eat with the king. But if it's all right with you, I will go and hide in the fields until the evening of the day after tomorrow.

⁶If your father notices that I am not at the table, tell him that I begged your permission to hurry home to Bethlehem, since it's the time for the annual sacrifice there for my whole family.

⁷ If he says, All right, I will be safe; but if he becomes angry, you will know that he is determined to harm me.

⁸ Please do me this favor, and keep the sacred promise you made to me. But if I'm guilty, kill me yourself! Why take me to your father to be killed?

⁹ Don't even think such a thing! Jonathan answered. If I knew for sure that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn't I tell you?

¹⁰ David then asked, Who will let me know if your father answers you angrily?

¹¹ Let's go out to the fields, Jonathan answered. So they went,

¹² and Jonathan said to David, May the LORD God of Israel be our witness! At this time tomorrow and on the following day I will question my father. If his attitude toward you is good, I will send you word.

¹³ If he intends to harm you, may the LORD strike me dead if I don't let you know about it and get you safely away. May the LORD be with you as he was with my father!

¹⁴And if I remain alive, please keep your sacred promise and be loyal to me; but if I die,

¹⁵show the same kind of loyalty to my family forever. And when the LORD has completely destroyed all your enemies,

¹⁶may our promise to each other still be unbroken. If it is broken, the LORD will punish you.

¹⁷Once again Jonathan made David promise to love him, for Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself.

¹⁸Then Jonathan said to him, Since tomorrow is the New Moon Festival, your absence will be noticed if you aren't at the meal.

¹⁹The day after tomorrow your absence will be noticed even more; so go to the place where you hid yourself the other time, and hide behind the pile of stones there.

²⁰I will then shoot three arrows at it, as though it were a target.

²¹Then I will tell my servant to go and find them. And if I tell him, Look, the arrows are on this side of you; get them, that means that you are safe and can

come out. I swear by the living LORD that you will be in no danger.

²²But if I tell him, The arrows are on the other side of you, then leave, because the LORD is sending you away.

²³As for the promise we have made to each other, the LORD will make sure that we will keep it forever.

²⁴So David hid in the fields. At the New Moon Festival, King Saul came to the meal

²⁵and sat in his usual place by the wall. Abner sat next to him, and Jonathan sat across the table from him. David's place was empty,

²⁶but Saul said nothing that day, because he thought, Something has happened to him, and he is not ritually pure.

²⁷On the following day, the day after the New Moon Festival, David's place was still empty, and Saul asked Jonathan, Why didn't David come to the meal either yesterday or today?

²⁸Jonathan answered, He begged me to let him go to Bethlehem.

²⁹Please let me go, he said, because our family is celebrating the sacrificial

feast in town, and my brother ordered me to be there. So then, if you are my friend, let me go and see my relatives. That is why he isn't in his place at your table.

³⁰Saul became furious with Jonathan and said to him, How rebellious and faithless your mother was! Now I know you are taking sides with David and are disgracing yourself and that mother of yours!

³¹Don't you realize that as long as David is alive, you will never be king of this country? Now go and bring him here -- he must die!

³²Why should he die? Jonathan replied. What has he done?

³³At that, Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to kill him, and Jonathan realized that his father was really determined to kill David.

³⁴Jonathan got up from the table in a rage and ate nothing that day -- the second day of the New Moon Festival. He was deeply distressed about David, because Saul had insulted him.

³⁵The following morning Jonathan went to the fields to meet David, as they had agreed. He took a young boy with him

³⁶and said to him, Run and find the arrows I'm going to shoot. The boy ran, and Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him.

³⁷When the boy reached the place where the arrow had fallen, Jonathan shouted to him, The arrow is farther on!

³⁸Don't just stand there! Hurry up! The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master,

³⁹not knowing what it all meant; only Jonathan and David knew.

⁴⁰Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and told him to take them back to town.

⁴¹After the boy had left, David got up from behind the pile of stones, fell on his knees and bowed with his face to the ground three times. Both he and Jonathan were crying as they kissed each other; David's grief was even greater than Jonathan's.

⁴²Then Jonathan said to David, God be with you. The LORD will make sure that you and I, and your descendants and mine, will forever keep the sacred

promise we have made to each other. Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

21 ¹David went to the priest Ahimelech in Nob. Ahimelech came out trembling to meet him and asked, Why did you come here all by yourself?

²I am here on the king's business, David answered. He told me not to let anyone know what he sent me to do. As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place.

³Now, then, what supplies do you have? Give me five loaves of bread or anything else you have.

⁴The priest said, I don't have any ordinary bread, only sacred bread; you can have it if your men haven't had sexual relations recently.

⁵Of course they haven't, answered David. My men always keep themselves ritually pure even when we go out on an ordinary mission; how much more this time when we are on a special mission!

⁶So the priest gave David the sacred bread, because the only bread he had was the loaves offered to God, which had

been removed from the sacred table and replaced by fresh bread.

⁷ (Saul's chief herdsman, Doeg, who was from Edom, happened to be there that day, because he had to fulfill a religious obligation.)

⁸ David said to Ahimelech, Do you have a spear or a sword you can give me? The king's orders made me leave in such a hurry that I didn't have time to get my sword or any other weapon.

⁹ Ahimelech answered, I have the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in Elah Valley; it is behind the ephod, wrapped in a cloth. If you want it, take it -- it's the only weapon here. Give it to me, David said. There is not a better sword anywhere!

¹⁰ So David left, fleeing from Saul, and went to King Achish of Gath.

¹¹ The king's officials said to Achish, Isn't this David, the king of his country? This is the man about whom the women sang, as they danced, Saul has killed thousands, but David has killed tens of thousands.

¹²Their words made a deep impression on David, and he became very much afraid of King Achish.

¹³So whenever David was around them, he pretended to be insane and acted like a madman when they tried to restrain him; he would scribble on the city gates and let spit drool down his beard.

¹⁴So Achish said to his officials, Look! The man is crazy! Why did you bring him to me?

¹⁵Don't I have enough madmen already? Why bring another one to bother me with his crazy actions right here in my own house?

22¹ David fled from the city of Gath and went to a cave near the town of Adullam. When his brothers and the rest of the family heard that he was there, they joined him.

²People who were oppressed or in debt or dissatisfied went to him, about four hundred men in all, and he became their leader.

³David went on from there to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, Please let my father and mother come

and stay with you until I find out what God is going to do for me.

⁴So David left his parents with the king of Moab, and they stayed there as long as David was hiding out in the cave.

⁵Then the prophet Gad came to David and said, Don't stay here; go at once to the land of Judah. So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

⁶One day Saul was in Gibeah, sitting under a tamarisk tree on a hill, with his spear in his hand, and all his officers were standing around him. He was told that David and his men had been located,

⁷and he said to his officers, Listen, men of Benjamin! Do you think that David will give fields and vineyards to all of you, and make you officers in his army?

⁸Is that why you are plotting against me? Not one of you told me that my own son had made an alliance with David. No one is concerned about me or tells me that David, one of my own men, is right now looking for a chance to kill me, and that my son has encouraged him!

⁹Doeg was standing there with Saul's officers, and he said, I saw David when

he went to Ahimelech son of Ahitub in Nob.

¹⁰Ahimelech asked the LORD what David should do, and then he gave David some food and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

¹¹So King Saul sent for the priest Ahimelech and all his relatives, who were also priests in Nob, and they came to him.

¹²Saul said to Ahimelech, Listen, Ahimelech! At your service, sir, he answered.

¹³Saul asked him, Why are you and David plotting against me? Why did you give him some food and a sword, and consult God for him? Now he has turned against me and is waiting for a chance to kill me!

¹⁴Ahimelech answered, David is the most faithful officer you have! He is your own son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard, and highly respected by everyone in the royal court.

¹⁵Yes, I consulted God for him, and it wasn't the first time. As for plotting against you, Your Majesty must not

accuse me or anyone else in my family. I don't know anything about this matter!

¹⁶The king said, Ahimelech, you and all your relatives must die.

¹⁷Then he said to the guards standing near him, Kill the LORD's priests! They conspired with David and did not tell me that he had run away, even though they knew it all along. But the guards refused to lift a hand to kill the LORD's priests.

¹⁸So Saul said to Doeg, You kill them! -- and Doeg killed them all. On that day he killed eighty-five priests who were qualified to carry the ephod.

¹⁹Saul also had all the other inhabitants of Nob, the city of priests, put to death: men and women, children and babies, cattle, donkeys, and sheep -- they were all killed.

²⁰But Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons, escaped, and went and joined David.

²¹He told him how Saul had slaughtered the priests of the LORD.

²²David said to him, When I saw Doeg there that day, I knew that he would be sure to tell Saul. So I am responsible for the death of all your relatives.

²³ Stay with me and don't be afraid. Saul wants to kill both you and me, but you will be safe with me.

23 ¹ David heard that the Philistines were attacking the town of Keilah and were stealing the newly harvested grain.

² So he asked the LORD, Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Yes, the LORD answered. Attack them and save Keilah.

³ But David's men said to him, We have enough to be afraid of here in Judah; it will be much worse if we go to Keilah and attack the Philistine forces!

⁴ So David consulted the LORD again, and the LORD said to him, Go and attack Keilah, because I will give you victory over the Philistines.

⁵ So David and his men went to Keilah and attacked the Philistines; they killed many of them and took their livestock. And so it was that David saved the town.

⁶ When Abiathar son of Ahimelech escaped and joined David in Keilah, he took the ephod with him.

⁷ Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, God has put him in my power. David has trapped himself by

going into a walled town with fortified gates.

⁸So Saul called his troops to war, to march against Keilah and besiege David and his men.

⁹When David heard that Saul was planning to attack him, he said to the priest Abiathar, Bring the ephod here.

¹⁰Then David said, LORD, God of Israel, I have heard that Saul is planning to come to Keilah and destroy it on account of me, your servant.

¹¹Will the citizens of Keilah hand me over to Saul? Will Saul really come, as I have heard? LORD, God of Israel, I beg you to answer me! The LORD answered, Saul will come.

¹²And will the citizens of Keilah hand my men and me over to Saul? David asked again. They will, the LORD answered.

¹³So David and his men -- about six hundred in all -- left Keilah at once and kept on the move. When Saul heard that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up his plan.

¹⁴David stayed in hiding in the hill country, in the wilderness near Ziph.

Saul was always trying to find him, but God did not turn David over to him.

¹⁵David saw that Saul was out to kill him. David was at Horesh, in the wilderness near Ziph.

¹⁶Jonathan went to him there and encouraged him with assurances of God's protection,

¹⁷saying to him, Don't be afraid. My father Saul won't be able to harm you. He knows very well that you are the one who will be the king of Israel and that I will be next in rank to you.

¹⁸The two of them made a sacred promise of friendship to each other. David stayed at Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

¹⁹Some people from Ziph went to Saul at Gibeah and said, David is hiding out in our territory at Horesh on Mount Hachilah, in the southern part of the Judean wilderness.

²⁰We know, Your Majesty, how much you want to capture him; so come to our territory, and we will make sure that you catch him.

²¹Saul answered, May the LORD bless you for being so kind to me!

²²Go and make sure once more; find out for certain where he is and who has seen him there. I hear that he is very cunning.

²³Find out exactly the places where he hides, and be sure to bring back a report to me right away. Then I will go with you, and if he is still in the region, I will hunt him down, even if I have to search the whole land of Judah.

²⁴So they left and returned to Ziph ahead of Saul. David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in a desolate valley in the southern part of the Judean wilderness.

²⁵Saul and his men set out to look for David, but he heard about it and went to a rocky hill in the wilderness of Maon and stayed there. When Saul heard about this, he went after David.

²⁶Saul and his men were on one side of the hill, separated from David and his men, who were on the other side. They were hurrying to get away from Saul and his men, who were closing in on them and were about to capture them.

²⁷ Just then a messenger arrived and said to Saul, Come back at once! The Philistines are invading the country!

²⁸ So Saul stopped pursuing David and went to fight the Philistines. That is why that place is called Separation Hill.

²⁹ David left and went to the region of Engedi, where he stayed in hiding.

24¹ When Saul came back from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David was in the wilderness near Engedi.

² Saul took three thousand of the best soldiers in Israel and went looking for David and his men east of Wild Goat Rocks.

³ He came to a cave close to some sheep pens by the road and went in to relieve himself. It happened to be the very cave in which David and his men were hiding far back in the cave.

⁴ They said to him, This is your chance! The LORD has told you that he would put your enemy in your power and you could do to him whatever you wanted to. David crept over and cut off a piece of Saul's robe without Saul's knowing it.

⁵ But then David's conscience began to hurt,

⁶ and he said to his men, May the LORD keep me from doing any harm to my master, whom the LORD chose as king! I must not harm him in the least, because he is the king chosen by the LORD!

⁷ So David convinced his men that they should not attack Saul. Saul got up, left the cave, and started away.

⁸ Then David went out after him and called to him, Your Majesty! Saul turned around, and David bowed down to the ground in respect

⁹ and said, Why do you listen to people who say that I am trying to harm you?

¹⁰ You can see for yourself that just now in the cave the LORD put you in my power. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I felt sorry for you and said that I would not harm you in the least, because you are the one whom the LORD chose to be king.

¹¹ Look, my father, look at the piece of your robe I am holding! I could have killed you, but instead I only cut this off. This should convince you that I have no thought of rebelling against you or of

harming you. You are hunting me down to kill me, even though I have not done you any wrong.

¹²May the LORD judge which one of us is wrong! May he punish you for your action against me, for I will not harm you in the least.

¹³You know the old saying, Evil is done only by evil people. And so I will not harm you.

¹⁴Look at what the king of Israel is trying to kill! Look at what he is chasing! A dead dog, a flea!

¹⁵The LORD will judge, and he will decide which one of us is wrong. May he look into the matter, defend me, and save me from you.

¹⁶When David had finished speaking, Saul said, Is that really you, David my son? And he started crying.

¹⁷Then he said to David, You are right, and I am wrong. You have been so good to me, while I have done such wrong to you!

¹⁸Today you have shown how good you are to me, because you did not kill me, even though the LORD put me in your power.

¹⁹How often does someone catch an enemy and then let him get away unharmed? The LORD bless you for what you have done to me today!

²⁰Now I am sure that you will be king of Israel and that the kingdom will continue under your rule.

²¹But promise me in the LORD's name that you will spare my descendants, so that my name and my family's name will not be completely forgotten.

²²David promised that he would. Then Saul went back home, and David and his men went back to their hiding place.

25¹Samuel died, and all the Israelites came together and mourned for him. Then they buried him at his home in Ramah. After this, David went to the wilderness of Paran.

²There was a man of the clan of Caleb named Nabal, who was from the town of Maon, and who owned land near the town of Carmel. He was a very rich man, the owner of three thousand sheep and one thousand goats. His wife Abigail was beautiful and intelligent, but he was a mean, bad-tempered man. Nabal was shearing his sheep in Carmel,

³ (25: 2)

⁴ and David, who was in the wilderness, heard about it,

⁵ so he sent ten young men with orders to go to Carmel, find Nabal, and give him his greetings.

⁶ He instructed them to say to Nabal: David sends you greetings, my friend, with his best wishes for you, your family, and all that is yours.

⁷ He heard that you were shearing your sheep, and he wants you to know that your shepherds have been with us and we did not harm them. Nothing that belonged to them was stolen all the time they were at Carmel.

⁸ Just ask them, and they will tell you. We have come on a feast day, and David asks you to receive us kindly. Please give what you can to us your servants and to your dear friend David.

⁹ David's men delivered this message to Nabal in David's name. Then they waited there,

¹⁰ and Nabal finally answered, David? Who is he? I've never heard of him! The country is full of runaway slaves nowadays!

¹¹ I'm not going to take my bread and water, and the animals I have butchered for my sheepshearers, and give them to people who come from I don't know where!

¹² David's men went back to him and told him what Nabal had said.

¹³ Buckle on your swords! he ordered, and they all did. David also buckled on his sword and left with about four hundred of his men, leaving two hundred behind with the supplies.

¹⁴ One of Nabal's servants said to Nabal's wife Abigail, Have you heard? David sent some messengers from the wilderness with greetings for our master, but he insulted them.

¹⁵ Yet they were very good to us; they never bothered us, and all the time we were with them in the fields, nothing that belonged to us was stolen.

¹⁶ They protected us day and night the whole time we were with them looking after our flocks.

¹⁷ Please think this over and decide what to do. This could be disastrous for our master and all his family. He is so mean that he won't listen to anybody!

¹⁸ Abigail quickly gathered two hundred loaves of bread, two leather bags full of wine, five roasted sheep, two bushels of roasted grain, a hundred bunches of raisins, and two hundred cakes of dried figs, and loaded them on donkeys.

¹⁹ Then she said to the servants, You go on ahead and I will follow you. But she said nothing to her husband.

²⁰ She was riding her donkey around a bend on a hillside when suddenly she met David and his men coming toward her.

²¹ David had been thinking, Why did I ever protect that fellow's property out here in the wilderness? Not a thing that belonged to him was stolen, and this is how he pays me back for the help I gave him!

²² May God strike me dead if I don't kill every last one of those men before morning!

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly dismounted and threw herself on the ground

²⁴ at David's feet, and said to him, Please, sir, listen to me! Let me take the blame.

²⁵ Please, don't pay any attention to Nabal, that good-for-nothing! He is exactly what his name means -- a fool! I wasn't there when your servants arrived, sir.

²⁶ It is the LORD who has kept you from taking revenge and killing your enemies. And now I swear to you by the living LORD that your enemies and all who want to harm you will be punished like Nabal.

²⁷ Please, sir, accept this present I have brought you, and give it to your men.

²⁸ Please forgive me, sir, for any wrong I have done. The LORD will make you king, and your descendants also, because you are fighting his battles; and you will not do anything evil as long as you live.

²⁹ If anyone should attack you and try to kill you, the LORD your God will keep you safe, as someone guards a precious treasure. As for your enemies, however, he will throw them away, as someone hurls stones with a sling.

³⁰ And when the LORD has done all the good things he has promised you and has made you king of Israel,

³¹ then you will not have to feel regret or remorse, sir, for having killed without cause or for having taken your own revenge. And when the LORD has blessed you, sir, please do not forget me.

³² David said to her, Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you today to meet me!

³³ Thank God for your good sense and for what you have done today in keeping me from the crime of murder and from taking my own revenge.

³⁴ The LORD has kept me from harming you. But I swear by the living God of Israel that if you had not hurried to meet me, all of Nabal's men would have been dead by morning!

³⁵ Then David accepted what she had brought him and said to her, Go back home and don't worry. I will do what you want.

³⁶ Abigail went back to Nabal, who was at home having a feast fit for a king. He was drunk and in a good mood, so she did not tell him anything until the next morning.

³⁷ Then, after he had sobered up, she told him everything. He suffered a stroke and was completely paralyzed.

³⁸ Some ten days later the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

³⁹ When David heard that Nabal had died, he said, Praise the LORD! He has taken revenge on Nabal for insulting me and has kept me his servant from doing wrong. The LORD has punished Nabal for his evil. Then David sent a proposal of marriage to Abigail.

⁴⁰ His servants went to her at Carmel and said to her, David sent us to take you to him to be his wife.

⁴¹ Abigail bowed down to the ground and said, I am his servant, ready to wash the feet of his servants.

⁴² She rose quickly and mounted her donkey. Accompanied by her five maids, she went with David's servants and became his wife.

⁴³ David had married Ahinoam from Jezreel, and now Abigail also became his wife.

⁴⁴ Meanwhile, Saul had given his daughter Michal, who had been David's

wife, to Palti son of Laish, who was from the town of Gallim.

26¹ Some men from Ziph came to Saul at Gibeah and told him that David was hiding on Mount Hachilah at the edge of the Judean wilderness.

² Saul went at once with three thousand of the best soldiers in Israel to the wilderness of Ziph to look for David,

³ and camped by the road on Mount Hachilah. David was still in the wilderness, and when he learned that Saul had come to look for him,

⁴ he sent spies and found out that Saul was indeed there.

⁵ He went at once and located the exact place where Saul and Abner son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, slept. Saul slept inside the camp, and his men camped around him.

⁶ Then David asked Ahimelech the Hittite, and Abishai the brother of Joab (their mother was Zeruah), Which of you two will go to Saul's camp with me? I will, Abishai answered.

⁷ So that night David and Abishai entered Saul's camp and found Saul sleeping in the center of the camp

with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the troops were sleeping around him.

⁸Abishai said to David, God has put your enemy in your power tonight. Now let me plunge his own spear through him and pin him to the ground with just one blow -- I won't have to strike twice!

⁹But David said, You must not harm him! The LORD will certainly punish whoever harms his chosen king.

¹⁰By the living LORD, David continued, I know that the LORD himself will kill Saul, either when his time comes to die a natural death or when he dies in battle.

¹¹The LORD forbid that I should try to harm the one whom the LORD has made king! Let's take his spear and his water jar, and go.

¹²So David took the spear and the water jar from right beside Saul's head, and he and Abishai left. No one saw it or knew what had happened or even woke up -- they were all sound asleep, because the LORD had sent a heavy sleep on them all.

¹³Then David crossed over to the other side of the valley to the top of the hill, a safe distance away,

¹⁴and shouted to Saul's troops and to Abner, Abner! Can you hear me? Who is that shouting and waking up the king? Abner asked.

¹⁵David answered, Abner, aren't you the greatest man in Israel? So why aren't you protecting your master, the king? Just now someone entered the camp to kill your master.

¹⁶You failed in your duty, Abner! I swear by the living LORD that all of you deserve to die, because you have not protected your master, whom the LORD made king. Look! Where is the king's spear? Where is the water jar that was right by his head?

¹⁷Saul recognized David's voice and asked, David, is that you, my son? Yes, Your Majesty, David answered.

¹⁸And he added, Why, sir, are you still pursuing me, your servant? What have I done? What crime have I committed?

¹⁹Your Majesty, listen to what I have to say. If it is the LORD who has turned you against me, an offering to him will make

him change his mind; but if some people have done it, may the LORD's curse fall on them. For they have driven me out from the LORD's land to a country where I can only worship foreign gods.

²⁰Don't let me be killed on foreign soil, away from the LORD. Why should the king of Israel come to kill a flea like me? Why should he hunt me down like a wild bird?

²¹Saul answered, I have done wrong. Come back, David, my son! I will never harm you again, because you have spared my life tonight. I have been a fool! I have done a terrible thing!

²²David replied, Here is your spear, Your Majesty. Let one of your men come over and get it.

²³The LORD rewards those who are faithful and righteous. Today he put you in my power, but I did not harm you, whom the LORD made king.

²⁴Just as I have spared your life today, may the LORD do the same to me and free me from all troubles!

²⁵Saul said to David, God bless you, my son! You will succeed in everything

you do! So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.

27 ¹ David said to himself, One of these days Saul will kill me. The best thing for me to do is to escape to Philistia. Then Saul will give up looking for me in Israel, and I will be safe.

² So David and his six hundred men went over at once to Achish son of Maoch, king of Gath.

³ David and his men settled there in Gath with their families. David had his two wives with him, Ahinoam from Jezreel, and Abigail, Nabal's widow, from Carmel.

⁴ When Saul heard that David had fled to Gath, he gave up trying to find him.

⁵ David said to Achish, If you are my friend, let me have a small town to live in. There is no need, sir, for me to live with you in the capital city.

⁶ So Achish gave him the town of Ziklag, and for this reason Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since.

⁷ David lived in Philistia for sixteen months.

⁸ During that time David and his men would attack the people of Geshur, Girzi,

and Amalek, who had been living in the region a very long time. He would raid their land as far as Shur, all the way down to Egypt,

⁹killing all the men and women and taking the sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and even the clothes. Then he would come back to Achish,

¹⁰who would ask him, Where did you go on a raid this time? and David would tell him that he had gone to the southern part of Judah or to the territory of the clan of Jerahmeel or to the territory where the Kenites lived.

¹¹David would kill everyone, men and women, so that no one could go back to Gath and report what he and his men had really done. This is what David did the whole time he lived in Philistia.

¹²But Achish trusted David and said to himself, He is hated so much by his own people the Israelites that he will have to serve me all his life.

28¹ Some time later the Philistines gathered their troops to fight Israel, and Achish said to David, Of course you understand that you and your men are to fight on my side.

²Of course, David answered. I am your servant, and you will see for yourself what I can do. Achish said, Good! I will make you my permanent bodyguard.

³Now Samuel had died, and all the Israelites had mourned for him and had buried him in his hometown of Ramah. Saul had forced all the fortunetellers and mediums to leave Israel.

⁴The Philistine troops assembled and camped near the town of Shunem; Saul gathered the Israelites and camped at Mount Gilboa.

⁵When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was terrified,

⁶and so he asked the LORD what to do. But the LORD did not answer him at all, either by dreams or by the use of Urim and Thummim or by prophets.

⁷Then Saul ordered his officials, Find me a woman who is a medium, and I will go and consult her. There is one in Endor, they answered.

⁸So Saul disguised himself; he put on different clothes, and after dark he went with two of his men to see the woman. Consult the spirits for me and tell me

what is going to happen, he said to her. Call up the spirit of the man I name.

⁹The woman answered, Surely you know what King Saul has done, how he forced the fortunetellers and mediums to leave Israel. Why, then, are you trying to trap me and get me killed?

¹⁰Then Saul made a sacred vow. By the living LORD I promise that you will not be punished for doing this, he told her.

¹¹Whom shall I call up for you? the woman asked. Samuel, he answered.

¹²When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed and said to Saul, Why have you tricked me? You are King Saul!

¹³Don't be afraid! the king said to her. What do you see? I see a spirit coming up from the earth, she answered.

¹⁴What does it look like? he asked. It's an old man coming up, she answered. He is wearing a cloak. Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed to the ground in respect.

¹⁵Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disturbed me? Why did you make me come back? Saul answered, I am in great trouble! The Philistines are at war with me, and God has abandoned me.

He doesn't answer me any more, either by prophets or by dreams. And so I have called you, for you to tell me what I must do.

¹⁶Samuel said, Why do you call me when the LORD has abandoned you and become your enemy?

¹⁷The LORD has done to you what he told you through me: he has taken the kingdom away from you and given it to David instead.

¹⁸You disobeyed the LORD's command and did not completely destroy the Amalekites and all they had. That is why the LORD is doing this to you now.

¹⁹He will give you and Israel over to the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons will join me, and the LORD will also give the army of Israel over to the Philistines.

²⁰At once Saul fell down and lay stretched out on the ground, terrified by what Samuel had said. He was weak, because he had not eaten anything all day and all night.

²¹The woman went over to him and saw that he was terrified, so she said to him, Please, sir, I risked my life by doing what you asked.

²² Now please do what I ask. Let me fix you some food. You must eat so that you will be strong enough to travel.

²³ Saul refused and said he would not eat anything. But his officers also urged him to eat. He finally gave in, got up from the ground, and sat on the bed.

²⁴ The woman quickly killed a calf which she had been fattening. Then she took some flour, prepared it, and baked some bread without yeast.

²⁵ She set the food before Saul and his officers, and they ate it. And they left that same night.

29¹ The Philistines brought all their troops together at Aphek, while the Israelites camped at the spring in Jezreel Valley.

² The five Philistine kings marched out with their units of a hundred and of a thousand men; David and his men marched in the rear with King Achish.

³ The Philistine commanders saw them and asked, What are these Hebrews doing here? Achish answered, This is David, an official of King Saul of Israel. He has been with me for quite some time

now. He has done nothing I can find fault with since the day he came over to me.

⁴But the Philistine commanders were angry with Achish and said to him, Send that fellow back to the town you gave him. Don't let him go into battle with us; he might turn against us during the fighting. What better way is there for him to win back his master's favor than by the death of our men?

⁵After all, this is David, the one about whom the women sang, as they danced, Saul has killed thousands, but David has killed tens of thousands.

⁶Achish called David and said to him, I swear by the living God of Israel that you have been loyal to me; and I would be pleased to have you go with me and fight in this battle. I have not found any fault in you from the day you came over to me. But the other kings don't approve of you.

⁷So go back home in peace, and don't do anything that would displease them.

⁸David answered, What have I done wrong, sir? If, as you say, you haven't found any fault in me since the day I started serving you, why shouldn't I go

with you, my master and king, and fight your enemies?

⁹I agree, Achish replied. I consider you as loyal as an angel of God. But the other kings have said that you can't go with us into battle.

¹⁰So then, David, tomorrow morning all of you who left Saul and came over to me will have to get up early and leave as soon as it's light.

¹¹So David and his men started out early the following morning to go back to Philistia, and the Philistines went on to Jezreel.

30¹Two days later David and his men arrived back at Ziklag. The Amalekites had raided southern Judah and attacked Ziklag. They had burned down the town

²and captured all the women; they had not killed anyone, but had taken everyone with them when they left.

³When David and his men arrived, they found that the town had been burned down and that their wives, sons, and daughters had been carried away.

⁴ David and his men started crying and did not stop until they were completely exhausted.

⁵ Even David's two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, had been taken away.

⁶ David was now in great trouble, because his men were all very bitter about losing their children, and they were threatening to stone him; but the LORD his God gave him courage.

⁷ David said to the priest Abiathar son of Ahimelech, Bring me the ephod, and Abiathar brought it to him.

⁸ David asked the LORD, Shall I go after those raiders? And will I catch them? He answered, Go after them; you will catch them and rescue the captives.

⁹ So David and his six hundred men started out, and when they arrived at Besor Brook, some of them stayed there.

¹⁰ David continued on his way with four hundred men; the other two hundred men were too tired to cross the brook and so stayed behind.

¹¹ The men with David found a young Egyptian out in the country and brought him to David. They gave him some food and water,

¹²some dried figs, and two bunches of raisins. After he had eaten, his strength returned; he had not had anything to eat or drink for three full days.

¹³David asked him, Who is your master, and where are you from? I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite, he answered. My master left me behind three days ago because I got sick.

¹⁴We had raided the territory of the Cherethites in the southern part of Judah and the territory of the clan of Caleb, and we burned down Ziklag.

¹⁵Will you lead me to those raiders? David asked him. He answered, I will if you promise me in God's name that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master.

¹⁶And he led David to them. The raiders were scattered all over the place, eating, drinking, and celebrating because of the enormous amount of loot they had captured from Philistia and Judah.

¹⁷At dawn the next day David attacked them and fought until evening. Except for four hundred young men who mounted camels and got away, none of them escaped.

¹⁸David rescued everyone and everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives;

¹⁹nothing at all was missing. David got back all his men's sons and daughters, and all the loot the Amalekites had taken.

²⁰He also recovered all the flocks and herds; his men drove all the livestock in front of them and said, This belongs to David!

²¹Then David went back to the two hundred men who had been too weak to go with him and had stayed behind at Besor Brook. They came forward to meet David and his men, and David went up to them and greeted them warmly.

²²But some mean and worthless men who had gone with David said, They didn't go with us, and so we won't give them any of the loot. They can take their wives and children and go away.

²³But David answered, My brothers, you can't do this with what the LORD has given us! He kept us safe and gave us victory over the raiders.

²⁴No one can agree with what you say! All must share alike: whoever stays

behind with the supplies gets the same share as the one who goes into battle.

²⁵David made this a rule, and it has been followed in Israel ever since.

²⁶When David returned to Ziklag, he sent part of the loot to his friends, the leaders of Judah, with the message, Here is a present for you from the loot we took from the LORD's enemies.

²⁷He sent it to the people in Bethel, to the people in Ramah in the southern part of Judah, and to the people in the towns of Jattir,

²⁸Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa,

²⁹and Racal; to the clan of Jerahmeel, to the Kenites,

³⁰and to the people in the towns of Hormah, Borashan, Athach,

³¹and Hebron. He sent it to all the places where he and his men had roamed.

31 ¹The Philistines fought a battle against the Israelites on Mount Gilboa. Many Israelites were killed there, and the rest of them, including King Saul and his sons, fled.

² But the Philistines caught up with them and killed three of Saul's sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua.

³ The fighting was heavy around Saul, and he himself was hit by enemy arrows and badly wounded.

⁴ He said to the young man carrying his weapons, Draw your sword and kill me, so that these godless Philistines won't gloat over me and kill me. But the young man was too terrified to do it. So Saul took his own sword and threw himself on it.

⁵ The young man saw that Saul was dead, so he too threw himself on his own sword and died with Saul.

⁶ And that is how Saul, his three sons, and the young man died; all of Saul's men died that day.

⁷ When the Israelites on the other side of Jezreel Valley and east of the Jordan River heard that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons had been killed, they abandoned their towns and fled. Then the Philistines came and occupied the towns.

⁸ The day after the battle the Philistines went to plunder the corpses, and they

found the bodies of Saul and his three sons lying on Mount Gilboa.

⁹They cut off Saul's head, stripped off his armor, and sent messengers with them throughout Philistia to tell the good news to their idols and to their people.

¹⁰Then they put his weapons in the temple of the goddess Astarte, and they nailed his body to the wall of the city of Beth Shan.

¹¹When the people of Jabesh in Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul,

¹²the bravest men started out and marched all night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall, brought them back to Jabesh, and burned them there.

¹³Then they took the bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in town, and fasted for seven days.

2 Samuel

1 ¹After Saul's death David came back from his victory over the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag for two days.

²The next day a young man arrived from Saul's camp. To show his grief, he had torn his clothes and put dirt on his head. He went to David and bowed to the ground in respect.

³David asked him, Where have you come from? I have escaped from the Israelite camp, he answered.

⁴Tell me what happened, David said. Our army ran away from the battle, he replied, and many of our men were killed. Saul and his son Jonathan were also killed.

⁵How do you know that Saul and Jonathan are dead? David asked him.

⁶He answered, I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and I saw that Saul was leaning on his spear and that the chariots and cavalry of the enemy were closing in on him.

⁷ Then he turned around, saw me, and called to me. I answered, Yes, sir!

⁸ He asked who I was, and I told him that I was an Amalekite.

⁹ Then he said, Come here and kill me! I have been badly wounded, and I'm about to die.

¹⁰ So I went up to him and killed him, because I knew that he would die anyway as soon as he fell. Then I took the crown from his head and the bracelet from his arm, and I have brought them to you, sir.

¹¹ David tore his clothes in sorrow, and all his men did the same.

¹² They grieved and mourned and fasted until evening for Saul and Jonathan and for Israel, the people of the LORD, because so many had been killed in battle.

¹³ David asked the young man who had brought him the news, Where are you from? He answered, I'm an Amalekite, but I live in your country.

¹⁴ David asked him, How is it that you dared kill the LORD's chosen king?

¹⁵ Then David called one of his men and said, Kill him! The man struck the Amalekite and mortally wounded him,
¹⁶ and David said to the Amalekite, You brought this on yourself. You condemned yourself when you confessed that you killed the one whom the LORD chose to be king.

¹⁷ David sang this lament for Saul and his son Jonathan,

¹⁸ and ordered it to be taught to the people of Judah. (It is recorded in The Book of Jashar.)

¹⁹ On the hills of Israel our leaders are dead! The bravest of our soldiers have fallen!

²⁰ Do not announce it in Gath or in the streets of Ashkelon. Do not make the women of Philistia glad; do not let the daughters of pagans rejoice.

²¹ May no rain or dew fall on Gilboa's hills; may its fields be always barren! For the shields of the brave lie there in disgrace; the shield of Saul is no longer polished with oil.

²² Jonathan's bow was deadly, the sword of Saul was merciless, striking down the mighty, killing the enemy.

²³ Saul and Jonathan, so wonderful and dear; together in life, together in death; swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

²⁴ Women of Israel, mourn for Saul! He clothed you in rich scarlet dresses and adorned you with jewels and gold.

²⁵ The brave soldiers have fallen, they were killed in battle. Jonathan lies dead in the hills.

²⁶ I grieve for you, my brother Jonathan; how dear you were to me! How wonderful was your love for me, better even than the love of women.

²⁷ The brave soldiers have fallen, their weapons abandoned and useless.

2¹ After this, David asked the LORD, Shall I go and take control of one of the towns of Judah? Yes, the LORD answered. Which one? David asked. Hebron, the LORD said.

² So David went to Hebron, taking with him his two wives: Ahinoam, who was from Jezreel, and Abigail, Nabal's widow, who was from Carmel.

³ He also took his men and their families, and they settled in the towns around Hebron.

⁴Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and anointed David as king of Judah. When David heard that the people of Jabesh in Gilead had buried Saul,

⁵he sent some men there with the message: May the LORD bless you for showing your loyalty to your king by burying him.

⁶And now may the LORD be kind and faithful to you. I too will treat you well because of what you have done.

⁷Be strong and brave! Saul your king is dead, and the people of Judah have anointed me as their king.

⁸The commander of Saul's army, Abner son of Ner, had fled with Saul's son Ishbosheth across the Jordan to Mahanaim.

⁹There Abner made Ishbosheth king of the territories of Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin, and indeed over all Israel.

¹⁰He was forty years old when he was made king of Israel, and he ruled for two years. But the tribe of Judah was loyal to David,

¹¹ and he ruled in Hebron over Judah for seven and a half years.

¹² Abner and the officials of Ishbosheth went from Mahanaim to the city of Gibeon.

¹³ Joab, whose mother was Zeruah, and David's other officials met them at the pool, where they all sat down, one group on one side of the pool and the other group on the opposite side.

¹⁴ Abner said to Joab, Let's have some of the young men from each side fight an armed contest. All right, Joab answered.

¹⁵ So twelve men, representing Ishbosheth and the tribe of Benjamin, fought twelve of David's men.

¹⁶ Each man caught his opponent by the head and plunged his sword into his opponent's side, so that all twenty-four of them fell down dead together. And so that place in Gibeon is called Field of Swords.

¹⁷ Then a furious battle broke out, and Abner and the Israelites were defeated by David's men.

¹⁸ The three sons of Zeruah were there: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel, who could run as fast as a wild deer,

¹⁹ started chasing Abner, running straight for him.

²⁰ Abner looked back and said, Is that you, Asahel? Yes, he answered.

²¹ Stop chasing me! Abner said. Run after one of the soldiers and take what he has. But Asahel kept on chasing him.

²² Once more Abner said to him, Stop chasing me! Why force me to kill you? How could I face your brother Joab?

²³ But Asahel would not quit; so Abner, with a backward thrust of his spear, struck him through the stomach so that the spear came out at his back. Asahel dropped to the ground dead, and everyone who came to the place where he was lying stopped and stood there.

²⁴ But Joab and Abishai started out after Abner, and at sunset they came to the hill of Ammah, which is to the east of Giah on the road to the wilderness of Gibeon.

²⁵ The men from the tribe of Benjamin gathered around Abner again and took their stand on the top of a hill.

²⁶ Abner called out to Joab, Do we have to go on fighting forever? Can't you see that in the end there will be nothing but

bitterness? We are your relatives. How long will it be before you order your men to stop chasing us?

²⁷I swear by the living God, Joab answered, that if you had not spoken, my men would have kept on chasing you until tomorrow morning.

²⁸Then Joab blew the trumpet as a signal for his men to stop pursuing the Israelites; and so the fighting stopped.

²⁹Abner and his men marched through the Jordan Valley all that night; they crossed the Jordan River, and after marching all the next morning, they arrived back at Mahanaim.

³⁰When Joab gave up the chase, he gathered all his men and found that nineteen of them were missing, in addition to Asahel.

³¹David's men had killed 360 of Abner's men from the tribe of Benjamin.

³²Joab and his men took Asahel's body and buried it in the family tomb at Bethlehem. Then they marched all night and at dawn arrived back at Hebron.

3¹The fighting between the forces supporting Saul's family and those supporting David went on for a long

time. As David became stronger and stronger, his opponents became weaker and weaker.

²The following six sons, in order of their birth, were born to David at Hebron: Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam, from Jezreel;

³Chileab, whose mother was Abigail, Nabal's widow, from Carmel; Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of King Talmi of Geshur;

⁴Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith; Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital;

⁵Ithream, whose mother was Eglah. All of these sons were born in Hebron.

⁶As the fighting continued between David's forces and the forces loyal to Saul's family, Abner became more and more powerful among Saul's followers.

⁷One day Ishbosheth son of Saul accused Abner of sleeping with Saul's concubine Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah.

⁸This made Abner furious. Do you think that I would betray Saul? Do you really think I'm serving Judah? he exclaimed. From the very first I have been loyal to the cause of your father Saul, his brothers, and his friends, and I have

kept you from being defeated by David; yet today you find fault with me about a woman!

⁹The LORD promised David that he would take the kingdom away from Saul and his descendants and would make David king of both Israel and Judah, from one end of the country to the other. Now may God strike me dead if I don't make this come true!

¹⁰(3: 9)

¹¹Ishbosheth was so afraid of Abner that he could not say a word.

¹²Abner sent messengers to David, who at that time was at Hebron, to say, Who is going to rule this land? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you win all Israel over to your side.

¹³Good! David answered. I will make an agreement with you on one condition: you must bring Saul's daughter Michal to me when you come to see me.

¹⁴And David also sent messengers to Ishbosheth to say, Give me back my wife Michal. I paid a hundred Philistine foreskins in order to marry her.

¹⁵So Ishbosheth had her taken from her husband Paltiel son of Laish.

¹⁶ Paltiel followed her all the way to the town of Bahurim, crying as he went. But when Abner said, Go back home, he did.

¹⁷ Abner went to the leaders of Israel and said to them, For a long time you have wanted David to be your king.

¹⁸ Now here is your chance. Remember that the LORD has said, I will use my servant David to rescue my people Israel from the Philistines and from all their other enemies.

¹⁹ Abner spoke also to the people of the tribe of Benjamin and then went to Hebron to tell David what the people of Benjamin and of Israel had agreed to do.

²⁰ When Abner came to David at Hebron with twenty men, David gave a feast for them.

²¹ Abner told David, I will go now and win all Israel over to Your Majesty. They will accept you as king, and then you will get what you have wanted and will rule over the whole land. David gave Abner a guarantee of safety and sent him on his way.

²² Later on Joab and David's other officials returned from a raid, bringing a large amount of loot with them. Abner,

however, was no longer there at Hebron with David, because David had sent him away with a guarantee of safety.

²³When Joab and his men arrived, he was told that Abner had come to King David and had been sent away with a guarantee of safety.

²⁴So Joab went to the king and said to him, What have you done? Abner came to you -- why did you let him go like that?

²⁵He came here to deceive you and to find out everything you do and everywhere you go. Surely you know that!

²⁶After leaving David, Joab sent messengers to get Abner, and they brought him back from Sirah Well; but David knew nothing about it.

²⁷When Abner arrived in Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gate, as though he wanted to speak privately with him, and there he stabbed him in the stomach. And so Abner was murdered because he had killed Joab's brother Asahel.

²⁸When David heard the news, he said, The LORD knows that my subjects and I

are completely innocent of the murder of Abner.

²⁹ May the punishment for it fall on Joab and all his family! In every generation may there be some man in his family who has gonorrhoea or a dreaded skin disease or is fit only to do a woman's work or is killed in battle or doesn't have enough to eat!

³⁰ So Joab and his brother Abishai took revenge on Abner for killing their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

³¹ Then David ordered Joab and his men to tear their clothes, wear sackcloth, and mourn for Abner. And at the funeral King David himself walked behind the coffin.

³² Abner was buried at Hebron, and the king wept aloud at the grave, and so did all the people.

³³ David sang this lament for Abner: Why did Abner have to die like a fool?

³⁴ His hands were not tied, And his feet were not bound; He died like someone killed by criminals! And the people wept for him again.

³⁵ All day long the people tried to get David to eat something, but he made a solemn promise, May God strike me

dead if I eat anything before the day is over!

³⁶They took note of this and were pleased. Indeed, everything the king did pleased the people.

³⁷All of David's people and all the people in Israel understood that the king had no part in the murder of Abner.

³⁸The king said to his officials, Don't you realize that this day a great leader in Israel has died?

³⁹Even though I am the king chosen by God, I feel weak today. These sons of Zeruiah are too violent for me. May the LORD punish these criminals as they deserve!

4¹When Saul's son Ishbosheth heard that Abner had been killed in Hebron, he was afraid, and all the people of Israel were alarmed.

²Ishbosheth had two officers who were leaders of raiding parties, Baanah and Rechab, sons of Rimmon, from Beeroth in the tribe of Benjamin. (Beeroth is counted as part of Benjamin.

³Its original inhabitants had fled to Gittaim, where they have lived ever since.)

⁴ Another descendant of Saul was Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, who was five years old when Saul and Jonathan were killed. When the news about their death came from the city of Jezreel, his nurse picked him up and fled; but she was in such a hurry that she dropped him, and he became crippled.

⁵ Rechab and Baanah set out for Ishbosheth's house and arrived there about noon, while he was taking his midday rest.

⁶ The woman at the door had become drowsy while she was sifting wheat and had fallen asleep, so Rechab and Baanah slipped in.

⁷ Once inside, they went to Ishbosheth's bedroom, where he was sound asleep, and killed him. Then they cut off his head, took it with them, and walked all night through the Jordan Valley.

⁸ They presented the head to King David at Hebron and said to him, Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of your enemy Saul, who tried to kill you. Today the LORD has allowed Your Majesty to take revenge on Saul and his descendants.

⁹David answered them, I take a vow by the living LORD, who has saved me from all dangers!

¹⁰The messenger who came to me at Ziklag and told me of Saul's death thought he was bringing good news. I seized him and had him put to death. That was the reward I gave him for his good news!

¹¹How much worse it will be for evil men who murder an innocent man asleep in his own house! I will now take revenge on you for murdering him and will wipe you off the face of the earth!

¹²David gave the order, and his soldiers killed Rechab and Baanah and cut off their hands and feet, which they hung up near the pool in Hebron. They took Ishbosheth's head and buried it in Abner's tomb there at Hebron.

5¹ Then all the tribes of Israel went to David at Hebron and said to him, We are your own flesh and blood.

²In the past, even when Saul was still our king, you led the people of Israel in battle, and the LORD promised you that you would lead his people and be their ruler.

³So all the leaders of Israel came to King David at Hebron. He made a sacred alliance with them, they anointed him, and he became king of Israel.

⁴David was thirty years old when he became king, and he ruled for forty years.

⁵He ruled in Hebron over Judah for seven and a half years, and in Jerusalem over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years.

⁶The time came when King David and his men set out to attack Jerusalem. The Jebusites, who lived there, thought that David would not be able to conquer the city, and so they said to him, You will never get in here; even the blind and the crippled could keep you out.

⁷(But David did capture their fortress of Zion, and it became known as David's City.)

⁸That day David said to his men, Does anybody here hate the Jebusites as much as I do? Enough to kill them? Then go up through the water tunnel and attack those poor blind cripples. (That is why it is said, The blind and the crippled cannot enter the LORD's house.)

⁹After capturing the fortress, David lived in it and named it David's City. He built the city around it, starting at the place where land was filled in on the east side of the hill.

¹⁰He grew stronger all the time, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

¹¹King Hiram of Tyre sent a trade mission to David; he provided him with cedar logs and with carpenters and stone masons to build a palace.

¹²And so David realized that the LORD had established him as king of Israel and was making his kingdom prosperous for the sake of his people.

¹³After moving from Hebron to Jerusalem, David took more concubines and wives, and had more sons and daughters.

¹⁴The following children were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

¹⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,

¹⁶Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

¹⁷The Philistines were told that David had been made king of Israel, so their army set out to capture him. When David

heard of it, he went down to a fortified place.

¹⁸The Philistines arrived at Rephaim Valley and occupied it.

¹⁹David asked the LORD, Shall I attack the Philistines? Will you give me the victory? Yes, attack! the LORD answered. I will give you the victory!

²⁰So David went to Baal Perazim and there he defeated the Philistines. He said, The LORD has broken through my enemies like a flood. And so that place is called Baal Perazim.

²¹When the Philistines fled, they left their idols behind, and David and his men carried them away.

²²Then the Philistines went back to Rephaim Valley and occupied it again.

²³Once more David consulted the LORD, who answered, Don't attack them from here, but go around and get ready to attack them from the other side, near the balsam trees.

²⁴When you hear the sound of marching in the treetops, then attack because I will be marching ahead of you to defeat the Philistine army.

²⁵ David did what the LORD had commanded, and was able to drive the Philistines back from Geba all the way to Gezer.

6¹ Once more David called together the best soldiers in Israel, a total of thirty thousand men,

² and led them to Baalah in Judah, in order to bring from there God's Covenant Box, bearing the name of the LORD Almighty, whose throne is above the winged creatures.

³ They took it from Abinadab's home on the hill and placed it on a new cart. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the cart,

⁴ with Ahio walking in front.

⁵ David and all the Israelites were dancing and singing with all their might to honor the LORD. They were playing harps, lyres, drums, rattles, and cymbals.

⁶ As they came to the threshing place of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out and took hold of the Covenant Box.

⁷ At once the LORD God became angry with Uzzah and killed him because of his

irreverence. Uzzah died there beside the Covenant Box,

⁸and so that place has been called Perez Uzzah ever since. David was furious because the LORD had punished Uzzah in anger.

⁹Then David was afraid of the LORD and said, How can I take the Covenant Box with me now?

¹⁰So he decided not to take it with him to Jerusalem; instead, he turned off the road and took it to the house of Obed Edom, a native of the city of Gath.

¹¹It stayed there three months, and the LORD blessed Obed Edom and his family.

¹²King David heard that because of the Covenant Box the LORD had blessed Obed Edom's family and all that he had; so he got the Covenant Box from Obed's house to take it to Jerusalem with a great celebration.

¹³After the men carrying the Covenant Box had gone six steps, David had them stop while he offered the LORD a sacrifice of a bull and a fattened calf.

¹⁴David, wearing only a linen cloth around his waist, danced with all his might to honor the LORD.

¹⁵And so he and all the Israelites took the Covenant Box up to Jerusalem with shouts of joy and the sound of trumpets.

¹⁶As the Box was being brought into the city, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked out of the window and saw King David dancing and jumping around in the sacred dance, and she was disgusted with him.

¹⁷They brought the Box and put it in its place in the Tent that David had set up for it. Then he offered sacrifices and fellowship offerings to the LORD.

¹⁸When he had finished offering the sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty

¹⁹and distributed food to them all. He gave each man and woman in Israel a loaf of bread, a piece of roasted meat, and some raisins. Then everyone went home.

²⁰Afterward, when David went home to greet his family, Michal came out to meet him. The king of Israel made a big name for himself today! she said. He exposed himself like a fool in the sight of the servant women of his officials!

²¹ David answered, I was dancing to honor the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and his family to make me the leader of his people Israel. And I will go on dancing to honor the LORD,

²² and will disgrace myself even more. You may think I am nothing, but those women will think highly of me!

²³ Michal, Saul's daughter, never had any children.

7 ¹ King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD kept him safe from all his enemies.

² Then the king said to the prophet Nathan, Here I am living in a house built of cedar, but God's Covenant Box is kept in a tent!

³ Nathan answered, Do whatever you have in mind, because the LORD is with you.

⁴ But that night the LORD said to Nathan,

⁵ Go and tell my servant David that I say to him, You are not the one to build a temple for me to live in.

⁶ From the time I rescued the people of Israel from Egypt until now, I have never

lived in a temple; I have traveled around living in a tent.

⁷In all my traveling with the people of Israel I never asked any of the leaders that I appointed why they had not built me a temple made of cedar.

⁸So tell my servant David that I, the LORD Almighty, say to him, I took you from looking after sheep in the fields and made you the ruler of my people Israel.

⁹I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have defeated all your enemies as you advanced. I will make you as famous as the greatest leaders in the world.

¹⁰I have chosen a place for my people Israel and have settled them there, where they will live without being oppressed any more. Ever since they entered this land, they have been attacked by violent people, but this will not happen again. I promise to keep you safe from all your enemies and to give you descendants.

¹¹ (7: 10)

¹²When you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will make one of your

sons king and will keep his kingdom strong.

¹³He will be the one to build a temple for me, and I will make sure that his dynasty continues forever.

¹⁴I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him as a father punishes his son.

¹⁵But I will not withdraw my support from him as I did from Saul, whom I removed so that you could be king.

¹⁶You will always have descendants, and I will make your kingdom last forever. Your dynasty will never end.

¹⁷Nathan told David everything that God had revealed to him.

¹⁸Then King David went into the Tent of the LORD's presence, sat down and prayed, Sovereign LORD, I am not worthy of what you have already done for me, nor is my family.

¹⁹Yet now you are doing even more, Sovereign LORD; you have made promises about my descendants in the years to come. And you let a man see this, Sovereign LORD!

²⁰What more can I say to you! You know me, your servant.

²¹ It was your will and purpose to do this; you have done all these great things in order to instruct me.

²² How great you are, Sovereign LORD! There is none like you; we have always known that you alone are God.

²³ There is no other nation on earth like Israel, whom you rescued from slavery to make them your own people. The great and wonderful things you did for them have spread your fame throughout the world. You drove out other nations and their gods as your people advanced, the people whom you set free from Egypt to be your own.

²⁴ You have made Israel your own people forever, and you, LORD, have become their God.

²⁵ And now, LORD God, fulfill for all time the promise you made about me and my descendants, and do what you said you would.

²⁶ Your fame will be great, and people will forever say, The LORD Almighty is God over Israel. And you will preserve my dynasty for all time.

²⁷ LORD Almighty, God of Israel! I have the courage to pray this prayer to you,

because you have revealed all this to me, your servant, and have told me that you will make my descendants kings.

²⁸And now, Sovereign LORD, you are God; you always keep your promises, and you have made this wonderful promise to me.

²⁹I ask you to bless my descendants so that they will continue to enjoy your favor. You, Sovereign LORD, have promised this, and your blessing will rest on my descendants forever.

8¹ Some time later King David attacked the Philistines again, defeated them, and ended their control over the land.

²Then he defeated the Moabites. He made the prisoners lie down on the ground and put two out of every three of them to death. So the Moabites became his subjects and paid taxes to him.

³Then he defeated the king of the Syrian state of Zobah, Hadadezer son of Rehob, as Hadadezer was on his way to restore his control over the territory by the upper Euphrates River.

⁴David captured seventeen hundred of his cavalry and twenty thousand of his foot soldiers. He kept enough horses for

a hundred chariots and crippled all the rest.

⁵When the Syrians of Damascus sent an army to help King Hadadezer, David attacked it and killed twenty-two thousand men.

⁶Then he set up military camps in their territory, and they became his subjects and paid taxes to him. The LORD made David victorious everywhere.

⁷David captured the gold shields carried by Hadadezer's officials and took them to Jerusalem.

⁸He also took a great quantity of bronze from Betah and Berothai, cities ruled by Hadadezer.

⁹King Toi of Hamath heard that David had defeated all of Hadadezer's army.

¹⁰So he sent his son Joram to greet King David and congratulate him for his victory over Hadadezer, against whom Toi had fought many times. Joram took David presents made of gold, silver, and bronze.

¹¹King David dedicated them for use in worship, along with the silver and gold he took from the nations he had conquered --

¹²Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek -- as well as part of the loot he had taken from Hadadezer.

¹³David became even more famous when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Edomites in Salt Valley.

¹⁴He set up military camps throughout Edom, and the people there became his subjects. The LORD made David victorious everywhere.

¹⁵David ruled over all of Israel and made sure that his people were always treated fairly and justly.

¹⁶Joab, whose mother was Zeruah, was the commander of the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was in charge of the records;

¹⁷Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests; Seraiah was the court secretary;

¹⁸Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in charge of David's bodyguards; and David's sons were priests.

9¹One day David asked, Is there anyone left of Saul's family? If there is, I would like to show him kindness for Jonathan's sake.

²There was a servant of Saul's family named Ziba, and he was told to go to David. Are you Ziba? the king asked. At your service, sir, he answered.

³The king asked him, Is there anyone left of Saul's family to whom I can show loyalty and kindness, as I promised God I would? Ziba answered, There is still one of Jonathan's sons. He is crippled.

⁴Where is he? the king asked. At the home of Machir son of Ammiel in Lodebar, Ziba answered.

⁵So King David sent for him.

⁶When Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul, arrived, he bowed down before David in respect. David said, Mephibosheth, and he answered, At your service, sir.

⁷Don't be afraid, David replied. I will be kind to you for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will give you back all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always be welcome at my table.

⁸Mephibosheth bowed again and said, I am no better than a dead dog, sir! Why should you be so good to me?

⁹Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said, I am giving Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, everything that belonged to Saul and his family.

¹⁰You, your sons, and your servants will farm the land for your master Saul's family and bring in the harvest, to provide food for them. But Mephibosheth himself will always be a guest at my table. (Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)

¹¹Ziba answered, I will do everything Your Majesty commands. So Mephibosheth ate at the king's table, just like one of the king's sons.

¹²Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. All the members of Ziba's family became servants of Mephibosheth.

¹³So Mephibosheth, who was crippled in both feet, lived in Jerusalem, eating all his meals at the king's table.

10¹Some time later King Nahash of Ammon died, and his son Hanun became king.

²King David said, I must show loyal friendship to Hanun, as his father Nahash did to me. So David sent messengers

to express his sympathy. When they arrived in Ammon,

³ the Ammonite leaders said to the king, Do you think that it is in your father's honor that David has sent these men to express sympathy to you? Of course not! He has sent them here as spies to explore the city, so that he can conquer us!

⁴ Hanun seized David's messengers, shaved off one side of their beards, cut off their clothes at the hips, and sent them away.

⁵ They were too ashamed to return home. When David heard about what had happened, he sent word for them to stay in Jericho and not return until their beards had grown again.

⁶ The Ammonites realized that they had made David their enemy, so they hired twenty thousand Syrian soldiers from Bethrehab and Zobah, twelve thousand men from Tob, and the king of Maacah with a thousand men.

⁷ David heard of it and sent Joab against them with the whole army.

⁸ The Ammonites marched out and took up their position at the entrance

to Rabbah, their capital city, while the others, both the Syrians and the men from Tob and Maacah, took up their position in the open countryside.

⁹Joab saw that the enemy troops would attack him in front and from the rear, so he chose the best of Israel's soldiers and put them in position facing the Syrians.

¹⁰He placed the rest of his troops under the command of his brother Abishai, who put them in position facing the Ammonites.

¹¹Joab said to him, If you see that the Syrians are defeating me, come and help me, and if the Ammonites are defeating you, I will go and help you.

¹²Be strong and courageous! Let's fight hard for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD's will be done!

¹³Joab and his men advanced to attack, and the Syrians fled.

¹⁴When the Ammonites saw the Syrians running away, they fled from Abishai and retreated into the city. Then Joab turned back from fighting the Ammonites and went back to Jerusalem.

¹⁵The Syrians realized that they had been defeated by the Israelites, and so they called all their troops together.

¹⁶King Hadadezer sent for the Syrians who were on the east side of the Euphrates River, and they came to Helam under the command of Shobach, commander of the army of King Hadadezer of Zobah.

¹⁷When David heard of it, he gathered the Israelite troops, crossed the Jordan River, and marched to Helam, where the Syrians took up their position facing him. The fighting began,

¹⁸and the Israelites drove the Syrian army back. David and his men killed seven hundred Syrian chariot drivers and forty thousand cavalry, and they wounded Shobach, the enemy commander, who died on the battlefield.

¹⁹When the kings who were subject to Hadadezer realized that they had been defeated by the Israelites, they made peace with them and became their subjects. And the Syrians were afraid to help the Ammonites any more.

11 ¹The following spring, at the time of the year when kings usually

go to war, David sent out Joab with his officers and the Israelite army; they defeated the Ammonites and besieged the city of Rabbah. But David himself stayed in Jerusalem.

²One day, late in the afternoon, David got up from his nap and went to the palace roof. As he walked around up there, he saw a woman taking a bath in her house. She was very beautiful.

³So he sent a messenger to find out who she was, and learned that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

⁴David sent messengers to get her; they brought her to him and he made love to her. (She had just finished her monthly ritual of purification.) Then she went back home.

⁵Afterward she discovered that she was pregnant and sent a message to David to tell him.

⁶David then sent a message to Joab: Send me Uriah the Hittite. So Joab sent him to David.

⁷When Uriah arrived, David asked him if Joab and the troops were well, and how the fighting was going.

⁸Then he said to Uriah, Go on home and rest a while. Uriah left, and David had a present sent to his home.

⁹But Uriah did not go home; instead he slept at the palace gate with the king's guards.

¹⁰When David heard that Uriah had not gone home, he asked him, You have just returned after a long absence; why didn't you go home?

¹¹Uriah answered, The men of Israel and Judah are away in battle, and the Covenant Box is with them; my commander Joab and his officers are camping out in the open. How could I go home, eat and drink, and sleep with my wife? By all that's sacred, I swear that I could never do such a thing!

¹²So David said, Then stay here the rest of the day, and tomorrow I'll send you back. So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next.

¹³David invited him to supper and got him drunk. But again that night Uriah did not go home; instead he slept on his blanket in the palace guardroom.

¹⁴The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by Uriah.

¹⁵He wrote: Put Uriah in the front line, where the fighting is heaviest, then retreat and let him be killed.

¹⁶So while Joab was besieging the city, he sent Uriah to a place where he knew the enemy was strong.

¹⁷The enemy troops came out of the city and fought Joab's forces; some of David's officers were killed, and so was Uriah.

¹⁸Then Joab sent a report to David telling him about the battle,

¹⁹and he instructed the messenger, After you have told the king all about the battle,

²⁰he may get angry and ask you, Why did you go so near the city to fight them? Didn't you realize that they would shoot arrows from the walls?

²¹Don't you remember how Abimelech son of Gideon was killed? It was at Thebez, where a woman threw a millstone down from the wall and killed him. Why, then, did you go so near the wall? If the king asks you this, tell him, Your officer Uriah was also killed.

²² So the messenger went to David and told him what Joab had commanded him to say.

²³ He said, Our enemies were stronger than we were and came out of the city to fight us in the open, but we drove them back to the city gate.

²⁴ Then they shot arrows at us from the wall, and some of Your Majesty's officers were killed; your officer Uriah was also killed.

²⁵ David said to the messenger, Encourage Joab and tell him not to be upset, since you never can tell who will die in battle. Tell him to launch a stronger attack on the city and capture it.

²⁶ When Bathsheba heard that her husband had been killed, she mourned for him.

²⁷ When the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to the palace; she became his wife and bore him a son. But the LORD was not pleased with what David had done.

12¹ The LORD sent the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan went to him and said, There were two men who

lived in the same town; one was rich and the other poor.

²The rich man had many cattle and sheep,

³while the poor man had only one lamb, which he had bought. He took care of it, and it grew up in his home with his children. He would feed it some of his own food, let it drink from his cup, and hold it in his lap. The lamb was like a daughter to him.

⁴One day a visitor arrived at the rich man's home. The rich man didn't want to kill one of his own animals to fix a meal for him; instead, he took the poor man's lamb and prepared a meal for his guest.

⁵David became very angry at the rich man and said, I swear by the living LORD that the man who did this ought to die!

⁶For having done such a cruel thing, he must pay back four times as much as he took.

⁷You are that man, Nathan said to David. And this is what the LORD God of Israel says: I made you king of Israel and rescued you from Saul.

⁸I gave you his kingdom and his wives; I made you king over Israel and Judah.

If this had not been enough, I would have given you twice as much.

⁹Why, then, have you disobeyed my commands? Why did you do this evil thing? You had Uriah killed in battle; you let the Ammonites kill him, and then you took his wife!

¹⁰Now, in every generation some of your descendants will die a violent death because you have disobeyed me and have taken Uriah's wife.

¹¹I swear to you that I will cause someone from your own family to bring trouble on you. You will see it when I take your wives from you and give them to another man; and he will have intercourse with them in broad daylight.

¹²You sinned in secret, but I will make this happen in broad daylight for all Israel to see.

¹³I have sinned against the LORD, David said. Nathan replied, The LORD forgives you; you will not die.

¹⁴But because you have shown such contempt for the LORD in doing this, your child will die.

¹⁵Then Nathan went home. The LORD caused the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David to become very sick.

¹⁶David prayed to God that the child would get well. He refused to eat anything, and every night he went into his room and spent the night lying on the floor.

¹⁷His court officials went to him and tried to make him get up, but he refused and would not eat anything with them.

¹⁸A week later the child died, and David's officials were afraid to tell him the news. They said, While the child was living, David wouldn't answer us when we spoke to him. How can we tell him that his child is dead? He might do himself some harm!

¹⁹When David noticed them whispering to each other, he realized that the child had died. So he asked them, Is the child dead? Yes, he is, they answered.

²⁰David got up from the floor, took a bath, combed his hair, and changed his clothes. Then he went and worshiped in the house of the LORD. When he returned to the palace, he asked for food and ate it as soon as it was served.

²¹ We don't understand this, his officials said to him. While the child was alive, you wept for him and would not eat; but as soon as he died, you got up and ate!

²² Yes, David answered, I did fast and weep while he was still alive. I thought that the LORD might be merciful to me and not let the child die.

²³ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Could I bring the child back to life? I will some day go to where he is, but he can never come back to me.

²⁴ Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba. He had intercourse with her, and she bore a son, whom David named Solomon. The LORD loved the boy

²⁵ and commanded the prophet Nathan to name the boy Jedidiah, because the LORD loved him.

²⁶ Meanwhile Joab continued his campaign against Rabbah, the capital city of Ammon, and was about to capture it.

²⁷ He sent messengers to David to report: I have attacked Rabbah and have captured its water supply.

²⁸ Now gather the rest of your forces, attack the city and take it yourself. I

don't want to get the credit for capturing it.

²⁹ So David gathered his forces, went to Rabbah, attacked it, and conquered it.

³⁰ From the head of the idol of the Ammonite god Molech David took a gold crown which weighed about seventy-five pounds and had a jewel in it. David took the jewel and put it in his own crown. He also took a large amount of loot from the city

³¹ and put its people to work with saws, iron hoes, and iron axes, and forced them to work at making bricks. He did the same to the people of all the other towns of Ammon. Then he and his men returned to Jerusalem.

13¹ David's son Absalom had a beautiful unmarried sister named Tamar. Amnon, another of David's sons, fell in love with her.

² He was so much in love with her that he became sick, because it seemed impossible for him to have her; as a virgin, she was kept from meeting men.

³ But he had a friend, a very shrewd man named Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shammah.

⁴Jonadab said to Amnon, You are the king's son, yet day after day I see you looking sad. What's the matter? I'm in love with Tamar, the sister of my half brother Absalom, he answered.

⁵Jonadab said to him, Pretend that you are sick and go to bed. When your father comes to see you, say to him, Please ask my sister Tamar to come and feed me. I want her to fix the food here where I can see her, and then serve it to me herself.

⁶So Amnon pretended that he was sick and went to bed. King David went to see him, and Amnon said to him, Please let Tamar come and make a few cakes here where I can see her, and then serve them to me herself.

⁷So David sent word to Tamar in the palace: Go to Amnon's house and fix him some food.

⁸She went there and found him in bed. She took some dough, prepared it, and made some cakes there where he could see her. Then she baked the cakes

⁹and emptied them out of the pan for him to eat, but he wouldn't. He said, Send everyone away -- and they all left.

¹⁰Then he said to her, Bring the cakes here to my bed and serve them to me yourself. She took the cakes and went over to him.

¹¹As she offered them to him, he grabbed her and said, Come to bed with me!

¹²No, she said. Don't force me to do such a degrading thing! That's awful!

¹³How could I ever hold up my head in public again? And you -- you would be completely disgraced in Israel. Please, speak to the king, and I'm sure that he will give me to you.

¹⁴But he would not listen to her; and since he was stronger than she was, he overpowered her and raped her.

¹⁵Then Amnon was filled with a deep hatred for her; he hated her now even more than he had loved her before. He said to her, Get out!

¹⁶No, she answered. To send me away like this is a greater crime than what you just did! But Amnon would not listen to her;

¹⁷he called in his personal servant and said, Get this woman out of my sight! Throw her out and lock the door!

¹⁸The servant put her out and locked the door. Tamar was wearing a long robe with full sleeves, the usual clothing for an unmarried princess in those days.

¹⁹She sprinkled ashes on her head, tore her robe, and with her face buried in her hands went away crying.

²⁰When her brother Absalom saw her, he asked, Has Amnon molested you? Please, sister, don't let it upset you so much. He is your half brother, so don't tell anyone about it. So Tamar lived in Absalom's house, sad and lonely.

²¹When King David heard what had happened, he was furious.

²²And Absalom hated Amnon so much for having raped his sister Tamar that he would no longer even speak to him.

²³Two years later Absalom was having his sheep sheared at Baal Hazor, near the town of Ephraim, and he invited all the king's sons to be there.

²⁴He went to King David and said, Your Majesty, I am having my sheep sheared. Will you and your officials come and take part in the festivities?

²⁵No, my son, the king answered. It would be too much trouble for you if we

all went. Absalom insisted, but the king would not give in, and he asked Absalom to leave.

²⁶ But Absalom said, Well, then, will you at least let my brother Amnon come? Why should he? the king asked.

²⁷ But Absalom kept on insisting until David finally let Amnon and all his other sons go with Absalom. Absalom prepared a banquet fit for a king

²⁸ and instructed his servants: Notice when Amnon has had too much to drink, and then when I give the order, kill him. Don't be afraid. I will take the responsibility myself. Be brave and don't hesitate!

²⁹ So the servants followed Absalom's instructions and killed Amnon. All the rest of David's sons mounted their mules and fled.

³⁰ While they were on their way home, David was told: Absalom has killed all your sons -- not one of them is left!

³¹ The king stood up, tore his clothes in sorrow, and threw himself to the ground. The servants who were there with him tore their clothes also.

³² But Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shammah, said, Your Majesty, they haven't killed all your sons. Only Amnon is dead. You could tell by looking at Absalom that he had made up his mind to do this from the time that Amnon raped his sister Tamar.

³³ So don't believe the news that all your sons are dead; only Amnon was killed.

³⁴ In the meantime Absalom had fled. Just then the soldier on sentry duty saw a large crowd coming down the hill on the road from Horonaim. He went to the king and reported what he had seen.

³⁵ Jonadab said to David, Those are your sons coming, just as I said they would.

³⁶ As soon as he finished saying this, David's sons came in; they started crying, and David and his officials also cried bitterly.

³⁷ Absalom fled and went to the king of Geshur, Talmai son of Ammihud, and stayed there three years. David mourned a long time for his son Amnon;

³⁸ (13: 37)

³⁹but when he got over Amnon's death, he was filled with longing for his son Absalom.

14¹ Joab knew that King David missed Absalom very much,
²so he sent for a clever woman who lived in Tekoa. When she arrived, he said to her, Pretend that you are in mourning; put on your mourning clothes, and don't comb your hair. Act like a woman who has been in mourning for a long time.

³Then go to the king and say to him what I tell you to say. Then Joab told her what to say.

⁴The woman went to the king, bowed down to the ground in respect, and said, Help me, Your Majesty!

⁵What do you want? he asked her. I am a poor widow, sir, she answered. My husband is dead.

⁶Sir, I had two sons, and one day they got into a quarrel out in the fields, where there was no one to separate them, and one of them killed the other.

⁷And now, sir, all my relatives have turned against me and are demanding that I hand my son over to them, so that they can kill him for murdering his

brother. If they do this, I will be left without a son. They will destroy my last hope and leave my husband without a son to keep his name alive.

⁸Go back home, the king answered, and I will take care of the matter.

⁹Your Majesty, she said, whatever you do, my family and I will take the blame; you and the royal family are innocent.

¹⁰The king replied, If anyone threatens you, bring him to me, and he will never bother you again.

¹¹She said, Your Majesty, please pray to the LORD your God, so that my relative who is responsible for avenging the death of my son will not commit a greater crime by killing my other son. I promise by the living LORD, David replied, that your son will not be harmed in the least.

¹²Please, Your Majesty, let me say just one more thing, the woman said. All right, he answered.

¹³She said to him, Why have you done such a wrong to God's people? You have not allowed your own son to return from exile, and so you have condemned yourself by what you have just said.

¹⁴We will all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which can't be gathered again. Even God does not bring the dead back to life, but the king can at least find a way to bring a man back from exile.

¹⁵Now, Your Majesty, the reason I have come to speak to you is that the people threatened me, and so I said to myself that I would speak to you in the hope that you would do what I ask.

¹⁶I thought you would listen to me and save me from the one who is trying to kill my son and me and so remove us from the land God gave his people.

¹⁷I said to myself that your promise, sir, would make me safe, because the king is like God's angel and can distinguish good from evil. May the LORD your God be with you!

¹⁸The king answered, I'm going to ask you a question, and you must tell me the whole truth. Ask me anything, Your Majesty, she answered.

¹⁹Did Joab put you up to this? he asked her. She answered, I swear by all that is sacred, Your Majesty, that there is no way to avoid answering your question.

It was indeed your officer Joab who told me what to do and what to say.

²⁰But he did it in order to straighten out this whole matter. Your Majesty is as wise as the angel of God and knows everything that happens.

²¹Later on the king said to Joab, I have decided to do what you want. Go and get the young man Absalom and bring him back here.

²²Joab threw himself to the ground in front of David in respect, and said, God bless you, Your Majesty! Now I know that you are pleased with me, because you have granted my request.

²³Then he got up and went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.

²⁴The king, however, gave orders that Absalom should not live in the palace. I don't want to see him, the king said. So Absalom lived in his own house and did not appear before the king.

²⁵There was no one in Israel as famous for his good looks as Absalom; he had no defect from head to toe.

²⁶His hair was very thick, and he had to cut it once a year, when it grew too long and heavy. It would weigh about five

pounds according to the royal standard of weights.

²⁷ Absalom had three sons and one daughter named Tamar, a very beautiful woman.

²⁸ Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king.

²⁹ Then he sent for Joab, to ask him to go to the king for him; but Joab would not come. Again Absalom sent for him, and again Joab refused to come.

³⁰ So Absalom said to his servants, Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and it has barley growing in it. Go and set fire to it. So they went and set the field on fire.

³¹ Joab went to Absalom's house and demanded, Why did your servants set fire to my field?

³² Absalom answered, Because you wouldn't come when I sent for you. I wanted you to go to the king and ask for me: Why did I leave Geshur and come here? It would have been better for me to have stayed there. And Absalom went on, I want you to arrange for me to see the king, and if I'm guilty, then let him put me to death.

³³ So Joab went to King David and told him what Absalom had said. The king sent for Absalom, who went to him and bowed down to the ground in front of him. The king welcomed him with a kiss.

15 ¹ After this, Absalom provided a chariot and horses for himself, and an escort of fifty men.

² He would get up early and go and stand by the road at the city gate. Whenever someone came there with a dispute that he wanted the king to settle, Absalom would call him over and ask him where he was from. And after the man had told him what tribe he was from,

³ Absalom would say, Look, the law is on your side, but there is no representative of the king to hear your case.

⁴ And he would add, How I wish I were a judge! Then anyone who had a dispute or a claim could come to me, and I would give him justice.

⁵ When the man would approach Absalom to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out, take hold of him, and kiss him.

⁶Absalom did this with every Israelite who came to the king for judgment, and so he won their loyalty.

⁷After four years Absalom said to King David, Sir, let me go to Hebron and keep a promise I made to the LORD.

⁸While I was living in Geshur in Syria, I promised the LORD that if he would take me back to Jerusalem, I would worship him in Hebron.

⁹Go in peace, the king said. So Absalom went to Hebron.

¹⁰But he sent messengers to all the tribes of Israel to say, When you hear the sound of trumpets, shout, Absalom has become king at Hebron!

¹¹There were two hundred men who at Absalom's invitation had gone from Jerusalem with him; they knew nothing of the plot and went in all good faith.

¹²And while he was offering sacrifices, Absalom also sent to the town of Gilo for Ahithophel, who was one of King David's advisers. The plot against the king gained strength, and Absalom's followers grew in number.

¹³A messenger reported to David, The Israelites are pledging their loyalty to Absalom.

¹⁴So David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, We must get away at once if we want to escape from Absalom! Hurry! Or else he will soon be here and defeat us and kill everyone in the city!

¹⁵Yes, Your Majesty, they answered. We are ready to do whatever you say.

¹⁶So the king left, accompanied by all his family and officials, except for ten concubines, whom he left behind to take care of the palace.

¹⁷As the king and all his men were leaving the city, they stopped at the last house.

¹⁸All his officials stood next to him as the royal bodyguards passed by in front of him. The six hundred soldiers who had followed him from Gath also passed by,

¹⁹and the king said to Ittai, their leader, Why are you going with us? Go back and stay with the new king. You are a foreigner, a refugee away from your own country.

²⁰You have lived here only a short time, so why should I make you wander around with me? I don't even know where I'm going. Go back and take all your people with you -- and may the LORD be kind and faithful to you.

²¹But Ittai answered, Your Majesty, I swear to you in the LORD's name that I will always go with you wherever you go, even if it means death.

²²Fine! David answered. March on! So Ittai went on with all his men and their dependents.

²³The people cried loudly as David's followers left. The king crossed Kidron Brook, followed by his men, and together they went out toward the wilderness.

²⁴Zadok the priest was there, and with him were the Levites, carrying the sacred Covenant Box. They set it down and didn't pick it up again until all the people had left the city. The priest Abiathar was there too.

²⁵Then the king said to Zadok, Take the Covenant Box back to the city. If the LORD is pleased with me, some day he will let me come back to see it and the place where it stays.

²⁶ But if he isn't pleased with me -- well, then, let him do to me what he wishes.

²⁷ And he went on to say to Zadok, Look, take your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan and go back to the city in peace.

²⁸ Meanwhile, I will wait at the river crossings in the wilderness until I receive news from you.

²⁹ So Zadok and Abiathar took the Covenant Box back into Jerusalem and stayed there.

³⁰ David went on up the Mount of Olives crying; he was barefoot and had his head covered as a sign of grief. All who followed him covered their heads and cried also.

³¹ When David was told that Ahithophel had joined Absalom's rebellion, he prayed, Please, LORD, turn Ahithophel's advice into nonsense!

³² When David reached the top of the hill, where there was a place of worship, his trusted friend Hushai the Archite met him with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head.

³³ David said to him, You will be of no help to me if you come with me,

³⁴ but you can help me by returning to the city and telling Absalom that you will now serve him as faithfully as you served his father. And do all you can to oppose any advice that Ahithophel gives.

³⁵ The priests Zadok and Abiathar will be there; tell them everything you hear in the king's palace.

³⁶ They have their sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan with them, and you can send them to me with all the information you gather.

³⁷ So Hushai, David's friend, returned to the city just as Absalom was arriving.

16 ¹ When David had gone a little beyond the top of the hill, he was suddenly met by Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, who had with him a couple of donkeys loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred bunches of fresh fruit, and a leather bag full of wine.

² King David asked him, What are you going to do with all that? Ziba answered, The donkeys are for Your Majesty's family to ride, the bread and the fruit are for the men to eat, and the wine is

for them to drink when they get tired in the wilderness.

³Where is Mephibosheth, the grandson of your master Saul? the king asked him. He is staying in Jerusalem, Ziba answered, because he is convinced that the Israelites will now restore to him the kingdom of his grandfather Saul.

⁴The king said to Ziba, Everything that belonged to Mephibosheth is yours. I am your servant, Ziba replied. May I always please Your Majesty!

⁵When King David arrived at Bahurim, one of Saul's relatives, Shimei son of Gera, came out to meet him, cursing him as he came.

⁶Shimei started throwing stones at David and his officials, even though David was surrounded by his men and his bodyguards.

⁷Shimei cursed him and said, Get out! Get out! Murderer! Criminal!

⁸You took Saul's kingdom, and now the LORD is punishing you for murdering so many of Saul's family. The LORD has given the kingdom to your son Absalom, and you are ruined, you murderer!

⁹Abishai, whose mother was Zeruah, said to the king, Your Majesty, why do you let this dog curse you? Let me go over there and cut off his head!

¹⁰This is none of your business, the king said to Abishai and his brother Joab. If he curses me because the LORD told him to, who has the right to ask why he does it?

¹¹And David said to Abishai and to all his officials, My own son is trying to kill me; so why should you be surprised at this Benjaminite? The LORD told him to curse; so leave him alone and let him do it.

¹²Perhaps the LORD will notice my misery and give me some blessings to take the place of his curse.

¹³So David and his men continued along the road. Shimei kept up with them, walking on the hillside; he was cursing and throwing stones and dirt at them as he went.

¹⁴The king and all his men were worn out when they reached the Jordan, and there they rested.

¹⁵ Absalom and all the Israelites with him entered Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with them.

¹⁶ When Hushai, David's trusted friend, met Absalom, he shouted, Long live the king! Long live the king!

¹⁷ What has happened to your loyalty to your friend David? Absalom asked him. Why didn't you go with him?

¹⁸ Hushai answered, How could I? I am for the one chosen by the LORD, by these people, and by all the Israelites. I will stay with you.

¹⁹ After all, whom should I serve, if not my master's son? As I served your father, so now I will serve you.

²⁰ Then Absalom turned to Ahithophel and said, Now that we are here, what do you advise us to do?

²¹ Ahithophel answered, Go and have intercourse with your father's concubines whom he left behind to take care of the palace. Then everyone in Israel will know that your father regards you as his enemy, and your followers will be greatly encouraged.

²² So they set up a tent for Absalom on the palace roof, and in the sight

of everyone Absalom went in and had intercourse with his father's concubines.

²³Any advice that Ahithophel gave in those days was accepted as though it were the very word of God; both David and Absalom followed it.

17 ¹Not long after that, Ahithophel said to Absalom, Let me choose twelve thousand men, and tonight I will set out after David.

²I will attack him while he is tired and discouraged. He will be frightened, and all his men will run away. I will kill only the king

³and then bring back all his men to you, like a bride returning to her husband. You want to kill only one man; the rest of the people will be safe.

⁴This seemed like good advice to Absalom and all the Israelite leaders.

⁵Absalom said, Now call Hushai, and let us hear what he has to say.

⁶When Hushai arrived, Absalom said to him, This is the advice that Ahithophel has given us; shall we follow it? If not, you tell us what to do.

⁷Hushai answered, The advice Ahithophel gave you this time is no good.

⁸You know that your father David and his men are hard fighters and that they are as fierce as a mother bear robbed of her cubs. Your father is an experienced soldier and does not stay with his men at night.

⁹Right now he is probably hiding in a cave or some other place. As soon as David attacks your men, whoever hears about it will say that your men have been defeated.

¹⁰Then even the bravest men, as fearless as lions, will be afraid because everyone in Israel knows that your father is a great soldier and that his men are hard fighters.

¹¹My advice is that you bring all the Israelites together from one end of the country to the other, as many as the grains of sand on the seashore, and that you lead them personally in battle.

¹²We will find David wherever he is, and attack him before he knows what's happening. Neither he nor any of his men will survive.

¹³If he retreats into a city, our people will all bring ropes and just pull the city

into the valley below. Not a single stone will be left there on top of the hill.

¹⁴Absalom and all the Israelites said, Hushai's advice is better than Ahithophel's. The LORD had decided that Ahithophel's good advice would not be followed, so that disaster would come on Absalom.

¹⁵Then Hushai told the priests Zadok and Abiathar what advice he had given to Absalom and the Israelite leaders and what advice Ahithophel had given.

¹⁶Hushai added, Quick, now! Send a message to David not to spend the night at the river crossings in the wilderness, but to cross the Jordan at once, so that he and his men won't all be caught and killed.

¹⁷Abiathar's son Jonathan and Zadok's son Ahimaaz were waiting at the spring of Enrogel, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, because they did not dare be seen entering the city. A servant woman would regularly go and tell them what was happening, and then they would go and tell King David.

¹⁸But one day a boy happened to see them, and he told Absalom; so they

hurried off to hide in the house of a certain man in Bahurim. He had a well near his house, and they got down in it.

¹⁹The man's wife took a covering, spread it over the opening of the well and scattered grain over it, so that no one would notice anything.

²⁰Absalom's officials came to the house and asked the woman, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? They crossed the river, she answered. The men looked for them but could not find them, and so they returned to Jerusalem.

²¹After they left, Ahimaaz and Jonathan came up out of the well and went and reported to King David. They told him what Ahithophel had planned against him and said, Hurry up and cross the river.

²²So David and his men started crossing the Jordan, and by daybreak they had all gone across.

²³When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and went back to his hometown. After putting his affairs in order, he hanged himself. He was buried in the family grave.

²⁴ David had reached the town of Mahanaim by the time Absalom and the Israelites had crossed the Jordan.

²⁵ (Absalom had put Amasa in command of the army in the place of Joab. Amasa was the son of Jether the Ishmaelite; his mother was Abigail, the daughter of Nahash and the sister of Joab's mother Zeruah.)

²⁶ Absalom and his men camped in the land of Gilead.

²⁷ When David arrived at Mahanaim, he was met by Shobi son of Nahash, from the city of Rabbah in Ammon, and by Machir son of Ammiel, from Lodebar, and by Barzillai, from Rogelim in Gilead.

²⁸ They brought bowls, clay pots, and bedding, and also food for David and his men: wheat, barley, meal, roasted grain, beans, peas, honey, cheese, cream, and some sheep. They knew that David and his men would get hungry, thirsty, and tired in the wilderness.

²⁹ (17: 28)

18¹ King David brought all his men together, divided them into units of a thousand and of a hundred, and placed officers in command of them.

²Then he sent them out in three groups, with Joab and Joab's brother Abishai and Ittai from Gath, each in command of a group. And the king said to his men, I will go with you myself.

³You mustn't go with us, they answered. It won't make any difference to the enemy if the rest of us turn and run, or even if half of us are killed; but you are worth ten thousand of us. It will be better if you stay here in the city and send us help.

⁴I will do whatever you think best, the king answered. Then he stood by the side of the gate as his men marched out in units of a thousand and of a hundred.

⁵He gave orders to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai: For my sake don't harm the young man Absalom. And all the troops heard David give this command to his officers.

⁶David's army went out into the countryside and fought the Israelites in Ephraim Forest.

⁷The Israelites were defeated by David's men; it was a terrible defeat, with twenty thousand men killed that day.

⁸The fighting spread over the countryside, and more men died in the forest than were killed in battle.

⁹Suddenly Absalom met some of David's men. Absalom was riding a mule, and as it went under a large oak tree, Absalom's head got caught in the branches. The mule ran on and Absalom was left hanging in midair.

¹⁰One of David's men saw him and reported to Joab, Sir, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!

¹¹Joab answered, If you saw him, why didn't you kill him on the spot? I myself would have given you ten pieces of silver and a belt.

¹²But the man answered, Even if you gave me a thousand pieces of silver, I wouldn't lift a finger against the king's son. We all heard the king command you and Abishai and Ittai, For my sake don't harm the young man Absalom.

¹³But if I had disobeyed the king and killed Absalom, the king would have heard about it -- he hears about everything -- and you would not have defended me.

¹⁴I'm not going to waste any more time with you, Joab said. He took three spears and plunged them into Absalom's chest while he was still alive, hanging in the oak tree.

¹⁵Then ten of Joab's soldiers closed in on Absalom and finished killing him.

¹⁶Joab had the trumpet blown to stop the fighting, and his troops came back from pursuing the Israelites.

¹⁷They took Absalom's body, threw it into a deep pit in the forest, and covered it with a huge pile of stones. All the Israelites fled to their own hometowns.

¹⁸During his lifetime Absalom had built a monument for himself in King's Valley, because he had no son to keep his name alive. So he named it after himself, and to this day it is known as Absalom's Monument.

¹⁹Then Ahimaaz son of Zadok said to Joab, Let me run to the king with the good news that the LORD has saved him from his enemies.

²⁰No, Joab said, today you will not take any good news. Some other day you may do so, but not today, for the king's son is dead.

²¹ Then he said to his Ethiopian slave, Go and tell the king what you have seen. The slave bowed and ran off.

²² Ahimaaz insisted, I don't care what happens; please let me take the news also. Why do you want to do it, my son? Joab asked. You will get no reward for it.

²³ Whatever happens, Ahimaaz said again, I want to go. Then go, Joab said. So Ahimaaz ran off down the road through the Jordan Valley, and soon he passed the slave.

²⁴ David was sitting in the space between the inner and outer gates of the city. The lookout went up to the top of the wall and stood on the roof of the gateway; he looked out and saw a man running alone.

²⁵ He called down and told the king, and the king said, If he is alone, he is bringing good news. The runner kept coming closer.

²⁶ Then the lookout saw another man running alone, and he called down to the gatekeeper, Look! There's another man running! The king answered, This one also is bringing good news.

²⁷ The lookout said, I can see that the first man runs like Ahimaaz. He's a good man, the king said, and he is bringing good news.

²⁸ Ahimaaz called out a greeting to the king, threw himself down to the ground before him, and said, Praise the LORD your God, who has given you victory over the men who rebelled against Your Majesty!

²⁹ Is the young man Absalom all right? the king asked. Ahimaaz answered, Sir, when your officer Joab sent me, I saw a great commotion, but I couldn't tell what it was.

³⁰ Stand over there, the king told him; and he went over and stood there.

³¹ Then the Ethiopian slave arrived and said to the king, I have good news for Your Majesty! Today the LORD has given you victory over all who rebelled against you!

³² Is the young man Absalom all right? the king asked. The slave answered, I wish that what has happened to him would happen to all your enemies, sir, and to all who rebel against you.

³³The king was overcome with grief. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he cried, O my son! My son Absalom! Absalom, my son! If only I had died in your place, my son! Absalom, my son!

19¹ Joab was told that King David was weeping and mourning for Absalom.

²And so the joy of victory was turned into sadness for all of David's troops that day, because they heard that the king was mourning for his son.

³They went back into the city quietly, like soldiers who are ashamed because they are running away from battle.

⁴The king covered his face and cried loudly, O my son! My son Absalom! Absalom, my son!

⁵Joab went to the king's house and said to him, Today you have humiliated your men -- the men who saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and of your wives and concubines.

⁶You oppose those who love you and support those who hate you! You have made it clear that your officers and men mean nothing to you. I can see that you

would be quite happy if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead.

⁷ Now go and reassure your men. I swear by the LORD's name that if you don't, not one of them will be with you by tomorrow morning. That would be the worst disaster you have suffered in all your life.

⁸ Then the king got up, and went and sat near the city gate. His men heard that he was there, and they all gathered around him. Meanwhile all the Israelites had fled to their own hometowns.

⁹ All over the country they started quarreling among themselves. King David saved us from our enemies, they said to one another. He rescued us from the Philistines, but now he has fled from Absalom and left the country.

¹⁰ We anointed Absalom as our king, but he has been killed in battle. So why doesn't somebody try to bring King David back?

¹¹ The news of what the Israelites were saying reached King David. So he sent the priests Zadok and Abiathar to ask the leaders of Judah, Why should you be

the last to help bring the king back to his palace?

¹²You are my relatives, my own flesh and blood; why should you be the last to bring me back?

¹³David also told them to say to Amasa, You are my relative. From now on I am putting you in charge of the army in place of Joab. May God strike me dead if I don't!

¹⁴David's words won the complete loyalty of all the men of Judah, and they sent him word to return with all his officials.

¹⁵On his way back the king was met at the Jordan River by the men of Judah, who had come to Gilgal to escort him across the river.

¹⁶At the same time the Benjaminite Shimei son of Gera from Bahurim hurried to the Jordan to meet King David.

¹⁷He had with him a thousand men from the tribe of Benjamin. And Ziba, the servant of Saul's family, also came with his fifteen sons and twenty servants, and they arrived at the Jordan before the king.

¹⁸They crossed the river to escort the royal party across and to do whatever the king wanted. As the king was getting ready to cross, Shimei threw himself down in front of him

¹⁹and said, Your Majesty, please forget the wrong I did that day you left Jerusalem. Don't hold it against me or think about it any more.

²⁰I know, sir, that I have sinned, and this is why I am the first one from the northern tribes to come and meet Your Majesty today.

²¹Abishai son of Zeruah spoke up: Shimei should be put to death because he cursed the one whom the LORD chose as king.

²²But David said to Abishai and his brother Joab, Who asked your opinion? Are you going to give me trouble? I am the one who is king of Israel now, and no Israelite will be put to death today.

²³And he said to Shimei, I give you my word that you will not be put to death.

²⁴Then Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, came down to meet the king. He had not washed his feet, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes from the time the

king left Jerusalem until he returned victorious.

²⁵When Mephibosheth arrived from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, Mephibosheth, you didn't go with me. Why not?

²⁶He answered, As you know, Your Majesty, I am crippled. I told my servant to saddle my donkey so that I could ride along with you, but he betrayed me.

²⁷He lied about me to Your Majesty, but you are like God's angel, so do what seems right to you.

²⁸All of my father's family deserved to be put to death by Your Majesty, but you gave me the right to eat at your table. I have no right to ask for any more favors from Your Majesty.

²⁹The king answered, You don't have to say anything more. I have decided that you and Ziba will share Saul's property.

³⁰Let Ziba have it all, Mephibosheth answered. It's enough for me that Your Majesty has come home safely.

³¹Barzillai, from Gilead, had also come down from Rogelim to escort the king across the Jordan.

³² Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years old. He was very rich and had supplied the king with food while he was staying at Mahanaim.

³³ The king said to him, Come with me to Jerusalem, and I will take care of you.

³⁴ But Barzillai answered, I don't have long to live; why should I go with Your Majesty to Jerusalem?

³⁵ I am already eighty years old, and nothing gives me pleasure any more. I can't taste what I eat and drink, and I can't hear the voices of singers. I would only be a burden to Your Majesty.

³⁶ I don't deserve such a great reward. So I will go just a little way with you beyond the Jordan.

³⁷ Then let me go back home and die near my parents' grave. Here is my son Chimham, who will serve you; take him with you, Your Majesty, and do for him as you think best.

³⁸ The king answered, I will take him with me and do for him whatever you want. And I will do for you anything you ask.

³⁹ Then David and all of his men crossed the Jordan. He kissed Barzillai and gave

him his blessing, and Barzillai went back home.

⁴⁰When the king had crossed, escorted by all the people of Judah and half the people of Israel, he went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went with him.

⁴¹Then all the Israelites went to the king and said to him, Your Majesty, why did our brothers, the men of Judah, think they had the right to take you away and escort you, your family, and your men across the Jordan?

⁴²The men of Judah answered, We did it because the king is one of us. So why should this make you angry? He hasn't paid for our food nor has he given us anything.

⁴³The Israelites replied, We have ten times as many claims on King David as you have, even if he is one of you. Why do you look down on us? Don't forget that we were the first to talk about bringing the king back! But the men of Judah were more violent in making their claims than the men of Israel.

20¹There happened to be in Gilgal a worthless character named Sheba son of Bikri, of the tribe of Benjamin. He

blew the trumpet and called out, Down with David! We won't follow him! Men of Israel, let's go home!

²So the Israelites deserted David and went with Sheba, but the men of Judah remained loyal and followed David from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

³When David arrived at his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace, and put them under guard. He provided for their needs, but did not have intercourse with them. They were kept confined for the rest of their lives, living like widows.

⁴The king said to Amasa, Call the men of Judah together and be back here with them by the day after tomorrow.

⁵Amasa went to call them, but he did not get back by the time the king had told him to.

⁶So the king said to Abishai, Sheba will give us more trouble than Absalom. Take my men and go after him, or else he may occupy some fortified towns and escape from us.

⁷So Joab's men, the royal bodyguards, and all the other soldiers left Jerusalem with Abishai to go after Sheba.

⁸When they reached the large rock at Gibeon, Amasa met them. Joab was dressed for battle, with a sword in its sheath fastened to his belt. As he came forward, the sword fell out.

⁹Joab said to Amasa, How are you, my friend? and took hold of his beard with his right hand in order to kiss him.

¹⁰Amasa was not on guard against the sword that Joab was holding in his other hand, and Joab stabbed him in the belly, and his insides spilled out on the ground. He died immediately, and Joab did not have to strike again. Then Joab and his brother Abishai went on after Sheba.

¹¹One of Joab's men stood by Amasa's body and called out, Everyone who is for Joab and David follow Joab!

¹²Amasa's body, covered with blood, was lying in the middle of the road. Joab's man saw that everybody was stopping, so he dragged the body from the road out into the field and threw a blanket over it.

¹³After the body had been removed from the road, everyone followed Joab in pursuit of Sheba.

¹⁴ Sheba passed through the territory of all the tribes of Israel and came to the city of Abel Beth Maacah, and all the members of the clan of Bikri assembled and followed him into the city.

¹⁵ Joab's men heard that Sheba was there, and so they went and besieged the city. They built ramps of earth against the outer wall and also began to dig under the wall to make it fall down.

¹⁶ There was a wise woman in the city who shouted from the wall, Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here; I want to speak with him.

¹⁷ Joab went, and she asked, Are you Joab? Yes, I am, he answered. Listen to me, sir, she said. I'm listening, he answered.

¹⁸ She said, Long ago they used to say, Go and get your answer in the city of Abel' -- and that's just what they did.

¹⁹ Ours is a great city, one of the most peaceful and loyal in Israel. Why are you trying to destroy it? Do you want to ruin what belongs to the LORD?

²⁰ Never! Joab answered. I will never ruin or destroy your city!

²¹ That is not our plan. A man named Sheba son of Bikri, who is from the hill country of Ephraim, started a rebellion against King David. Hand over this one man, and I will withdraw from the city. We will throw his head over the wall to you, she said.

²² Then she went to the people of the city with her plan, and they cut off Sheba's head and threw it over the wall to Joab. He blew the trumpet as a signal for his men to leave the city, and they went back home. And Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

²³ Joab was in command of the army of Israel; Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in charge of David's bodyguards;

²⁴ Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was in charge of the records;

²⁵ Sheva was the court secretary; Zadok and Abiathar were the priests,

²⁶ and Ira from the town of Jair was also one of David's priests.

21 ¹ During David's reign there was a severe famine which lasted for three full years. So David consulted the LORD about it, and the LORD said, Saul

and his family are guilty of murder; he put the people of Gibeon to death.

²(The people of Gibeon were not Israelites; they were a small group of Amorites whom the Israelites had promised to protect, but Saul had tried to destroy them because of his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah.)

³So David summoned the people of Gibeon and said to them, What can I do for you? I want to make up for the wrong that was done to you, so that you will bless the LORD's people.

⁴They answered, Our quarrel with Saul and his family can't be settled with silver or gold, nor do we want to kill any Israelite. What, then, do you think I should do for you? David asked.

⁵They answered, Saul wanted to destroy us and leave none of us alive anywhere in Israel.

⁶So hand over seven of his male descendants, and we will hang them before the LORD at Gibeah, the hometown of Saul, the LORD's chosen king. I will hand them over, the king answered.

⁷ But because of the sacred promise that he and Jonathan had made to each other, David spared Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul.

⁸ However, he took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons that Rizpah the daughter of Aiah had borne to Saul; he also took the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab, whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai, who was from Meholah.

⁹ David handed them over to the people of Gibeon, who hanged them on the mountain before the LORD -- and all seven of them died together. It was late in the spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest, when they were put to death.

¹⁰ Then Saul's concubine Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, used sackcloth to make a shelter for herself on the rock where the corpses were, and she stayed there from the beginning of harvest until the autumn rains came. During the day she would keep the birds away from the corpses, and at night she would protect them from wild animals.

¹¹ When David heard what Rizpah had done,

¹² he went and got the bones of Saul and of his son Jonathan from the people of Jabesh in Gilead. (They had stolen them from the public square in Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hanged the bodies on the day they killed Saul on Mount Gilboa.)

¹³ David took the bones of Saul and Jonathan and also gathered up the bones of the seven men who had been hanged.

¹⁴ Then they buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan in the grave of Saul's father Kish, in Zela in the territory of Benjamin, doing all that the king had commanded. And after that, God answered their prayers for the country.

¹⁵ There was another war between the Philistines and Israel, and David and his men went and fought the Philistines. During one of the battles David grew tired.

¹⁶ A giant named Ishbibenob, who was carrying a bronze spear that weighed about seven and a half pounds and who was wearing a new sword, thought he could kill David.

¹⁷ But Abishai son of Zeruah came to David's help, attacked the giant, and killed him. Then David's men made David promise that he would never again go out with them to battle. You are the hope of Israel, and we don't want to lose you, they said.

¹⁸ After this there was a battle with the Philistines at Gob, during which Sibbecai from Hushah killed a giant named Saph.

¹⁹ There was another battle with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan son of Jair from Bethlehem killed Goliath from Gath, whose spear had a shaft as thick as the bar on a weaver's loom.

²⁰ Then there was another battle at Gath, where there was a giant who loved to fight. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot.

²¹ He defied the Israelites, and Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shammah, killed him.

²² These four were descendants of the giants of Gath, and they were killed by David and his men.

22¹ When the LORD saved David from Saul and his other enemies, David sang this song to the LORD:

²The LORD is my protector; he is my strong fortress.

³My God is my protection, and with him I am safe. He protects me like a shield; he defends me and keeps me safe. He is my savior; he protects me and saves me from violence.

⁴I call to the LORD, and he saves me from my enemies. Praise the LORD!

⁵The waves of death were all around me; the waves of destruction rolled over me.

⁶The danger of death was around me, and the grave set its trap for me.

⁷In my trouble I called to the LORD; I called to my God for help. In his temple he heard my voice; he listened to my cry for help.

⁸Then the earth trembled and shook; the foundations of the sky rocked and quivered because God was angry!

⁹Smoke poured out of his nostrils, a consuming flame and burning coals from his mouth.

¹⁰He tore the sky open and came down, with a dark cloud under his feet.

¹¹ He flew swiftly on his winged creature; he traveled on the wings of the wind.

¹² He covered himself with darkness; thick clouds, full of water, surrounded him;

¹³ burning coals flamed up from the lightning before him.

¹⁴ Then the LORD thundered from the sky, and the voice of Almighty God was heard.

¹⁵ He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies; with flashes of lightning he sent them running.

¹⁶ The floor of the ocean was laid bare, and the foundations of the earth were uncovered when the LORD rebuked his enemies and roared at them in anger.

¹⁷ The LORD reached down from above and took hold of me; he pulled me out of the deep waters.

¹⁸ He rescued me from my powerful enemies and from all those who hate me -- they were too strong for me.

¹⁹ When I was in trouble, they attacked me, but the LORD protected me.

²⁰He helped me out of danger; he saved me because he was pleased with me.

²¹The LORD rewards me because I do what is right; he blesses me because I am innocent.

²²I have obeyed the law of the LORD; I have not turned away from my God.

²³I have observed all his laws; I have not disobeyed his commands.

²⁴He knows that I am faultless, that I have kept myself from doing wrong.

²⁵And so he rewards me because I do what is right, because he knows that I am innocent.

²⁶O LORD, you are faithful to those who are faithful to you, and completely good to those who are perfect.

²⁷You are pure to those who are pure, but hostile to those who are wicked.

²⁸You save those who are humble, but you humble those who are proud.

²⁹You, LORD, are my light; you dispel my darkness.

³⁰You give me strength to attack my enemies and power to overcome their defenses.

³¹ This God -- how perfect are his deeds, how dependable his words! He is like a shield for all who seek his protection.

³² The LORD alone is God; God alone is our defense.

³³ This God is my strong refuge; he makes my pathway safe.

³⁴ He makes me sure-footed as a deer; he keeps me safe on the mountains.

³⁵ He trains me for battle, so that I can use the strongest bow.

³⁶ O LORD, you protect me and save me; your help has made me great.

³⁷ You have kept me from being captured, and I have never fallen.

³⁸ I pursue my enemies and defeat them; I do not stop until I destroy them.

³⁹ I strike them down, and they cannot rise; they lie defeated before me.

⁴⁰ You give me strength for the battle and victory over my enemies.

⁴¹ You make my enemies run from me; I destroy those who hate me.

⁴² They look for help, but no one saves them; they call to the LORD, but he does not answer.

⁴³I crush them, and they become like dust; I trample on them like mud in the streets.

⁴⁴You saved me from my rebellious people and maintained my rule over the nations; people I did not know have now become my subjects.

⁴⁵Foreigners bow before me; when they hear me, they obey.

⁴⁶They lose their courage and come trembling from their fortresses.

⁴⁷The LORD lives! Praise my defender! Proclaim the greatness of the strong God who saves me!

⁴⁸He gives me victory over my enemies; he subdues the nations under me

⁴⁹and saves me from my foes. O LORD, you give me victory over my enemies and protect me from violent men.

⁵⁰And so I praise you among the nations; I sing praises to you.

⁵¹God gives great victories to his king; he shows constant love to the one he has chosen, to David and his descendants forever.

23¹ David son of Jesse was the man whom God made great, whom the

God of Jacob chose to be king, and who was the composer of beautiful songs for Israel. These are David's last words:

²The spirit of the LORD speaks through me; his message is on my lips.

³The God of Israel has spoken; the protector of Israel said to me: The king who rules with justice, who rules in obedience to God,

⁴is like the sun shining on a cloudless dawn, the sun that makes the grass sparkle after rain.

⁵And that is how God will bless my descendants, because he has made an eternal covenant with me, an agreement that will not be broken, a promise that will not be changed. That is all I desire; that will be my victory, and God will surely bring it about.

⁶But godless people are like thorns that are thrown away; no one can touch them barehanded.

⁷You must use an iron tool or a spear; they will be burned completely.

⁸These are the names of David's famous soldiers: the first was Josheb Basshebeth from Tachemon, who was the leader of The Three; he fought with

his spear against eight hundred men and killed them all in one battle.

⁹The second of the famous three was Eleazar son of Dodo, of the clan of Ahoh. One day he and David challenged the Philistines who had gathered for battle. The Israelites fell back,

¹⁰but he stood his ground and fought the Philistines until his hand was so cramped that he could not let go of his sword. The LORD won a great victory that day. After it was over, the Israelites returned to where Eleazar was and stripped the armor from the dead.

¹¹The third of the famous three was Shammah son of Agee from Harar. The Philistines had gathered at Lehi, where there was a field of peas. The Israelites fled from the Philistines,

¹²but Shammah stood his ground in the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. The LORD won a great victory that day.

¹³Near the beginning of harvest time three of The Thirty went down to Adullam Cave, where David was, while a band of Philistines was camping in Rephaim Valley.

¹⁴At that time David was on a fortified hill, and a group of Philistines had occupied Bethlehem.

¹⁵David grew homesick and said, How I wish someone would bring me a drink of water from the well by the gate at Bethlehem!

¹⁶The three famous soldiers forced their way through the Philistine camp, drew some water from the well, and brought it back to David. But he would not drink it; instead he poured it out as an offering to the LORD

¹⁷and said, LORD, I could never drink this! It would be like drinking the blood of these men who risked their lives! So he refused to drink it. Those were the brave deeds of the three famous soldiers.

¹⁸Joab's brother Abishai (their mother was Zeruah) was the leader of The Famous Thirty. He fought with his spear against three hundred men and killed them, and became famous among The Thirty.

¹⁹He was the most famous of The Thirty and became their leader, but he was not as famous as The Three.

²⁰ Benaiah son of Jehoiada from Kabzeel was another famous soldier; he did many brave deeds, including killing two great Moabite warriors. He once went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.

²¹ He also killed an Egyptian, a huge man who was armed with a spear. Benaiah attacked him with his club, snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with it.

²² Those were the brave deeds of Benaiah, who was one of The Thirty.

²³ He was outstanding among them, but was not as famous as The Three. David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

²⁴ Other members of The Thirty included: /INPAsahel, Joab's brother /INPEIhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem /INPShammah and Erika from Harod /INPHelez from Pelet /INPIra son of Ikkesh from Tekoa /INPAbiezer from Anathoth /INPMebunnai from Hushah /INPZalmon from Ahoh /INPMaharai from Netophah /INPHeleb son of Baanah from Netophah /INPIttai son of Ribai from Gibeah in Benjamin /INPBenaiah from Pirathon /INPHiddai from the valleys

near Gaash /INPAbialbon from Arabah
/INPAzmaveth from Bahurim /INPEliahba
from Shaalbon /INPTThe sons of Jashen
/INPJonathan /INPSShammah from
Harar /INPAhiam son of Sharar from
Harar /INPEliphelet son of Ahasbai from
Maacah /INPEIliam son of Ahithophel from
Gilo /INPHezro from Carmel /INPPaarai
from Arab /INPIgal son of Nathan from
Zobah /INPBani from Gad /INPZekek
from Ammon /INPNaharai from Beeroth,
Joab's armorbearer /INPIra and Gareb
from Jattir /INPUriah the Hittite. There
were thirty-seven famous soldiers in all.

²⁵ (23: 24)

²⁶ (23: 24)

²⁷ (23: 24)

²⁸ (23: 24)

²⁹ (23: 24)

³⁰ (23: 24)

³¹ (23: 24)

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³⁴ (23: 24)

³⁵ (23: 24)

³⁶ (23: 24)

³⁷ (23: 24)

³⁸ (23: 24)

³⁹ (23: 24)

24¹ On another occasion the LORD was angry with Israel, and he made David bring trouble on them. The LORD said to him, Go and count the people of Israel and Judah.

² So David gave orders to Joab, the commander of his army: Go with your officers through all the tribes of Israel from one end of the country to the other, and count the people. I want to know how many there are.

³ But Joab answered the king, Your Majesty, may the LORD your God make the people of Israel a hundred times more numerous than they are now, and may you live to see him do it. But why does Your Majesty want to do this?

⁴ But the king made Joab and his officers obey his order; they left his presence and went out to count the people of Israel.

⁵ They crossed the Jordan and camped south of Aroer, the city in the middle of the valley, in the territory of Gad. From there they went north to Jazer,

⁶and on to Gilead and to Kadesh, in Hittite territory. Then they went to Dan, and from Dan they went west to Sidon.

⁷Then they went south to the fortified city of Tyre, on to all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites, and finally to Beersheba, in the southern part of Judah.

⁸So after nine months and twenty days they returned to Jerusalem, having traveled through the whole country.

⁹They reported to the king the total number of men capable of military service: 800,000 in Israel and 500,000 in Judah.

¹⁰But after David had taken the census, his conscience began to hurt, and he said to the LORD, I have committed a terrible sin in doing this! Please forgive me. I have acted foolishly.

¹¹The LORD said to Gad, David's prophet, Go and tell David that I am giving him three choices. I will do whichever he chooses. The next morning, after David had gotten up,

¹²(24: 11)

¹³Gad went to him, told him what the LORD had said, and asked, Which is it to

be? Three years of famine in your land or three months of running away from your enemies or three days of an epidemic in your land? Now think it over, and tell me what answer to take back to the LORD.

¹⁴David answered, I am in a desperate situation! But I don't want to be punished by people. Let the LORD himself be the one to punish us, for he is merciful.

¹⁵So the LORD sent an epidemic on Israel, which lasted from that morning until the time that he had chosen. From one end of the country to the other seventy thousand Israelites died.

¹⁶When the LORD's angel was about to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD changed his mind about punishing the people and said to the angel who was killing them, Stop! That's enough! The angel was by the threshing place of Araunah, a Jebusite.

¹⁷David saw the angel who was killing the people, and said to the LORD, I am the guilty one. I am the one who did wrong. What have these poor people done? You should punish me and my family.

¹⁸That same day Gad went to David and said to him, Go up to Araunah's threshing place and build an altar to the LORD.

¹⁹David obeyed the LORD's command and went as Gad had told him to.

²⁰Araunah looked down and saw the king and his officials coming up to him. He threw himself on the ground in front of David

²¹and asked, Your Majesty, why are you here? David answered, To buy your threshing place and build an altar for the LORD, in order to stop the epidemic.

²²Take it, Your Majesty, Araunah said, and offer to the LORD whatever you wish. Here are these oxen to burn as an offering on the altar; here are their yokes and the threshing boards to use as fuel.

²³Araunah gave it all to the king and said to him, May the LORD your God accept your offering.

²⁴But the king answered, No, I will pay you for it. I will not offer to the LORD my God sacrifices that have cost me nothing. And he bought the threshing place and the oxen for fifty pieces of silver.

²⁵ Then he built an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. The LORD answered his prayer, and the epidemic in Israel was stopped.

1 Kings

1 ¹ King David was now a very old man, and although his servants covered him with blankets, he could not keep warm.

² So his officials said to him, Your Majesty, let us find a young woman to stay with you and take care of you. She will lie close to you and keep you warm.

³ A search was made all over Israel for a beautiful young woman, and in Shunem they found such a woman named Abishag, and brought her to the king.

⁴ She was very beautiful, and waited on the king and took care of him, but he did not have intercourse with her.

⁵ Now that Absalom was dead, Adonijah, the son of David and Haggith, was the oldest surviving son. He was a very handsome man. David had never reprimanded him about anything, and he was ambitious to be king. He provided for himself chariots, horses, and an escort of fifty men.

⁶(1:5)

⁷He talked with Joab (whose mother was Zeruah) and with Abiathar the priest, and they agreed to support his cause.

⁸But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and David's bodyguards were not on Adonijah's side.

⁹One day Adonijah offered a sacrifice of sheep, bulls, and fattened calves at Snake Rock, near the spring of Enrogel. He invited the other sons of King David and the king's officials who were from Judah to come to this sacrificial feast,

¹⁰but he did not invite his half brother Solomon or Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the king's bodyguards.

¹¹Then Nathan went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and asked her, Haven't you heard that Haggith's son Adonijah has made himself king? And King David doesn't know anything about it!

¹²If you want to save your life and the life of your son Solomon, I would advise you to

¹³go at once to King David and ask him, Your Majesty, didn't you solemnly promise me that my son Solomon would succeed you as king? How is it, then, that Adonijah has become king?

¹⁴And Nathan added, Then, while you are still talking with King David, I will come in and confirm your story.

¹⁵So Bathsheba went to see the king in his bedroom. He was very old, and Abishag, the young woman from Shunem, was taking care of him.

¹⁶Bathsheba bowed low before the king, and he asked, What do you want?

¹⁷She answered, Your Majesty, you made me a solemn promise in the name of the LORD your God that my son Solomon would be king after you.

¹⁸But Adonijah has already become king, and you don't know anything about it.

¹⁹He has offered a sacrifice of many bulls, sheep, and fattened calves, and he invited your sons, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of your army to the feast, but he did not invite your son Solomon.

²⁰Your Majesty, all the people of Israel are looking to you to tell them who is to succeed you as king.

²¹If you don't, as soon as you are dead, my son Solomon and I will be treated as traitors.

²²She was still speaking, when Nathan arrived at the palace.

²³The king was told that the prophet was there, and Nathan went in and bowed low before the king.

²⁴Then he said, Your Majesty, have you announced that Adonijah would succeed you as king?

²⁵This very day he has gone and offered a sacrifice of many bulls, sheep, and fattened calves. He invited all your sons, Joab the commander of your army, and Abiathar the priest, and right now they are feasting with him and shouting, Long live King Adonijah!

²⁶But he did not invite me, sir, or Zadok the priest or Benaiah or Solomon.

²⁷Did Your Majesty approve all this and not even tell your officials who is to succeed you as king?

²⁸ King David said, Ask Bathsheba to come back in -- and she came and stood before him.

²⁹ Then he said to her, I promise you by the living LORD, who has rescued me from all my troubles,

³⁰ that today I will keep the promise I made to you in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, that your son Solomon would succeed me as king.

³¹ Bathsheba bowed low and said, May my lord the king live forever!

³² Then King David sent for Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah. When they came in,

³³ he said to them, Take my court officials with you; have my son Solomon ride my own mule, and escort him down to Gihon Spring,

³⁴ where Zadok and Nathan are to anoint him as king of Israel. Then blow the trumpet and shout, Long live King Solomon!

³⁵ Follow him back here when he comes to sit on my throne. He will succeed me as king, because he is the one I have chosen to be the ruler of Israel and Judah.

³⁶It shall be done, answered Benaiah, and may the LORD your God confirm it!

³⁷As the LORD has been with Your Majesty, may he also be with Solomon and make his reign even more prosperous than yours.

³⁸So Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and the royal bodyguards put Solomon on King David's mule and escorted him to Gihon Spring.

³⁹Zadok took the container of olive oil which he had brought from the Tent of the LORD's presence, and anointed Solomon. They blew the trumpet, and all the people shouted, Long live King Solomon!

⁴⁰Then they all followed him back, shouting for joy and playing flutes, making enough noise to shake the ground.

⁴¹As Adonijah and all his guests were finishing the feast, they heard the noise. And when Joab heard the trumpet, he asked, What's the meaning of all that noise in the city?

⁴²Before he finished speaking, Jonathan, the son of the priest Abiathar, arrived. Come on in, Adonijah said.

You're a good man -- you must be bringing good news.

⁴³ I'm afraid not, Jonathan answered. His Majesty King David has made Solomon king.

⁴⁴ He sent Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and the royal bodyguards to escort him. They had him ride on the king's mule,

⁴⁵ and Zadok and Nathan anointed him as king at Gihon Spring. Then they went into the city, shouting for joy, and the people are now in an uproar. That's the noise you just heard.

⁴⁶ Solomon is now the king.

⁴⁷ What is more, the court officials went in to pay their respects to His Majesty King David and said, May your God make Solomon even more famous than you, and may Solomon's reign be even more prosperous than yours. Then King David bowed in worship on his bed

⁴⁸ and prayed, Let us praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has today made one of my descendants succeed me as king, and has let me live to see it!

⁴⁹ Then Adonijah's guests were afraid, and they all got up and left, each going his own way.

⁵⁰ Adonijah, in great fear of Solomon, went to the Tent of the LORD's presence and took hold of the corners of the altar.

⁵¹ King Solomon was told that Adonijah was afraid of him and that he was holding on to the corners of the altar and had said, First, I want King Solomon to swear to me that he will not have me put to death.

⁵² Solomon replied, If he is loyal, not even a hair on his head will be touched; but if he is not, he will die.

⁵³ King Solomon then sent for Adonijah and had him brought down from the altar. Adonijah went to the king and bowed low before him, and the king said to him, You may go home.

2¹ When David was about to die, he called his son Solomon and gave him his last instructions:

² My time to die has come. Be confident and determined,

³ and do what the LORD your God orders you to do. Obey all his laws and commands, as written in the Law of Moses, so that wherever you go you may prosper in everything you do.

⁴If you obey him, the LORD will keep the promise he made when he told me that my descendants would rule Israel as long as they were careful to obey his commands faithfully with all their heart and soul.

⁵There is something else. You remember what Joab did to me by killing the two commanders of Israel's armies, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. You remember how he murdered them in time of peace as revenge for deaths they had caused in time of war. He killed innocent men, and now I bear the responsibility for what he did, and I suffer the consequences.

⁶You know what to do; you must not let him die a natural death.

⁷But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai from Gilead and take care of them, because they were kind to me when I was fleeing from your brother Absalom.

⁸There is also Shimei son of Gera, from the town of Bahurim in Benjamin. He cursed me bitterly the day I went to Mahanaim, but when he met me at the Jordan River, I gave him my solemn

promise in the name of the LORD that I would not have him killed.

⁹But you must not let him go unpunished. You know what to do, and you must see to it that he is put to death.

¹⁰David died and was buried in David's City.

¹¹He had been king of Israel for forty years, ruling seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

¹²Solomon succeeded his father David as king, and his royal power was firmly established.

¹³Then Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, went to Bathsheba, who was Solomon's mother. Is this a friendly visit? she asked. It is, he answered,

¹⁴and then he added, I have something to ask of you. What is it? she asked.

¹⁵He answered, You know that I should have become king and that everyone in Israel expected it. But it happened differently, and my brother became king because it was the LORD's will.

¹⁶And now I have one request to make; please do not refuse me. What is it? Bathsheba asked.

¹⁷ He answered, Please ask King Solomon -- I know he won't refuse you -- to let me have Abishag, the young woman from Shunem, as my wife.

¹⁸ Very well, she answered. I will speak to the king for you.

¹⁹ So Bathsheba went to the king to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. The king stood up to greet his mother and bowed to her. Then he sat on his throne and had another one brought in on which she sat at his right.

²⁰ She said, I have a small favor to ask of you; please do not refuse me. What is it, mother? he asked. I will not refuse you.

²¹ She answered, Let your brother Adonijah have Abishag as his wife.

²² Why do you ask me to give Abishag to him? the king asked. You might as well ask me to give him the throne too. After all, he is my older brother, and Abiathar the priest and Joab are on his side!

²³ Then Solomon made a solemn promise in the LORD's name, May God strike me dead if I don't make Adonijah pay with his life for asking this!

²⁴The LORD has firmly established me on the throne of my father David; he has kept his promise and given the kingdom to me and my descendants. I swear by the living LORD that Adonijah will die this very day!

²⁵So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah, who went out and killed Adonijah.

²⁶Then King Solomon said to Abiathar the priest, Go to your country home in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not have you put to death now, for you were in charge of the LORD's Covenant Box while you were with my father David, and you shared in all his troubles.

²⁷Then Solomon dismissed Abiathar from serving as a priest of the LORD, and so made come true what the LORD had said in Shiloh about the priest Eli and his descendants.

²⁸Joab heard what had happened. (He had supported Adonijah, but not Absalom.) So he fled to the Tent of the LORD's presence and took hold of the corners of the altar.

²⁹When the news reached King Solomon that Joab had fled to the Tent

and was by the altar, Solomon sent a messenger to Joab to ask him why he had fled to the altar. Joab answered that he had fled to the LORD because he was afraid of Solomon. So King Solomon sent Benaiah to kill Joab.

³⁰He went to the Tent of the LORD's presence and said to Joab, The king orders you to come out. No, Joab answered. I will die here. Benaiah went back to the king and told him what Joab had said.

³¹Do what Joab says, Solomon answered. Kill him and bury him. Then neither I nor any other of David's descendants will any longer be held responsible for what Joab did when he killed innocent men.

³²The LORD will punish Joab for those murders, which he committed without my father David's knowledge. Joab killed two innocent men who were better men than he: Abner, commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa, commander of the army of Judah.

³³The punishment for their murders will fall on Joab and on his descendants forever. But the LORD will always give

success to David's descendants who sit on his throne.

³⁴ So Benaiah went to the Tent of the LORD's presence and killed Joab, and he was buried at his home in the open country.

³⁵ The king made Benaiah commander of the army in Joab's place and put Zadok the priest in Abiathar's place.

³⁶ Then the king sent for Shimei and said to him, Build a house for yourself here in Jerusalem. Live in it and don't leave the city.

³⁷ If you ever leave and go beyond Kidron Brook, you will certainly die -- and you yourself will be to blame.

³⁸ Very well, Your Majesty, Shimei answered. I will do what you say. So he lived in Jerusalem a long time.

³⁹ Three years later, however, two of Shimei's slaves ran away to the king of Gath, Achish son of Maacah. When Shimei heard that they were in Gath,

⁴⁰ he saddled his donkey and went to King Achish in Gath, to find his slaves. He found them and brought them back home.

⁴¹ When Solomon heard what Shimei had done,

⁴² he sent for him and said, I made you promise in the LORD's name not to leave Jerusalem. And I warned you that if you ever did, you would certainly die. Did you not agree to it and say that you would obey me?

⁴³ Why, then, have you broken your promise and disobeyed my command?

⁴⁴ You know very well all the wrong that you did to my father David. The LORD will punish you for it.

⁴⁵ But he will bless me, and he will make David's kingdom secure forever.

⁴⁶ Then the king gave orders to Benaiah, who went out and killed Shimei. Solomon was now in complete control.

3¹ Solomon made an alliance with the king of Egypt by marrying his daughter. He brought her to live in David's City until he had finished building his palace, the Temple, and the wall around Jerusalem.

² A temple had not yet been built for the LORD, and so the people were still offering sacrifices at many different altars.

³Solomon loved the LORD and followed the instructions of his father David, but he also slaughtered animals and offered them as sacrifices on various altars.

⁴On one occasion he went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices because that was where the most famous altar was. He had offered hundreds of burnt offerings there in the past.

⁵That night the LORD appeared to him in a dream and asked him, What would you like me to give you?

⁶Solomon answered, You always showed great love for my father David, your servant, and he was good, loyal, and honest in his relation with you. And you have continued to show him your great and constant love by giving him a son who today rules in his place.

⁷O LORD God, you have let me succeed my father as king, even though I am very young and don't know how to rule.

⁸Here I am among the people you have chosen to be your own, a people who are so many that they cannot be counted.

⁹So give me the wisdom I need to rule your people with justice and to know the difference between good and evil.

Otherwise, how would I ever be able to rule this great people of yours?

¹⁰The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this,

¹¹and so he said to him, Because you have asked for the wisdom to rule justly, instead of long life for yourself or riches or the death of your enemies,

¹²I will do what you have asked. I will give you more wisdom and understanding than anyone has ever had before or will ever have again.

¹³I will also give you what you have not asked for: all your life you will have wealth and honor, more than that of any other king.

¹⁴And if you obey me and keep my laws and commands, as your father David did, I will give you a long life.

¹⁵Solomon woke up and realized that God had spoken to him in the dream. Then he went to Jerusalem and stood in front of the LORD's Covenant Box and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD. After that he gave a feast for all his officials.

¹⁶One day two prostitutes came and presented themselves before King Solomon.

¹⁷One of them said, Your Majesty, this woman and I live in the same house, and I gave birth to a baby boy at home while she was there.

¹⁸Two days after my child was born, she also gave birth to a baby boy. Only the two of us were there in the house -- no one else was present.

¹⁹Then one night she accidentally rolled over on her baby and smothered it.

²⁰She got up during the night, took my son from my side while I was asleep, and carried him to her bed; then she put the dead child in my bed.

²¹The next morning, when I woke up and was going to nurse my baby, I saw that it was dead. I looked at it more closely and saw that it was not my child.

²²But the other woman said, No! The living child is mine, and the dead one is yours! The first woman answered back, No! The dead child is yours, and the living one is mine! And so they argued before the king.

²³Then King Solomon said, Each of you claims that the living child is hers and that the dead child belongs to the other one.

²⁴He sent for a sword, and when it was brought,

²⁵he said, Cut the living child in two and give each woman half of it.

²⁶The real mother, her heart full of love for her son, said to the king, Please, Your Majesty, don't kill the child! Give it to her! But the other woman said, Don't give it to either of us; go on and cut it in two.

²⁷Then Solomon said, Don't kill the child! Give it to the first woman -- she is its real mother.

²⁸When the people of Israel heard of Solomon's decision, they were all filled with deep respect for him, because they knew then that God had given him the wisdom to settle disputes fairly.

4¹ Solomon was king of all Israel,
²and these were his high officials:
The priest: Azariah son of Zadok

³The court secretaries: Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha In charge of the records: Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud

⁴ Commander of the army: Benaiah son of Jehoiada
Priests: Zadok and Abiathar

⁵ Chief of the district governors: Azariah son of Nathan
Royal Adviser: the priest Zabud son of Nathan

⁶ In charge of the palace servants: Ahishar
In charge of the forced labor: Adoniram son of Abda

⁷ Solomon appointed twelve men as district governors in Israel. They were to provide food from their districts for the king and his household, each man being responsible for one month out of the year.

⁸ The following are the names of these twelve officers and the districts they were in charge of: Benhur: the hill country of Ephraim

⁹ Bendeker: the cities of Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, Elon, and Beth Hanan

¹⁰ Benhesed: the cities of Arubboth and Socoh and all the territory of Hephher

¹¹ Benabinadab, who was married to Solomon's daughter Taphath: the whole region of Dor

¹² Baana son of Ahilud: the cities of Taanach, Megiddo, and all the region

near Beth Shan, near the town of Zarethan, south of the town of Jezreel, as far as the city of Abel Meholah and the city of Jokmeam

¹³Bengeber: the city of Ramoth in Gilead, and the villages in Gilead belonging to the clan of Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, and the region of Argob in Bashan, sixty large towns in all, fortified with walls and with bronze bars on the gates

¹⁴Ahinadab son of Iddo: the district of Mahanaim

¹⁵Ahimaaz, who was married to Basemath, another of Solomon's daughters: the territory of Naphtali

¹⁶Baana son of Hushai: the region of Asher and the town of Bealoth

¹⁷Jehoshaphat son of Paruah: the territory of Issachar

¹⁸Shimei son of Ela: the territory of Benjamin

¹⁹Geber son of Uri: the region of Gilead, which had been ruled by King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan Besides these twelve, there was one governor over the whole land.

²⁰The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore; they ate and drank, and were happy.

²¹Solomon's kingdom included all the nations from the Euphrates River to Philistia and the Egyptian border. They paid him taxes and were subject to him all his life.

²²The supplies Solomon needed each day were 150 bushels of fine flour and 300 bushels of meal;

²³10 stall-fed cattle, 20 pasture-fed cattle, and 100 sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and poultry.

²⁴Solomon ruled over all the land west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphseh on the Euphrates as far west as the city of Gaza. All the kings west of the Euphrates were subject to him, and he was at peace with all the neighboring countries.

²⁵As long as he lived, the people throughout Judah and Israel lived in safety, each family with its own grapevines and fig trees.

²⁶Solomon had forty thousand stalls for his chariot horses and twelve thousand cavalry horses.

²⁷ His twelve governors, each one in the month assigned to him, supplied the food King Solomon needed for himself and for all who ate in the palace; they always supplied everything needed.

²⁸ Each governor also supplied his share of barley and straw, where it was needed, for the chariot horses and the work animals.

²⁹ God gave Solomon unusual wisdom and insight, and knowledge too great to be measured.

³⁰ Solomon was wiser than the wise men of the East or the wise men of Egypt.

³¹ He was the wisest of all men: wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame spread throughout all the neighboring countries.

³² He composed three thousand proverbs and more than a thousand songs.

³³ He spoke of trees and plants, from the Lebanon cedars to the hyssop that grows on walls; he talked about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish.

³⁴ Kings all over the world heard of his wisdom and sent people to listen to him.

5 ¹ King Hiram of Tyre had always been a friend of David's, and when he heard that Solomon had succeeded his father David as king, he sent ambassadors to him.

² Solomon sent back this message to Hiram:

³ You know that because of the constant wars my father David had to fight against the enemy countries all around him, he could not build a temple for the worship of the LORD his God until the LORD had given him victory over all his enemies.

⁴ But now the LORD my God has given me peace on all my borders. I have no enemies, and there is no danger of attack.

⁵ The LORD promised my father David, Your son, whom I will make king after you, will build a temple for me. And I have now decided to build that temple for the worship of the LORD my God.

⁶ So send your men to Lebanon to cut down cedars for me. My men will work with them, and I will pay your men whatever you decide. As you well know,

my men don't know how to cut down trees as well as yours do.

⁷Hiram was extremely pleased when he received Solomon's message, and he said, Praise the LORD today for giving David such a wise son to succeed him as king of that great nation!

⁸Then Hiram sent Solomon the following message: I have received your message, and I am ready to do what you ask. I will provide the cedars and the pine trees.

⁹My men will bring the logs down from Lebanon to the sea and will tie them together in rafts to float them down the coast to the place you choose. There my men will untie them, and your men will take charge of them. On your part, I would like you to supply the food for my men.

¹⁰So Hiram supplied Solomon with all the cedar and pine logs that he wanted,

¹¹and Solomon provided Hiram with 100,000 bushels of wheat and 110,000 gallons of pure olive oil every year to feed his men.

¹²The LORD kept his promise and gave Solomon wisdom. There was peace

between Hiram and Solomon, and they made a treaty with each other.

¹³ King Solomon drafted 30,000 men as forced labor from all over Israel,

¹⁴ and put Adoniram in charge of them. He divided them into three groups of 10,000 men, and each group spent one month in Lebanon and two months back home.

¹⁵ Solomon also had 80,000 stone cutters in the hill country, with 70,000 men to carry the stones,

¹⁶ and he placed 3,300 foremen in charge of them to supervise their work.

¹⁷ At King Solomon's command they cut fine large stones for the foundation of the Temple.

¹⁸ Solomon's and Hiram's workers and men from the city of Byblos prepared the stones and the timber to build the Temple.

6¹ Four hundred and eighty years after the people of Israel left Egypt, during the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the second month, the month of Ziv, Solomon began work on the Temple.

²Inside it was 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

³The entrance room was 15 feet deep and 30 feet wide, as wide as the sanctuary itself.

⁴The walls of the Temple had openings in them, narrower on the outside than on the inside.

⁵Against the outside walls, on the sides and the back of the Temple, a three-storied annex was built, each story 7 1/2 feet high.

⁶Each room in the lowest story was 7 1/2 feet wide, in the middle story 9 feet wide, and in the top story 10 1/2 feet wide. The Temple wall on each floor was thinner than on the floor below, so that the rooms could rest on the wall without having their beams built into it.

⁷The stones with which the Temple was built had been prepared at the quarry, so that there was no noise made by hammers, axes, or any other iron tools as the Temple was being built.

⁸The entrance to the lowest story of the annex was on the south side of the Temple, with stairs leading up to the second and third stories.

⁹So King Solomon finished building the Temple. He put in a ceiling made of beams and boards of cedar.

¹⁰The three-storied annex, each story 7 1/2 feet high, was built against the outside walls of the Temple, and was joined to them by cedar beams.

¹¹The LORD said to Solomon,

¹²If you obey all my laws and commands, I will do for you what I promised your father David.

¹³I will live among my people Israel in this Temple that you are building, and I will never abandon them.

¹⁴So Solomon finished building the Temple.

¹⁵The inside walls were covered with cedar panels from the floor to the ceiling, and the floor was made of pine.

¹⁶An inner room, called the Most Holy Place, was built in the rear of the Temple. It was 30 feet long and was partitioned off by cedar boards reaching from the floor to the ceiling.

¹⁷The room in front of the Most Holy Place was 60 feet long.

¹⁸The cedar panels were decorated with carvings of gourds and flowers; the

whole interior was covered with cedar, so that the stones of the walls could not be seen.

¹⁹In the rear of the Temple an inner room was built, where the LORD's Covenant Box was to be placed.

²⁰This inner room was 30 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 30 feet high, all covered with pure gold. The altar was covered with cedar panels.

²¹The inside of the Temple was covered with gold, and gold chains were placed across the entrance of the inner room, which was also covered with gold.

²²The whole interior of the Temple was covered with gold, as well as the altar in the Most Holy Place.

²³Two winged creatures were made of olive wood and placed in the Most Holy Place, each one 15 feet tall.

²⁴Both were of the same size and shape. Each had two wings, each wing 7 1/2 feet long, so that the distance from one wing tip to the other was 15 feet.

²⁵(6: 24)

²⁶(6: 24)

²⁷They were placed side by side in the Most Holy Place, so that two of their

outstretched wings touched each other in the middle of the room, and the other two wings touched the walls.

²⁸The two winged creatures were covered with gold.

²⁹The walls of the main room and of the inner room were all decorated with carved figures of winged creatures, palm trees, and flowers.

³⁰Even the floor was covered with gold.

³¹A double door made of olive wood was set in place at the entrance of the Most Holy Place; the top of the doorway was a pointed arch.

³²The doors were decorated with carved figures of winged creatures, palm trees, and flowers. The doors, the winged creatures, and the palm trees were covered with gold.

³³For the entrance to the main room a rectangular doorframe of olive wood was made.

³⁴There were two folding doors made of pine

³⁵and decorated with carved figures of winged creatures, palm trees, and flowers, which were evenly covered with gold.

³⁶An inner court was built in front of the Temple, enclosed with walls which had one layer of cedar beams for every three layers of stone.

³⁷The foundation of the Temple was laid in the second month, the month of Ziv, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign.

³⁸In the eighth month, the month of Bul, in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, the Temple was completely finished exactly as it had been planned. It had taken Solomon seven years to build it.

7¹ Solomon also built a palace for himself, and it took him thirteen years.

²The Hall of the Forest of Lebanon was 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. It had three rows of cedar pillars, 15 in each row, with cedar beams resting on them. The ceiling was of cedar, extending over storerooms, which were supported by the pillars.

³(7:2)

⁴On each of the two side walls there were three rows of windows.

⁵The doorways and the windows had rectangular frames, and the three

rows of windows in each wall faced the opposite rows.

⁶The Hall of Columns was 75 feet long and 45 feet wide. It had a covered porch, supported by columns.

⁷The Throne Room, also called the Hall of Judgment, where Solomon decided cases, had cedar panels from the floor to the rafters.

⁸Solomon's own quarters, in another court behind the Hall of Judgment, were made like the other buildings. He also built the same kind of house for his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt.

⁹All these buildings and the great court were made of fine stones from the foundations to the eaves. The stones were prepared at the quarry and cut to measure, with their inner and outer sides trimmed with saws.

¹⁰The foundations were made of large stones prepared at the quarry, some of them twelve feet long and others fifteen feet long.

¹¹On top of them were other stones, cut to measure, and cedar beams.

¹²The palace court, the inner court of the Temple, and the entrance room of

the Temple had walls with one layer of cedar beams for every three layers of cut stones.

¹³King Solomon sent for a man named Hiram, a craftsman living in the city of Tyre, who was skilled in bronze work.

¹⁴His father, who was no longer living, was from Tyre, and had also been a skilled bronze craftsman; his mother was from the tribe of Naphtali. Hiram was an intelligent and experienced craftsman. He accepted King Solomon's invitation to be in charge of all the bronze work.

¹⁵Hiram cast two bronze columns, each one 27 feet tall and 18 feet in circumference, and placed them at the entrance of the Temple.

¹⁶He also made two bronze capitals, each one 7 1/2 feet tall, to be placed on top of the columns.

¹⁷The top of each column was decorated with a design of interwoven chains

¹⁸and two rows of bronze pomegranates.

¹⁹The capitals were shaped like lilies, 6 feet tall,

²⁰and were placed on a rounded section which was above the chain design. There

were 200 pomegranates in two rows around each capital.

²¹ Hiram placed these two bronze columns in front of the entrance of the Temple: the one on the south side was named Jachin and the one on the north was named Boaz.

²² The lily-shaped bronze capitals were on top of the columns. And so the work on the columns was completed.

²³ Hiram made a round tank of bronze, 7 1/2 feet deep, 15 feet in diameter, and 45 feet in circumference.

²⁴ All around the outer edge of the rim of the tank were two rows of bronze gourds, which had been cast all in one piece with the rest of the tank.

²⁵ The tank rested on the backs of twelve bronze bulls that faced outward, three facing in each direction.

²⁶ The sides of the tank were 3 inches thick. Its rim was like the rim of a cup, curving outward like the petals of a lily. The tank held about 10,000 gallons.

²⁷ Hiram also made ten bronze carts; each was 6 feet long, 6 feet wide, and 4 1/2 feet high.

²⁸They were made of square panels which were set in frames,

²⁹with the figures of lions, bulls, and winged creatures on the panels; and on the frames, above and underneath the lions and bulls, there were spiral figures in relief.

³⁰Each cart had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. At the four corners were bronze supports for a basin; the supports were decorated with spiral figures in relief.

³¹There was a circular frame on top for the basin. It projected upward 18 inches from the top of the cart and 7 inches down into it. It had carvings around it.

³²The wheels were 25 inches high; they were under the panels, and the axles were of one piece with the carts.

³³The wheels were like chariot wheels; their axles, rims, spokes, and hubs were all of bronze.

³⁴There were four supports at the bottom corners of each cart, which were of one piece with the cart.

³⁵There was a 9-inch band around the top of each cart; its supports and the panels were of one piece with the cart.

³⁶The supports and panels were decorated with figures of winged creatures, lions, and palm trees, wherever there was space for them, with spiral figures all around.

³⁷This, then, is how the carts were made; they were all alike, having the same size and shape.

³⁸Huram also made ten basins, one for each cart. Each basin was 6 feet in diameter and held 200 gallons.

³⁹He placed five of the carts on the south side of the Temple, and the other five on the north side; the tank he placed at the southeast corner.

⁴⁰Huram also made pots, shovels, and bowls. He completed all his work for King Solomon for the LORD's Temple. This is what he made: The two columns The two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the columns The design of interwoven chains on each capital The 400 bronze pomegranates, in two rows of 100 each around the design on each capital The ten carts The ten basins The tank The twelve bulls supporting the tank The pots, shovels, and bowls All this equipment for the Temple, which Hiram

made for King Solomon, was of polished bronze.

⁴¹ (7: 40)

⁴² (7: 40)

⁴³ (7: 40)

⁴⁴ (7: 40)

⁴⁵ (7: 40)

⁴⁶ The king had it all made in the foundry between Sukkoth and Zarethan, in the Jordan Valley.

⁴⁷ Solomon did not have these bronze objects weighed, because there were too many of them, and so their weight was never determined.

⁴⁸ Solomon also had gold furnishings made for the Temple: the altar, the table for the bread offered to God,

⁴⁹ the ten lampstands that stood in front of the Most Holy Place, five on the south side and five on the north; the flowers, lamps, and tongs;

⁵⁰ the cups, lamp snuffers, bowls, dishes for incense, and the pans used for carrying live coals; and the hinges for the doors of the Most Holy Place and of the outer doors of the Temple. All these furnishings were made of gold.

⁵¹ When King Solomon finished all the work on the Temple, he placed in the Temple storerooms all the things that his father David had dedicated to the LORD -- the silver, gold, and other articles.

8¹ Then King Solomon summoned all the leaders of the tribes and clans of Israel to come to him in Jerusalem in order to take the LORD's Covenant Box from Zion, David's City, to the Temple.

² They all assembled during the Festival of Shelters in the seventh month, in the month of Ethanim.

³ When all the leaders had gathered, the priests lifted the Covenant Box

⁴ and carried it to the Temple. The Levites and the priests also moved the Tent of the LORD's presence and all its equipment to the Temple.

⁵ King Solomon and all the people of Israel assembled in front of the Covenant Box and sacrificed a large number of sheep and cattle -- too many to count.

⁶ Then the priests carried the Covenant Box into the Temple and put it in the Most Holy Place, beneath the winged creatures.

⁷ Their outstretched wings covered the box and the poles it was carried by.

⁸ The ends of the poles could be seen by anyone standing directly in front of the Most Holy Place, but from nowhere else. (The poles are still there today.)

⁹ There was nothing inside the Covenant Box except the two stone tablets which Moses had placed there at Mount Sinai, when the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel as they were coming from Egypt.

¹⁰ As the priests were leaving the Temple, it was suddenly filled with a cloud

¹¹ shining with the dazzling light of the LORD's presence, and they could not go back in to perform their duties.

¹² Then Solomon prayed: You, LORD, have placed the sun in the sky, yet you have chosen to live in clouds and darkness.

¹³ Now I have built a majestic temple for you, a place for you to live in forever.

¹⁴ As the people stood there, King Solomon turned to face them, and he asked God's blessing on them.

¹⁵He said, Praise the LORD God of Israel! He has kept the promise he made to my father David, when he told him,

¹⁶From the time I brought my people out of Egypt, I have not chosen any city in all the land of Israel in which a temple should be built where I would be worshiped. But I chose you, David, to rule my people.

¹⁷And Solomon continued, My father David planned to build a temple for the worship of the LORD God of Israel,

¹⁸but the LORD said to him, You were right in wanting to build a temple for me,

¹⁹but you will never build it. It is your son, your own son, who will build my temple.

²⁰And now the LORD has kept his promise. I have succeeded my father as king of Israel, and I have built the Temple for the worship of the LORD God of Israel.

²¹I have also provided a place in the Temple for the Covenant Box containing the stone tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt.

²²Then in the presence of the people Solomon went and stood in front of the altar, where he raised his arms

²³and prayed, LORD God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven above or on earth below! You keep your covenant with your people and show them your love when they live in wholehearted obedience to you.

²⁴You have kept the promise you made to my father David; today every word has been fulfilled.

²⁵And now, LORD God of Israel, I pray that you will also keep the other promise you made to my father when you told him that there would always be one of his descendants ruling as king of Israel, provided they obeyed you as carefully as he did.

²⁶So now, O God of Israel, let everything come true that you promised to my father David, your servant.

²⁷But can you, O God, really live on earth? Not even all of heaven is large enough to hold you, so how can this Temple that I have built be large enough?

²⁸LORD my God, I am your servant. Listen to my prayer, and grant the requests I make to you today.

²⁹Watch over this Temple day and night, this place where you have chosen to be worshiped. Hear me when I face this Temple and pray.

³⁰Hear my prayers and the prayers of your people when they face this place and pray. In your home in heaven hear us and forgive us.

³¹When a person is accused of wronging another and is brought to your altar in this Temple to take an oath that he is innocent,

³²O LORD, listen in heaven and judge your servants. Punish the guilty one as he deserves, and acquit the one who is innocent.

³³When your people Israel are defeated by their enemies because they have sinned against you, and then when they turn to you and come to this Temple, humbly praying to you for forgiveness,

³⁴listen to them in heaven. Forgive the sins of your people and bring them back to the land which you gave to their ancestors.

³⁵When you hold back the rain because your people have sinned against you, and then when they repent and face this Temple, humbly praying to you,

³⁶listen to them in heaven. Forgive the sins of the king and of the people of Israel, and teach them to do what is right. Then, O LORD, send rain on this land of yours, which you gave to your people as a permanent possession.

³⁷When there is famine in the land or an epidemic or the crops are destroyed by scorching winds or swarms of locusts, or when your people are attacked by their enemies, or when there is disease or sickness among them,

³⁸listen to their prayers. If any of your people Israel, out of heartfelt sorrow, stretch out their hands in prayer toward this Temple,

³⁹hear their prayer. Listen to them in your home in heaven, forgive them, and help them. You alone know the thoughts of the human heart. Deal with each person as he deserves,

⁴⁰so that your people may obey you all the time they live in the land which you gave to our ancestors.

⁴¹ When a foreigner who lives in a distant land hears of your fame and of the great things you have done for your people and comes to worship you and to pray at this Temple,

⁴² (8: 41)

⁴³ listen to his prayer. In heaven, where you live, hear him and do what he asks you to do, so that all the peoples of the world may know you and obey you, as your people Israel do. Then they will know that this Temple I have built is the place where you are to be worshiped.

⁴⁴ When you command your people to go into battle against their enemies and they pray to you, wherever they are, facing this city which you have chosen and this Temple which I have built for you,

⁴⁵ listen to their prayers. Hear them in heaven and give them victory.

⁴⁶ When your people sin against you -- and there is no one who does not sin -- and in your anger you let their enemies defeat them and take them as prisoners to some other land, even if that land is far away,

⁴⁷ listen to your people's prayers. If there in that land they repent and pray to you, confessing how sinful and wicked they have been, hear their prayers, O LORD.

⁴⁸ If in that land they truly and sincerely repent and pray to you as they face toward this land which you gave to our ancestors, this city which you have chosen, and this Temple which I have built for you,

⁴⁹ then listen to their prayers. In your home in heaven hear them and be merciful to them.

⁵⁰ Forgive all their sins and their rebellion against you, and make their enemies treat them with kindness.

⁵¹ They are your own people, whom you brought out of Egypt, that blazing furnace.

⁵² Sovereign LORD, may you always look with favor on your people Israel and their king, and hear their prayer whenever they call to you for help.

⁵³ You chose them from all the peoples to be your own people, as you told them through your servant Moses when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt.

⁵⁴ After Solomon had finished praying to the LORD, he stood up in front of the altar, where he had been kneeling with uplifted hands.

⁵⁵ In a loud voice he asked God's blessings on all the people assembled there. He said,

⁵⁶ Praise the LORD who has given his people peace, as he promised he would. He has kept all the generous promises he made through his servant Moses.

⁵⁷ May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us or abandon us;

⁵⁸ may he make us obedient to him, so that we will always live as he wants us to live, keeping all the laws and commands he gave our ancestors.

⁵⁹ May the LORD our God remember at all times this prayer and these petitions I have made to him. May he always be merciful to the people of Israel and to their king, according to their daily needs.

⁶⁰ And so all the nations of the world will know that the LORD alone is God -- there is no other.

⁶¹ May you, his people, always be faithful to the LORD our God, obeying all his laws and commands as you do today.

⁶² Then King Solomon and all the people there offered sacrifices to the LORD.

⁶³ He sacrificed 22,000 head of cattle and 120,000 sheep as fellowship offerings. And so the king and all the people dedicated the Temple.

⁶⁴ That same day he also consecrated the central part of the courtyard, the area in front of the Temple, and then he offered there the sacrifices burned whole, the grain offerings, and the fat of the animals for the fellowship offerings. He did this because the bronze altar was too small for all these offerings.

⁶⁵ There at the Temple, Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the Festival of Shelters for seven days. There was a huge crowd of people from as far away as Hamath Pass in the north and the Egyptian border in the south.

⁶⁶ On the eighth day Solomon sent the people home. They all praised him and went home happy because of all the blessings that the LORD had given his servant David and his people Israel.

9¹ After King Solomon had finished building the Temple and the palace and everything else he wanted to build,
² the LORD appeared to him again, as he had in Gibeon.

³ The LORD said to him, I have heard your prayer. I consecrate this Temple which you have built as the place where I shall be worshiped forever. I will watch over it and protect it for all time.

⁴ If you will serve me in honesty and integrity, as your father David did, and if you obey my laws and do everything I have commanded you,

⁵ I will keep the promise I made to your father David when I told him that Israel would always be ruled by his descendants.

⁶ But if you or your descendants stop following me, disobey the laws and commands I have given you, and worship other gods,

⁷ then I will remove my people Israel from the land that I have given them. I will also abandon this Temple which I have consecrated as the place where I am to be worshiped. People everywhere

will ridicule Israel and treat her with contempt.

⁸This Temple will become a pile of ruins, and everyone who passes by will be shocked and amazed. Why did the LORD do this to this land and this Temple? they will ask.

⁹People will answer, It is because they abandoned the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of Egypt. They gave their allegiance to other gods and worshiped them. That is why the LORD has brought this disaster on them.

¹⁰It took Solomon twenty years to build the Temple and his palace.

¹¹King Hiram of Tyre had provided him with all the cedar and pine and with all the gold he wanted for this work. After it was finished, King Solomon gave Hiram twenty towns in the region of Galilee.

¹²Hiram went to see them, and he did not like them.

¹³So he said to Solomon, So these, my brother, are the towns you have given me! For this reason the area is still called Cabul.

¹⁴Hiram had sent Solomon almost five tons of gold.

¹⁵ King Solomon used forced labor to build the Temple and the palace, to fill in land on the east side of the city, and to build the city wall. He also used it to rebuild the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

¹⁶ (The king of Egypt had attacked Gezer and captured it, killing its inhabitants and setting fire to the city. Then he gave it as a wedding present to his daughter when she married Solomon,

¹⁷ and Solomon rebuilt it.) Using his forced labor, Solomon also rebuilt Lower Beth Horon,

¹⁸ Baalath, Tamar in the wilderness of Judah,

¹⁹ the cities where his supplies were kept, the cities for his horses and chariots, and everything else he wanted to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and elsewhere in his kingdom.

²⁰ For his forced labor Solomon used the descendants of the people of Canaan whom the Israelites had not killed when they took possession of their land. These included Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, whose

descendants continue to be slaves down to the present time.

²¹ (9: 20)

²² Solomon did not make slaves of Israelites; they served as his soldiers, officers, commanders, chariot captains, and cavalry.

²³ There were 550 officials in charge of the forced labor working on Solomon's various building projects.

²⁴ Solomon filled in the land on the east side of the city, after his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt, had moved from David's City to the palace Solomon built for her.

²⁵ Three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he had built to the LORD. He also burned incense to the LORD. And so he finished building the Temple.

²⁶ King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Eziongeber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, in the land of Edom.

²⁷ King Hiram sent some experienced sailors from his fleet to serve with Solomon's men.

²⁸They sailed to the land of Ophir and brought back to Solomon about sixteen tons of gold.

10¹The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, and she traveled to Jerusalem to test him with difficult questions.

²She brought with her a large group of attendants, as well as camels loaded with spices, jewels, and a large amount of gold. When she and Solomon met, she asked him all the questions that she could think of.

³He answered them all; there was nothing too difficult for him to explain.

⁴The queen of Sheba heard Solomon's wisdom and saw the palace he had built.

⁵She saw the food that was served at his table, the living quarters for his officials, the organization of his palace staff and the uniforms they wore, the servants who waited on him at feasts, and the sacrifices he offered in the Temple. It left her breathless and amazed.

⁶She said to King Solomon, What I heard in my own country about you and your wisdom is true!

⁷ But I couldn't believe it until I had come and seen it all for myself. But I didn't hear even half of it; your wisdom and wealth are much greater than what I was told.

⁸ How fortunate are your wives! And how fortunate your servants, who are always in your presence and are privileged to hear your wise sayings!

⁹ Praise the LORD your God! He has shown how pleased he is with you by making you king of Israel. Because his love for Israel is eternal, he has made you their king so that you can maintain law and justice.

¹⁰ She presented to King Solomon the gifts she had brought: almost five tons of gold and a very large amount of spices and jewels. The amount of spices she gave him was by far the greatest that he ever received at any time.

¹¹ (Hiram's fleet, which had brought gold from Ophir, also brought from there a large amount of juniper wood and jewels.

¹² Solomon used the wood to build railings in the Temple and the palace, and also to make harps and lyres for the

musicians. It was the finest juniper wood ever imported into Israel; none like it has ever been seen again.)

¹³King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she asked for, besides all the other customary gifts that he had generously given her. Then she and her attendants returned to the land of Sheba.

¹⁴Every year King Solomon received over twenty-five tons of gold,

¹⁵in addition to the taxes paid by merchants, the profits from trade, and tribute paid by the Arabian kings and the governors of the Israelite districts.

¹⁶Solomon made two hundred large shields and had each one overlaid with almost fifteen pounds of gold.

¹⁷He also made three hundred smaller shields, overlaying each one of them with nearly four pounds of gold. He had all these shields placed in the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁸He also had a large throne made. Part of it was covered with ivory and the rest of it was covered with the finest gold.

¹⁹The throne had six steps leading up to it, with the figure of a lion at each end

of every step, a total of twelve lions. At the back of the throne was the figure of a bull's head, and beside each of the two armrests was the figure of a lion. No throne like this had ever existed in any other kingdom.

²⁰ (10: 19)

²¹ All of Solomon's drinking cups were made of gold, and all the utensils in the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. No silver was used, since it was not considered valuable in Solomon's day.

²² He had a fleet of ocean-going ships sailing with Hiram's fleet. Every three years his fleet would return, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.

²³ King Solomon was richer and wiser than any other king,

²⁴ and the whole world wanted to come and listen to the wisdom that God had given him.

²⁵ Everyone who came brought him a gift -- articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules. This continued year after year.

²⁶ Solomon built up a force of fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand

cavalry horses. Some of them he kept in Jerusalem and the rest he stationed in various other cities.

²⁷ During his reign silver was as common in Jerusalem as stone, and cedar was as plentiful as ordinary sycamore in the foothills of Judah.

²⁸ The king's agents controlled the export of horses from Musri and Cilicia,

²⁹ and the export of chariots from Egypt. They supplied the Hittite and Syrian kings with horses and chariots, selling chariots for 600 pieces of silver each and horses for 150 each.

11 ¹ Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides the daughter of the king of Egypt he married Hittite women and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Sidon.

² He married them even though the LORD had commanded the Israelites not to intermarry with these people, because they would cause the Israelites to give their loyalty to other gods.

³ Solomon married seven hundred princesses and also had three hundred concubines. They made him turn away from God,

⁴ and by the time he was old they had led him into the worship of foreign gods. He was not faithful to the LORD his God, as his father David had been.

⁵ He worshiped Astarte, the goddess of Sidon, and Molech, the disgusting god of Ammon.

⁶ He sinned against the LORD and was not true to him as his father David had been.

⁷ On the mountain east of Jerusalem he built a place to worship Chemosh, the disgusting god of Moab, and a place to worship Molech, the disgusting god of Ammon.

⁸ He also built places of worship where all his foreign wives could burn incense and offer sacrifices to their own gods.

⁹ Even though the LORD, the God of Israel, had appeared to Solomon twice and had commanded him not to worship foreign gods, Solomon did not obey the LORD but turned away from him. So the LORD was angry with Solomon

¹⁰ (11: 9)

¹¹ and said to him, Because you have deliberately broken your covenant with me and disobeyed my commands, I

promise that I will take the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your officials.

¹²However, for the sake of your father David I will not do this in your lifetime, but during the reign of your son.

¹³And I will not take the whole kingdom away from him; instead, I will leave him one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have made my own.

¹⁴So the LORD caused Hadad, of the royal family of Edom, to turn against Solomon.

¹⁵Long before this, when David had conquered Edom, Joab the commander of his army had gone there to bury the dead. He and his men remained in Edom six months, and during that time they killed every male in Edom

¹⁶(11:15)

¹⁷except Hadad and some of his father's Edomite servants, who escaped to Egypt. (At that time Hadad was just a child.)

¹⁸They left Midian and went to Paran, where some other men joined them. Then they traveled to Egypt and went

to the king, who gave Hadad some land and a house and provided him with food.

¹⁹Hadad won the friendship of the king, and the king gave his sister-in-law, the sister of Queen Tahpenes, to Hadad in marriage.

²⁰She bore him a son, Genubath, who was raised by the queen in the palace, where he lived with the king's sons.

²¹When the news reached Hadad in Egypt that David had died and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to the king, Let me go back to my own country.

²²Why? the king asked. Have I failed to give you something? Is that why you want to go back home? Just let me go, Hadad answered the king. And he went back to his country. As king of Edom, Hadad was an evil, bitter enemy of Israel.

²³God also caused Rezon son of Eliada to turn against Solomon. Rezon had fled from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah,

²⁴and had become the leader of a gang of outlaws. (This happened after David had defeated Hadadezer and had

slaughtered his Syrian allies.) Rezon and his gang went and lived in Damascus, where his followers made him king of Syria.

²⁵ He was an enemy of Israel during the lifetime of Solomon.

²⁶ Another man who turned against King Solomon was one of his officials, Jeroboam son of Nebat, from Zeredah in Ephraim. His mother was a widow named Zeruah.

²⁷ This is the story of the revolt. Solomon was filling in the land on the east side of Jerusalem and repairing the city walls.

²⁸ Jeroboam was an able young man, and when Solomon noticed how hard he worked, he put him in charge of all the forced labor in the territory of the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.

²⁹ One day, as Jeroboam was traveling from Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh met him alone on the road in the open country.

³⁰ Ahijah took off the new robe he was wearing, tore it into twelve pieces,

³¹ and said to Jeroboam, Take ten pieces for yourself, because the LORD, the God

of Israel, says to you, I am going to take the kingdom away from Solomon, and I will give you ten tribes.

³²Solomon will keep one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen to be my own from the whole land of Israel.

³³I am going to do this because Solomon has rejected me and has worshiped foreign gods: Astarte, the goddess of Sidon; Chemosh, the god of Moab; and Molech, the god of Ammon. Solomon has disobeyed me; he has done wrong and has not kept my laws and commands as his father David did.

³⁴But I will not take the whole kingdom away from Solomon, and I will keep him in power as long as he lives. This I will do for the sake of my servant David, whom I chose and who obeyed my laws and commands.

³⁵I will take the kingdom away from Solomon's son and will give you ten tribes,

³⁶but I will let Solomon's son keep one tribe, so that I will always have a descendant of my servant David ruling in

Jerusalem, the city I have chosen as the place where I am worshiped.

³⁷ Jeroboam, I will make you king of Israel, and you will rule over all the territory that you want.

³⁸ If you obey me completely, live by my laws, and win my approval by doing what I command, as my servant David did, I will always be with you. I will make you king of Israel and will make sure that your descendants rule after you, just as I have done for David.

³⁹ Because of Solomon's sin I will punish the descendants of David, but not for all time.

⁴⁰ And so Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he escaped to King Shishak of Egypt and stayed there until Solomon's death.

⁴¹ Everything else that Solomon did, his career, and his wisdom, are all recorded in The History of Solomon.

⁴² He was king in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years.

⁴³ He died and was buried in David's City, and his son Rehoboam succeeded him as king.

12¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all the people of northern Israel had gathered to make him king.

² When Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had gone to Egypt to escape from King Solomon, heard this news, he returned from Egypt.

³ The people of the northern tribes sent for him, and then they all went together to Rehoboam and said to him,

⁴ Your father Solomon treated us harshly and placed heavy burdens on us. If you make these burdens lighter and make life easier for us, we will be your loyal subjects.

⁵ Come back in three days and I will give you my answer, he replied. So they left.

⁶ King Rehoboam consulted the older men who had served as his father Solomon's advisers. What answer do you advise me to give these people? he asked.

⁷ They replied, If you want to serve this people well, give a favorable answer to their request, and they will always serve you loyally.

⁸But he ignored the advice of the older men and went instead to the young men who had grown up with him and who were now his advisers.

⁹What do you advise me to do? he asked. What shall I say to the people who are asking me to make their burdens lighter?

¹⁰They replied, This is what you should tell them: My little finger is thicker than my father's waist!

¹¹Tell them, My father placed heavy burdens on you; I will make them even heavier. He beat you with whips; I'll flog you with bullwhips!

¹²Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to King Rehoboam, as he had instructed them.

¹³The king ignored the advice of the older men and spoke harshly to the people,

¹⁴as the younger men had advised. He said, My father placed heavy burdens on you; I will make them even heavier. He beat you with whips; I'll flog you with bullwhips!

¹⁵It was the will of the LORD to bring about what he had spoken to Jeroboam

son of Nebat through the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh. This is why the king did not pay any attention to the people.

¹⁶When the people saw that the king would not listen to them, they shouted, Down with David and his family! What have they ever done for us? People of Israel, let's go home! Let Rehoboam look out for himself! So the people of Israel rebelled,

¹⁷leaving Rehoboam as king only of the people who lived in the territory of Judah.

¹⁸Then King Rehoboam sent Adoniram, who was in charge of the forced labor, to go to the Israelites, but they stoned him to death. At this, Rehoboam hurriedly got in his chariot and escaped to Jerusalem.

¹⁹Ever since that time the people of the northern kingdom of Israel have been in rebellion against the dynasty of David.

²⁰When the people of Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned from Egypt, they invited him to a meeting of the people and made him king of Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to David's descendants.

²¹ When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he called together 180,000 of the best soldiers from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. He intended to go to war and restore his control over the northern tribes of Israel.

²² But God told the prophet Shemaiah

²³ to give this message to Rehoboam and to all the people of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin:

²⁴ Do not attack your own relatives, the people of Israel. Go home, all of you. What has happened is my will. They all obeyed the LORD's command and went back home.

²⁵ King Jeroboam of Israel fortified the town of Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there for a while. Then he left and fortified the town of Penuel.

²⁶ He said to himself, As things are now, if my people go to Jerusalem and offer sacrifices to the LORD in the Temple there, they will transfer their allegiance to King Rehoboam of Judah and will kill me.

²⁷ (12: 26)

²⁸ After thinking it over, he made two bull-calves of gold and said to his people,

You have been going long enough to Jerusalem to worship. People of Israel, here are your gods who brought you out of Egypt!

²⁹He placed one of the gold bull-calves in Bethel and the other in Dan.

³⁰And so the people sinned, going to worship in Bethel and in Dan.

³¹Jeroboam also built places of worship on hilltops, and he chose priests from families who were not of the tribe of Levi.

³²Jeroboam also instituted a religious festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival in Judah. On the altar in Bethel he offered sacrifices to the gold bull-calves he had made, and he placed there in Bethel the priests serving at the places of worship he had built.

³³And on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, the day that he himself had set, he went to Bethel and offered a sacrifice on the altar in celebration of the festival he had instituted for the people of Israel.

13¹At the LORD's command a prophet from Judah went to Bethel and arrived there as Jeroboam stood at the altar to offer the sacrifice.

²Following the LORD's command, the prophet denounced the altar: O altar, altar, this is what the LORD says: A child, whose name will be Josiah, will be born to the family of David. He will slaughter on you the priests serving at the pagan altars who offer sacrifices on you, and he will burn human bones on you.

³And the prophet went on to say, This altar will fall apart, and the ashes on it will be scattered. Then you will know that the LORD has spoken through me.

⁴When King Jeroboam heard this, he pointed at him and ordered, Seize that man! At once the king's arm became paralyzed so that he couldn't pull it back.

⁵The altar suddenly fell apart and the ashes spilled to the ground, as the prophet had predicted in the name of the LORD.

⁶King Jeroboam said to the prophet, Please pray for me to the LORD your God, and ask him to heal my arm! The prophet prayed to the LORD, and the king's arm was healed.

⁷Then the king said to the prophet, Come home with me and have something

to eat. I will reward you for what you have done.

⁸The prophet answered, Even if you gave me half of your wealth, I would not go with you or eat or drink anything with you.

⁹The LORD has commanded me not to eat or drink a thing, and not to return home the same way I came.

¹⁰So he did not go back the same way he had come, but by another road.

¹¹At that time there was an old prophet living in Bethel. His sons came and told him what the prophet from Judah had done in Bethel that day and what he had said to King Jeroboam.

¹²Which way did he go when he left? the old prophet asked them. They showed him the road

¹³and he told them to saddle his donkey for him. They did so, and he rode off

¹⁴down the road after the prophet from Judah and found him sitting under an oak tree. Are you the prophet from Judah? he asked. I am, the man answered.

¹⁵Come home and have a meal with me, he said.

¹⁶But the prophet from Judah answered, I can't go home with you or accept your hospitality. And I won't eat or drink anything with you here,

¹⁷because the LORD has commanded me not to eat or drink a thing, and not to return home the same way I came.

¹⁸Then the old prophet from Bethel said to him, I, too, am a prophet just like you, and at the LORD's command an angel told me to take you home with me and offer you my hospitality. But the old prophet was lying.

¹⁹So the prophet from Judah went home with the old prophet and had a meal with him.

²⁰As they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet,

²¹and he cried out to the prophet from Judah, The LORD says that you disobeyed him and did not do what he commanded.

²²Instead, you returned and ate a meal in a place he had ordered you not to eat in. Because of this you will be killed, and your body will not be buried in your family grave.

²³ After they had finished eating, the old prophet saddled the donkey for the prophet from Judah,

²⁴ who rode off. On the way a lion met him and killed him. His body lay on the road, and the donkey and the lion stood beside it.

²⁵ Some men passed by and saw the body on the road, with the lion standing near by. They went on into Bethel and reported what they had seen.

²⁶ When the old prophet heard about it, he said, That is the prophet who disobeyed the LORD's command! And so the LORD sent the lion to attack and kill him, just as the LORD said he would.

²⁷ Then he said to his sons, Saddle my donkey for me. They did so,

²⁸ and he rode off and found the prophet's body lying on the road, with the donkey and the lion still standing by it. The lion had not eaten the body or attacked the donkey.

²⁹ The old prophet picked up the body, put it on the donkey, and brought it back to Bethel to mourn over it and bury it.

³⁰He buried it in his own family grave, and he and his sons mourned over it, saying, Oh my brother, my brother!

³¹After the burial the prophet said to his sons, When I die, bury me in this grave and lay my body next to his.

³²The words that he spoke at the LORD's command against the altar in Bethel and against all the places of worship in the towns of Samaria will surely come true.

³³King Jeroboam of Israel still did not turn from his evil ways but continued to choose priests from ordinary families to serve at the altars he had built. He ordained as priest anyone who wanted to be one.

³⁴This sin on his part brought about the ruin and total destruction of his dynasty.

14¹At that time King Jeroboam's son Abijah got sick.

²Jeroboam said to his wife, Disguise yourself so that no one will recognize you, and go to Shiloh, where the prophet Ahijah lives, the one who said I would be king of Israel.

³Take him ten loaves of bread, some cakes, and a jar of honey. Ask him what

is going to happen to our son, and he will tell you.

⁴So she went to Ahijah's home in Shiloh. Old age had made Ahijah blind.

⁵The LORD had told him that Jeroboam's wife was coming to ask him about her son, who was sick. And the LORD told Ahijah what to say. When Jeroboam's wife arrived, she pretended to be someone else.

⁶But when Ahijah heard her coming in the door, he said, Come in. I know you are Jeroboam's wife. Why are you pretending to be someone else? I have bad news for you.

⁷Go and tell Jeroboam that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to him: I chose you from among the people and made you the ruler of my people Israel.

⁸I took the kingdom away from David's descendants and gave it to you. But you have not been like my servant David, who was completely loyal to me, obeyed my commands, and did only what I approve of.

⁹You have committed far greater sins than those who ruled before you. You have rejected me and have aroused my

anger by making idols and metal images to worship.

¹⁰Because of this I will bring disaster on your dynasty and will kill all your male descendants, young and old alike. I will get rid of your family; they will be swept away like dung.

¹¹Any members of your family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and any who die in the open country will be eaten by vultures. I, the LORD, have spoken.

¹²And Ahijah went on to say to Jeroboam's wife, Now go back home. As soon as you enter the town, your son will die.

¹³All the people of Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He will be the only member of Jeroboam's family who will be properly buried, because he is the only one with whom the LORD, the God of Israel, is pleased.

¹⁴The LORD is going to place a king over Israel who will put an end to Jeroboam's dynasty.

¹⁵The LORD will punish Israel, and she will shake like a reed shaking in a stream. He will uproot the people of Israel from this good land which he gave

to their ancestors, and he will scatter them beyond the Euphrates River, because they have aroused his anger by making idols of the goddess Asherah.

¹⁶The LORD will abandon Israel because Jeroboam sinned and led the people of Israel into sin.

¹⁷Jeroboam's wife went back to Tirzah. Just as she entered her home, the child died.

¹⁸The people of Israel mourned for him and buried him, as the LORD had said through his servant, the prophet Ahijah.

¹⁹Everything else that King Jeroboam did, the wars he fought and how he ruled, are all recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

²⁰Jeroboam ruled as king for twenty-two years. He died and was buried, and his son Nadab succeeded him as king.

²¹Solomon's son Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen from all the territory of Israel as the place where he was to be worshiped. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah from Ammon.

²²The people of Judah sinned against the LORD and did more to arouse his anger against them than all their ancestors had done.

²³They built places of worship for false gods and put up stone pillars and symbols of Asherah to worship on the hills and under shady trees.

²⁴Worst of all, there were men and women who served as prostitutes at those pagan places of worship. The people of Judah practiced all the shameful things done by the people whom the LORD had driven out of the land as the Israelites advanced into the country.

²⁵In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem.

²⁶He took away all the treasures in the Temple and in the palace, including the gold shields Solomon had made.

²⁷To replace them, King Rehoboam made bronze shields and entrusted them to the officers responsible for guarding the palace gates.

²⁸Every time the king went to the Temple, the guards carried the

shields and then returned them to the guardroom.

²⁹Everything else that King Rehoboam did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

³⁰During all this time Rehoboam and Jeroboam were constantly at war with each other.

³¹Rehoboam died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City and his son Abijah succeeded him as king.

15¹In the eighteenth year of the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel, Abijah became king of Judah,

²and he ruled three years in Jerusalem. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of Absalom.

³He committed the same sins as his father and was not completely loyal to the LORD his God, as his great-grandfather David had been.

⁴But for David's sake the LORD his God gave Abijah a son to rule after him in Jerusalem and to keep Jerusalem secure.

⁵The LORD did this because David had done what pleased him and had never disobeyed any of his commands, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.

⁶The war which had begun between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continued throughout Abijah's lifetime.

⁷And everything else that Abijah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

⁸Abijah died and was buried in David's City, and his son Asa succeeded him as king.

⁹In the twentieth year of the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel, Asa became king of Judah,

¹⁰and he ruled forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother was Maacah, the daughter of Absalom.

¹¹Asa did what pleased the LORD, as his ancestor David had done.

¹²He expelled from the country all the male and female prostitutes serving at the pagan places of worship, and he removed all the idols his predecessors had made.

¹³He removed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made an obscene idol of the fertility goddess Asherah. Asa cut down the idol and burned it in Kidron Valley.

¹⁴Even though Asa did not destroy all the pagan places of worship, he remained faithful to the LORD all his life.

¹⁵He placed in the Temple all the objects his father had dedicated to God, as well as the gold and silver objects that he himself dedicated.

¹⁶King Asa of Judah and King Baasha of Israel were constantly at war with each other as long as they were in power.

¹⁷Baasha invaded Judah and started to fortify Ramah in order to cut off all traffic in and out of Judah.

¹⁸So King Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the Temple and the palace, and sent it by some of his officials to Damascus, to King Benhadad of Syria, the son of Tabrimmon and grandson of Hezion, with this message:

¹⁹Let us be allies, as our fathers were. This silver and gold is a present for you. Now break your alliance with King Baasha of Israel, so that he will have to pull his troops out of my territory.

²⁰King Benhadad agreed to Asa's proposal and sent his commanding officers and their armies to attack the cities of Israel. They captured Ijon,

Dan, Abel Beth Maacah, the area near Lake Galilee, and the whole territory of Naphtali.

²¹ When King Baasha heard what had happened, he stopped fortifying Ramah and went to Tirzah.

²² Then King Asa sent out an order throughout all of Judah requiring everyone, without exception, to help carry away from Ramah the stones and timber that Baasha had been using to fortify it. With this material Asa fortified Mizpah and Geba, a city in the territory of Benjamin.

²³ Everything else that King Asa did, his brave deeds and the towns he fortified, are all recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah. But in his old age he was crippled by a foot disease.

²⁴ Asa died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City, and his son Jehoshaphat succeeded him as king.

²⁵ In the second year of the reign of King Asa of Judah, King Jeroboam's son Nadab became king of Israel, and he ruled for two years.

²⁶ Like his father before him, he sinned against the LORD and led Israel into sin.

²⁷ Baasha son of Ahijah, of the tribe of Issachar, plotted against Nadab and killed him as Nadab and his army were besieging the city of Gibbethon in Philistia.

²⁸ This happened during the third year of the reign of King Asa of Judah. And so Baasha succeeded Nadab as king of Israel.

²⁹ At once he began killing all the members of Jeroboam's family. In accordance with what the LORD had said through his servant, the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh, all of Jeroboam's family were killed; not one survived.

³⁰ This happened because Jeroboam aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, by the sins that he committed and that he caused Israel to commit.

³¹ Everything else that Nadab did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

³² King Asa of Judah and King Baasha of Israel were constantly at war with each other as long as they were in power.

³³ In the third year of the reign of King Asa of Judah, Baasha son of Ahijah

became king of all Israel, and he ruled in Tirzah for twenty-four years.

³⁴Like King Jeroboam before him, he sinned against the LORD and led Israel into sin.

16¹The LORD spoke to the prophet Jehu son of Hanani and gave him this message for Baasha:

²You were a nobody, but I made you the leader of my people Israel. And now you have sinned like Jeroboam and have led my people into sin. Their sins have aroused my anger,

³and so I will do away with you and your family, just as I did with Jeroboam.

⁴Any members of your family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and any who die in the open country will be eaten by vultures.

⁵Everything else that Baasha did and all his brave deeds are recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

⁶Baasha died and was buried in Tirzah, and his son Elah succeeded him as king.

⁷That message from the LORD against Baasha and his family was given by the prophet Jehu because of the sins that Baasha committed against the LORD.

He aroused the LORD's anger not only because of the evil he did, just as King Jeroboam had done before him, but also because he killed all of Jeroboam's family.

⁸In the twenty-sixth year of the reign of King Asa of Judah, Elah son of Baasha became king of Israel, and he ruled in Tirzah for two years.

⁹Zimri, one of his officers who was in charge of half of the king's chariots, plotted against him. One day in Tirzah, Elah was getting drunk in the home of Arza, who was in charge of the palace.

¹⁰Zimri entered the house, assassinated Elah, and succeeded him as king. This happened in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of King Asa of Judah.

¹¹As soon as Zimri became king he killed off all the members of Baasha's family. Every male relative and friend was put to death.

¹²And so, in accordance with what the LORD had said against Baasha through the prophet Jehu, Zimri killed all the family of Baasha.

¹³Because of their idolatry and because they led Israel into sin, Baasha and his

son Elah had aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁴Everything else that Elah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹⁵In the twenty-seventh year of the reign of King Asa of Judah, Zimri ruled in Tirzah over Israel for seven days. The Israelite troops were besieging the city of Gibbethon in Philistia,

¹⁶and when they heard that Zimri had plotted against the king and assassinated him, then and there they all proclaimed their commander Omri king of Israel.

¹⁷Omri and his troops left Gibbethon and went and besieged Tirzah.

¹⁸When Zimri saw that the city had fallen, he went into the palace's inner fortress, set the palace on fire, and died in the flames.

¹⁹This happened because of his sins against the LORD. Like his predecessor Jeroboam, he displeased the LORD by his own sins and by leading Israel into sin.

²⁰Everything else that Zimri did, including the account of his conspiracy,

is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

²¹The people of Israel were divided: some of them wanted to make Tibni son of Ginath king, and the others were in favor of Omri.

²²In the end, those in favor of Omri won out; Tibni died and Omri became king.

²³So in the thirty-first year of the reign of King Asa of Judah, Omri became king of Israel, and he ruled for twelve years. The first six years he ruled in Tirzah,

²⁴and then he bought the hill of Samaria for six thousand pieces of silver from a man named Shemer. Omri fortified the hill, built a town there, and named it Samaria, after Shemer, the former owner of the hill.

²⁵Omri sinned against the LORD more than any of his predecessors.

²⁶Like Jeroboam before him, he aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, by his sins and by leading the people into sin and idolatry.

²⁷Everything else that Omri did and all his accomplishments are recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

²⁸Omri died and was buried in Samaria, and his son Ahab succeeded him as king.

²⁹In the thirty-eighth year of the reign of King Asa of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for twenty-two years.

³⁰He sinned against the LORD more than any of his predecessors.

³¹It was not enough for him to sin like King Jeroboam; he went further and married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon, and worshiped Baal.

³²He built a temple to Baal in Samaria, made an altar for him, and put it in the temple.

³³He also put up an image of the goddess Asherah. He did more to arouse the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than all the kings of Israel before him.

³⁴During his reign Hiel from Bethel rebuilt Jericho. As the LORD had foretold through Joshua son of Nun, Hiel lost his oldest son Abiram when he laid the foundation of Jericho, and his youngest son Segub when he built the gates.

17¹A prophet named Elijah, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to King Ahab, In the name of the LORD, the

living God of Israel, whom I serve, I tell you that there will be no dew or rain for the next two or three years until I say so.

²Then the LORD said to Elijah,

³Leave this place and go east and hide yourself near Cherith Brook, east of the Jordan.

⁴The brook will supply you with water to drink, and I have commanded ravens to bring you food there.

⁵Elijah obeyed the LORD's command, and went and stayed by Cherith Brook.

⁶He drank water from the brook, and ravens brought him bread and meat every morning and every evening.

⁷After a while the brook dried up because of the lack of rain.

⁸Then the LORD said to Elijah,

⁹Now go to the town of Zarephath, near Sidon, and stay there. I have commanded a widow who lives there to feed you.

¹⁰So Elijah went to Zarephath, and as he came to the town gate, he saw a widow gathering firewood. Please bring me a drink of water, he said to her.

¹¹ And as she was going to get it, he called out, And please bring me some bread, too.

¹² She answered, By the living LORD your God I swear that I don't have any bread. All I have is a handful of flour in a bowl and a bit of olive oil in a jar. I came here to gather some firewood to take back home and prepare what little I have for my son and me. That will be our last meal, and then we will starve to death.

¹³ Don't worry, Elijah said to her. Go on and prepare your meal. But first make a small loaf from what you have and bring it to me, and then prepare the rest for you and your son.

¹⁴ For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: The bowl will not run out of flour or the jar run out of oil before the day that I, the LORD, send rain.

¹⁵ The widow went and did as Elijah had told her, and all of them had enough food for many days.

¹⁶ As the LORD had promised through Elijah, the bowl did not run out of flour nor did the jar run out of oil.

¹⁷ Some time later the widow's son got sick; he got worse and worse, and finally he died.

¹⁸ She said to Elijah, Man of God, why did you do this to me? Did you come here to remind God of my sins and so cause my son's death?

¹⁹ Give the boy to me, Elijah said. He took the boy from her arms, carried him upstairs to the room where he was staying, and laid him on the bed.

²⁰ Then he prayed aloud, O LORD my God, why have you done such a terrible thing to this widow? She has been kind enough to take care of me, and now you kill her son!

²¹ Then Elijah stretched himself out on the boy three times and prayed, O LORD my God, restore this child to life!

²² The LORD answered Elijah's prayer; the child started breathing again and revived.

²³ Elijah took the boy back downstairs to his mother and said to her, Look, your son is alive!

²⁴ She answered, Now I know that you are a man of God and that the LORD really speaks through you!

18¹ After some time, in the third year of the drought, the LORD said to Elijah, Go and present yourself to King Ahab, and I will send rain.

² So Elijah started out. The famine in Samaria was at its worst,

³ so Ahab called in Obadiah, who was in charge of the palace. (Obadiah was a devout worshiper of the LORD,

⁴ and when Jezebel was killing the LORD's prophets, Obadiah took a hundred of them, hid them in caves in two groups of fifty, and provided them with food and water.)

⁵ Ahab said to Obadiah, Let us go and look at every spring and every stream bed in the land to see if we can find enough grass to keep the horses and mules alive. Maybe we won't have to kill any of our animals.

⁶ They agreed on which part of the land each one would explore, and set off in different directions.

⁷ As Obadiah was on his way, he suddenly met Elijah. He recognized him, bowed low before him, and asked, Is it really you, sir?

⁸Yes, I'm Elijah, he answered. Go and tell your master the king that I am here.

⁹Obadiah answered, What have I done that you want to put me in danger of being killed by King Ahab?

¹⁰By the living LORD, your God, I swear that the king has made a search for you in every country in the world. Whenever the ruler of a country reported that you were not in his country, Ahab would require that ruler to swear that you could not be found.

¹¹And now you want me to go and tell him that you are here?

¹²What if the spirit of the LORD carries you off to some unknown place as soon as I leave? Then, when I tell Ahab that you are here and he can't find you, he will put me to death. Remember that I have been a devout worshiper of the LORD ever since I was a boy.

¹³Haven't you heard that when Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD I hid a hundred of them in caves, in two groups of fifty, and supplied them with food and water?

¹⁴ So how can you order me to go and tell the king that you are here? He will kill me!

¹⁵ Elijah answered, By the living LORD Almighty, whom I serve, I promise that I will present myself to the king today.

¹⁶ So Obadiah went to King Ahab and told him, and Ahab set off to meet Elijah.

¹⁷ When Ahab saw him, he said, So there you are -- the worst troublemaker in Israel!

¹⁸ I'm not the troublemaker, Elijah answered. You are -- you and your father. You are disobeying the LORD's commands and worshiping the idols of Baal.

¹⁹ Now order all the people of Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel. Bring along the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah who are supported by Queen Jezebel.

²⁰ So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and the prophets of Baal to meet at Mount Carmel.

²¹ Elijah went up to the people and said, How much longer will it take you to make up your minds? If the LORD is God, worship him; but if Baal is God,

worship him! But the people didn't say a word.

²²Then Elijah said, I am the only prophet of the LORD still left, but there are 450 prophets of Baal.

²³Bring two bulls; let the prophets of Baal take one, kill it, cut it in pieces, and put it on the wood -- but don't light the fire. I will do the same with the other bull.

²⁴Then let the prophets of Baal pray to their god, and I will pray to the LORD, and the one who answers by sending fire -- he is God. The people shouted their approval.

²⁵Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, Since there are so many of you, you take a bull and prepare it first. Pray to your god, but don't set fire to the wood.

²⁶They took the bull that was brought to them, prepared it, and prayed to Baal until noon. They shouted, Answer us, Baal! and kept dancing around the altar they had built. But no answer came.

²⁷At noon Elijah started making fun of them: Pray louder! He is a god! Maybe he is day-dreaming or relieving himself,

or perhaps he's gone off on a trip! Or maybe he's sleeping, and you've got to wake him up!

²⁸So the prophets prayed louder and cut themselves with knives and daggers, according to their ritual, until blood flowed.

²⁹They kept on ranting and raving until the middle of the afternoon; but no answer came, not a sound was heard.

³⁰Then Elijah said to the people, Come closer to me, and they all gathered around him. He set about repairing the altar of the LORD which had been torn down.

³¹He took twelve stones, one for each of the twelve tribes named for the sons of Jacob, the man to whom the LORD had given the name Israel.

³²With these stones he rebuilt the altar for the worship of the LORD. He dug a trench around it, large enough to hold about four gallons of water.

³³Then he placed the wood on the altar, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood. He said, Fill four jars with water and pour it on the offering and the wood. They did so,

³⁴ and he said, Do it again -- and they did. Do it once more, he said -- and they did.

³⁵ The water ran down around the altar and filled the trench.

³⁶ At the hour of the afternoon sacrifice the prophet Elijah approached the altar and prayed, O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove now that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant and have done all this at your command.

³⁷ Answer me, LORD, answer me, so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God and that you are bringing them back to yourself.

³⁸ The LORD sent fire down, and it burned up the sacrifice, the wood, and the stones, scorched the earth and dried up the water in the trench.

³⁹ When the people saw this, they threw themselves on the ground and exclaimed, The LORD is God; the LORD alone is God!

⁴⁰ Elijah ordered, Seize the prophets of Baal; don't let any of them get away! The people seized them all, and Elijah

led them down to Kishon Brook and killed them.

⁴¹ Then Elijah said to King Ahab, Now, go and eat. I hear the roar of rain approaching.

⁴² While Ahab went to eat, Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel, where he bowed down to the ground, with his head between his knees.

⁴³ He said to his servant, Go and look toward the sea. The servant went and returned, saying, I didn't see a thing. Seven times in all Elijah told him to go and look.

⁴⁴ The seventh time he returned and said, I saw a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand, coming up from the sea. Elijah ordered his servant, Go to King Ahab and tell him to get in his chariot and go back home before the rain stops him.

⁴⁵ In a little while the sky was covered with dark clouds, the wind began to blow, and a heavy rain began to fall. Ahab got in his chariot and started back to Jezreel.

⁴⁶ The power of the LORD came on Elijah; he fastened his clothes tight

around his waist and ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

19¹ King Ahab told his wife Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had put all the prophets of Baal to death.

² She sent a message to Elijah: May the gods strike me dead if by this time tomorrow I don't do the same thing to you that you did to the prophets.

³ Elijah was afraid and fled for his life; he took his servant and went to Beersheba in Judah. Leaving the servant there,

⁴ Elijah walked a whole day into the wilderness. He stopped and sat down in the shade of a tree and wished he would die. It's too much, LORD, he prayed. Take away my life; I might as well be dead!

⁵ He lay down under the tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, Wake up and eat.

⁶ He looked around and saw a loaf of bread and a jar of water near his head. He ate and drank, and lay down again.

⁷ The LORD's angel returned and woke him up a second time, saying, Get up

and eat, or the trip will be too much for you.

⁸Elijah got up, ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to walk forty days to Sinai, the holy mountain.

⁹There he went into a cave to spend the night. Suddenly the LORD spoke to him, Elijah, what are you doing here?

¹⁰He answered, LORD God Almighty, I have always served you -- you alone. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed all your prophets. I am the only one left -- and they are trying to kill me!

¹¹Go out and stand before me on top of the mountain, the LORD said to him. Then the LORD passed by and sent a furious wind that split the hills and shattered the rocks -- but the LORD was not in the wind. The wind stopped blowing, and then there was an earthquake -- but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

¹²After the earthquake there was a fire -- but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the soft whisper of a voice.

¹³When Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, Elijah, what are you doing here?

¹⁴He answered, LORD God Almighty, I have always served you -- you alone. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed all your prophets. I am the only one left -- and they are trying to kill me.

¹⁵The LORD said, Return to the wilderness near Damascus, then enter the city and anoint Hazael as king of Syria;

¹⁶anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.

¹⁷Anyone who escapes being put to death by Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and anyone who escapes Jehu will be killed by Elisha.

¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand people alive in Israel -- all those who are loyal to me and have not bowed to Baal or kissed his idol.

¹⁹Elijah left and found Elisha plowing with a team of oxen; there were eleven teams ahead of him, and he was plowing with the last one. Elijah took off his cloak and put it on Elisha.

²⁰Elisha then left his oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, Let me kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you. Elijah answered, All right, go back. I'm not stopping you!

²¹Then Elisha went to his team of oxen, killed them, and cooked the meat, using the yoke as fuel for the fire. He gave the meat to the people, and they ate it. Then he went and followed Elijah as his helper.

20¹ King Benhadad of Syria gathered all his troops, and supported by thirty-two other rulers with their horses and chariots, he marched up, laid siege to Samaria, and launched attacks against it.

²He sent messengers into the city to King Ahab of Israel to say, King Benhadad demands that

³you surrender to him your silver and gold, your women and the strongest of your children.

⁴Tell my lord, King Benhadad, that I agree; he can have me and everything I own, Ahab answered.

⁵Later the messengers came back to Ahab with another demand from Benhadad: I sent you word that you were to hand over to me your silver and gold, your women and your children.

⁶Now, however, I will send my officers to search your palace and the homes of your officials, and to take everything they consider valuable. They will be there about this time tomorrow.

⁷King Ahab called in all the leaders of the country and said, You see that this man wants to ruin us. He sent me a message demanding my wives and children, my silver and gold, and I agreed.

⁸The leaders and the people answered, Don't pay any attention to him; don't give in.

⁹So Ahab replied to Benhadad's messengers, Tell my lord the king that I agreed to his first demand, but I cannot agree to the second. The messengers left and then returned with another message

¹⁰from Benhadad: I will bring enough men to destroy this city of yours and carry off the rubble in their hands. May the gods strike me dead if I don't!

¹¹King Ahab answered, Tell King Benhadad that a real soldier does his bragging after a battle, not before it.

¹²Benhadad received Ahab's answer as he and his allies, the other rulers, were drinking in their tents. He ordered his men to get ready to attack the city, and so they moved into position.

¹³Meanwhile, a prophet went to King Ahab and said, The LORD says, Don't be afraid of that huge army! I will give you victory over it today, and you will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁴Who will lead the attack? Ahab asked. The prophet answered, The LORD says that the young soldiers under the command of the district governors are to do it. Who will command the main force? the king asked. You, the prophet answered.

¹⁵So the king called out the young soldiers who were under the district commanders, 232 in all. Then he called

out the Israelite army, a total of seven thousand men.

¹⁶The attack began at noon, as Benhadad and his thirty-two allies were getting drunk in their tents.

¹⁷The young soldiers advanced first. Scouts sent out by Benhadad reported to him that a group of soldiers was coming out of Samaria.

¹⁸He ordered, Take them alive, no matter whether they are coming to fight or to ask for peace.

¹⁹The young soldiers led the attack, followed by the Israelite army,

²⁰and each one killed the man he fought. The Syrians fled, with the Israelites in hot pursuit, but Benhadad escaped on horseback, accompanied by some of the cavalry.

²¹King Ahab took to the field, captured the horses and chariots, and inflicted a severe defeat on the Syrians.

²²Then the prophet went to King Ahab and said, Go back and build up your forces and make careful plans, because the king of Syria will attack again next spring.

²³ King Benhadad's officials said to him, The gods of Israel are mountain gods, and that is why the Israelites defeated us. But we will certainly defeat them if we fight them in the plains.

²⁴ Now, remove the thirty-two rulers from their commands and replace them with field commanders.

²⁵ Then call up an army as large as the one that deserted you, with the same number of horses and chariots. We will fight the Israelites in the plains, and this time we will defeat them. King Benhadad agreed and followed their advice.

²⁶ The following spring he called up his men and marched with them to the city of Aphek to attack the Israelites.

²⁷ The Israelites were called up and equipped; they marched out and camped in two groups facing the Syrians. The Israelites looked like two small flocks of goats compared to the Syrians, who spread out over the countryside.

²⁸ A prophet went to King Ahab and said, This is what the LORD says: Because the Syrians say that I am a god of the hills and not of the plains, I will give you victory over their huge army,

and you and your people will know that I am the LORD.

²⁹For seven days the Syrians and the Israelites stayed in their camps, facing each other. On the seventh day they started fighting, and the Israelites killed a hundred thousand Syrians.

³⁰The survivors fled into the city of Aphek, where the city walls fell on twenty-seven thousand of them. Benhadad also escaped into the city and took refuge in the back room of a house.

³¹His officials went to him and said, We have heard that the Israelite kings are merciful. Give us permission to go to the king of Israel with sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our necks, and maybe he will spare your life.

³²So they wrapped sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their necks, went to Ahab and said, Your servant Benhadad pleads with you for his life. Ahab answered, Is he still alive? Good! He's like a brother to me!

³³Benhadad's officials were watching for a good sign, and when Ahab said brother, they took it up at once, and said, As you say, Benhadad is your brother!

Bring him to me, Ahab ordered. When Benhadad arrived, Ahab invited him to get in the chariot with him.

³⁴ Benhadad said to him, I will restore to you the towns my father took from your father, and you may set up a commercial center for yourself in Damascus, just as my father did in Samaria. Ahab replied, On these terms, then, I will set you free. He made a treaty with him and let him go.

³⁵ At the LORD's command a member of a group of prophets ordered a fellow prophet to hit him. But he refused,

³⁶ so he said to him, Because you have disobeyed the LORD's command, a lion will kill you as soon as you leave me. And as soon as he left, a lion came along and killed him.

³⁷ Then this same prophet went to another man and said, Hit me! This man did so; he hit him a hard blow and hurt him.

³⁸ The prophet bandaged his face with a cloth, to disguise himself, and went and stood by the road, waiting for the king of Israel to pass.

³⁹As the king was passing by, the prophet called out to him and said, Your Majesty, I was fighting in the battle when a soldier brought a captured enemy to me and said, Guard this man; if he escapes, you will pay for it with your life or else pay a fine of three thousand pieces of silver.

⁴⁰But I got busy with other things, and the man escaped. The king answered, You have pronounced your own sentence, and you will have to pay the penalty.

⁴¹The prophet tore the cloth from his face, and at once the king recognized him as one of the prophets.

⁴²The prophet then said to the king, This is the word of the LORD: Because you allowed the man to escape whom I had ordered to be killed, you will pay for it with your life, and your army will be destroyed for letting his army escape.

⁴³The king went back home to Samaria, worried and depressed.

21 ¹Near King Ahab's palace in Jezreel there was a vineyard owned by a man named Naboth.

²One day Ahab said to Naboth, Let me have your vineyard; it is close to my

palace, and I want to use the land for a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard for it or, if you prefer, I will pay you a fair price.

³I inherited this vineyard from my ancestors, Naboth replied. The LORD forbid that I should let you have it!

⁴Ahab went home, depressed and angry over what Naboth had said to him. He lay down on his bed, facing the wall, and would not eat.

⁵His wife Jezebel went to him and asked, Why are you so depressed? Why won't you eat?

⁶He answered, Because of what Naboth said to me. I offered to buy his vineyard or, if he preferred, to give him another one for it, but he told me that I couldn't have it!

⁷Well, are you the king or aren't you? Jezebel replied. Get out of bed, cheer up, and eat. I will get you Naboth's vineyard!

⁸Then she wrote some letters, signed Ahab's name to them, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the officials and leading citizens of Jezreel.

⁹The letters said: Proclaim a day of fasting, call the people together, and give Naboth the place of honor.

¹⁰Get a couple of scoundrels to accuse him to his face of cursing God and the king. Then take him out of the city and stone him to death.

¹¹The officials and leading citizens of Jezreel did what Jezebel had commanded.

¹²They proclaimed a day of fasting, called the people together, and gave Naboth the place of honor.

¹³The two scoundrels publicly accused him of cursing God and the king, and so he was taken outside the city and stoned to death.

¹⁴The message was sent to Jezebel: Naboth has been put to death.

¹⁵As soon as Jezebel received the message, she said to Ahab, Naboth is dead. Now go and take possession of the vineyard which he refused to sell to you.

¹⁶At once Ahab went to the vineyard to take possession of it.

¹⁷Then the LORD said to Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe,

¹⁸Go to King Ahab of Samaria. You will find him in Naboth's vineyard, about to take possession of it.

¹⁹Tell him that I, the LORD, say to him, After murdering the man, are you taking over his property as well? Tell him that this is what I say: In the very place that the dogs licked up Naboth's blood they will lick up your blood!

²⁰When Ahab saw Elijah, he said, Have you caught up with me, my enemy? Yes, I have, Elijah answered. You have devoted yourself completely to doing what is wrong in the LORD's sight.

²¹So the LORD says to you, I will bring disaster on you. I will do away with you and get rid of every male in your family, young and old alike.

²²Your family will become like the family of King Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the family of King Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have stirred up my anger by leading Israel into sin.

²³And concerning Jezebel, the LORD says that dogs will eat her body in the city of Jezreel.

²⁴Any of your relatives who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and any who

die in the open country will be eaten by vultures.

²⁵ (There was no one else who had devoted himself so completely to doing wrong in the LORD's sight as Ahab -- all at the urging of his wife Jezebel.

²⁶ He committed the most shameful sins by worshiping idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD had driven out of the land as the people of Israel advanced.)

²⁷ When Elijah finished speaking, Ahab tore his clothes, took them off, and put on sackcloth. He refused food, slept in the sackcloth, and went about gloomy and depressed.

²⁸ The LORD said to the prophet Elijah,

²⁹ Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Since he has done this, I will not bring disaster on him during his lifetime; it will be during his son's lifetime that I will bring disaster on Ahab's family.

22 ¹ There was peace between Israel and Syria for the next two years, ² but in the third year King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to see King Ahab of Israel.

³Ahab asked his officials, Why is it that we have not done anything to get back Ramoth in Gilead from the king of Syria? It belongs to us!

⁴And Ahab asked Jehoshaphat, Will you go with me to attack Ramoth? I am ready when you are, Jehoshaphat answered, and so are my soldiers and my cavalry.

⁵But first let's consult the LORD.

⁶So Ahab called in the prophets, about four hundred of them, and asked them, Should I go and attack Ramoth, or not? Attack it, they answered. The Lord will give you victory.

⁷But Jehoshaphat asked, Isn't there another prophet through whom we can consult the LORD?

⁸Ahab answered, There is one more, Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him because he never prophesies anything good for me; it's always something bad. You shouldn't say that! Jehoshaphat replied.

⁹Then Ahab called in a court official and told him to go and get Micaiah at once.

¹⁰The two kings, dressed in their royal robes, were sitting on their thrones at

the threshing place just outside the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying in front of them.

¹¹ One of them, Zedekiah son of Chenaanah, made iron horns and said to Ahab, This is what the LORD says: With these you will fight the Syrians and totally defeat them.

¹² All the other prophets said the same thing. March against Ramoth and you will win, they said. The LORD will give you victory.

¹³ Meanwhile, the official who had gone to get Micaiah said to him, All the other prophets have prophesied success for the king, and you had better do the same.

¹⁴ But Micaiah answered, By the living LORD I promise that I will say what he tells me to!

¹⁵ When he appeared before King Ahab, the king asked him, Micaiah, should King Jehoshaphat and I go and attack Ramoth, or not? Attack! Micaiah answered. Of course you'll win. The LORD will give you victory.

¹⁶ But Ahab replied, When you speak to me in the name of the LORD, tell the

truth! How many times do I have to tell you that?

¹⁷ Micaiah answered, I can see the army of Israel scattered over the hills like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, These men have no leader; let them go home in peace.

¹⁸ Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good for me? It's always something bad!

¹⁹ Micaiah went on: Now listen to what the LORD says! I saw the LORD sitting on his throne in heaven, with all his angels standing beside him.

²⁰ The LORD asked, Who will deceive Ahab so that he will go and be killed at Ramoth? Some of the angels said one thing, and others said something else,

²¹ until a spirit stepped forward, approached the LORD, and said, I will deceive him.

²² How? the LORD asked. The spirit replied, I will go and make all of Ahab's prophets tell lies. The LORD said, Go and deceive him. You will succeed.

²³ And Micaiah concluded: This is what has happened. The LORD has made these prophets of yours lie to you. But

he himself has decreed that you will meet with disaster!

²⁴Then the prophet Zedekiah went up to Micaiah, slapped his face, and asked, Since when did the LORD's spirit leave me and speak to you?

²⁵You will find out when you go into some back room to hide, Micaiah replied.

²⁶Then King Ahab ordered one of his officers, Arrest Micaiah and take him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Prince Joash.

²⁷Tell them to throw him in prison and to put him on bread and water until I return safely.

²⁸If you return safely, Micaiah exclaimed, then the LORD has not spoken through me! And he added, Listen, everyone, to what I have said!

²⁹Then King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to attack the city of Ramoth in Gilead.

³⁰Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, As we go into battle, I will disguise myself, but you wear your royal garments. So the king of Israel went into battle in disguise.

³¹ The king of Syria had ordered his thirty-two chariot commanders to attack no one else except the king of Israel.

³² So when they saw King Jehoshaphat, they all thought that he was the king of Israel, and they turned to attack him. But when he cried out,

³³ they realized that he was not the king of Israel, and they stopped their attack.

³⁴ By chance, however, a Syrian soldier shot an arrow which struck King Ahab between the joints of his armor. I'm wounded! he cried out to his chariot driver. Turn around and pull out of the battle!

³⁵ While the battle raged on, King Ahab remained propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians. The blood from his wound ran down and covered the bottom of the chariot, and at evening he died.

³⁶ Near sunset the order went out through the Israelite ranks: Each of you go back to your own country and city!

³⁷ So died King Ahab. His body was taken to Samaria and buried.

³⁸ His chariot was cleaned up at the pool of Samaria, where dogs licked up his blood and prostitutes washed

themselves, as the LORD had said would happen.

³⁹Everything else that King Ahab did, including an account of his palace decorated with ivory and of all the cities he built, is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

⁴⁰At his death his son Ahaziah succeeded him as king.

⁴¹In the fourth year of the reign of King Ahab of Israel, Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king of Judah

⁴²at the age of thirty-five, and he ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-five years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

⁴³Like his father Asa before him, he did what was right in the sight of the LORD; but the places of worship were not destroyed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

⁴⁴Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵Everything else that Jehoshaphat did, all his bravery and his battles, are recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

⁴⁶He got rid of all the male and female prostitutes serving at the pagan altars who were still left from the days of his father Asa.

⁴⁷The land of Edom had no king; it was ruled by a deputy appointed by the king of Judah.

⁴⁸King Jehoshaphat had ocean-going ships built to sail to the land of Ophir for gold; but they were wrecked at Eziongeber and never sailed.

⁴⁹Then King Ahaziah of Israel offered to let his men sail with Jehoshaphat's men, but Jehoshaphat refused the offer.

⁵⁰Jehoshaphat died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City, and his son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

⁵¹In the seventeenth year of the reign of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for two years.

⁵²He sinned against the LORD, following the wicked example of his father Ahab, his mother Jezebel, and King Jeroboam, who had led Israel into sin.

⁵³He worshiped and served Baal, and like his father before him, he aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel.

2 Kings

1 ¹After the death of King Ahab of Israel the country of Moab rebelled against Israel.

²King Ahaziah of Israel fell off the balcony on the roof of his palace in Samaria and was seriously injured. So he sent some messengers to consult Baalzebub, the god of the Philistine city of Ekron, in order to find out whether or not he would recover.

³But an angel of the LORD commanded Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe, to go and meet the messengers of King Ahaziah and ask them, Why are you going to consult Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Is it because you think there is no god in Israel?

⁴Tell the king that the LORD says, You will not recover from your injuries; you will die! Elijah did as the LORD commanded,

⁵and the messengers returned to the king. Why have you come back? he asked.

⁶They answered, We were met by a man who told us to come back and tell you that the LORD says to you, Why are you sending messengers to consult Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Is it because you think there is no god in Israel? You will not recover from your injuries; you will die!

⁷What did the man look like? the king asked.

⁸He was wearing a cloak made of animal skins, tied with a leather belt, they answered. It's Elijah! the king exclaimed.

⁹Then he sent an officer with fifty men to get Elijah. The officer found him sitting on a hill and said to him, Man of God, the king orders you to come down.

¹⁰If I am a man of God, Elijah answered, may fire come down from heaven and kill you and your men! At once fire came down and killed the officer and his men.

¹¹The king sent another officer with fifty men, who went up and said to Elijah, Man of God, the king orders you to come down at once!

¹²If I am a man of God, Elijah answered, may fire come down from heaven and kill you and your men! At once the fire of God came down and killed the officer and his men.

¹³Once more the king sent an officer with fifty men. He went up the hill, fell on his knees in front of Elijah, and pleaded, Man of God, be merciful to me and my men. Spare our lives!

¹⁴The two other officers and their men were killed by fire from heaven; but please be merciful to me!

¹⁵The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, Go down with him, and don't be afraid. So Elijah went with the officer to the king

¹⁶and said to him, This is what the LORD says: Because you sent messengers to consult Baalzebub, the god of Ekron -- as if there were no god in Israel to consult -- you will not get well; you will die!

¹⁷Ahaziah died, as the LORD had said through Elijah. Ahaziah had no sons, so his brother Joram succeeded him as king in the second year of the reign of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

¹⁸Everything else that King Ahaziah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

2¹The time came for the LORD to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah and Elisha set out from Gilgal, ²and on the way Elijah said to Elisha, Now stay here; the LORD has ordered me to go to Bethel. But Elisha answered, I swear by my loyalty to the living LORD and to you that I will not leave you. So they went on to Bethel.

³A group of prophets who lived there went to Elisha and asked him, Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today? Yes, I know, Elisha answered. But let's not talk about it.

⁴Then Elijah said to Elisha, Now stay here; the LORD has ordered me to go to Jericho. But Elisha answered, I swear by my loyalty to the living LORD and to you that I will not leave you. So they went on to Jericho.

⁵A group of prophets who lived there went to Elisha and asked him, Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today? Yes, I

know, Elisha answered. But let's not talk about it.

⁶Then Elijah said to Elisha, Now stay here; the LORD has ordered me to go to the Jordan River. But Elisha answered, I swear by my loyalty to the living LORD and to you that I will not leave you. So they went on,

⁷and fifty of the prophets followed them to the Jordan. Elijah and Elisha stopped by the river, and the fifty prophets stood a short distance away.

⁸Then Elijah took off his cloak, rolled it up, and struck the water with it; the water divided, and he and Elisha crossed to the other side on dry ground.

⁹There, Elijah said to Elisha, Tell me what you want me to do for you before I am taken away. Let me receive the share of your power that will make me your successor, Elisha answered.

¹⁰That is a difficult request to grant, Elijah replied. But you will receive it if you see me as I am being taken away from you; if you don't see me, you won't receive it.

¹¹They kept talking as they walked on; then suddenly a chariot of fire pulled

by horses of fire came between them, and Elijah was taken up to heaven by a whirlwind.

¹²Elisha saw it and cried out to Elijah, My father, my father! Mighty defender of Israel! You are gone! And he never saw Elijah again. In grief Elisha tore his cloak in two.

¹³Then he picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

¹⁴He struck the water with Elijah's cloak and said, Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah? Then he struck the water again, and it divided, and he walked over to the other side.

¹⁵The fifty prophets from Jericho saw him and said, The power of Elijah is on Elisha! They went to meet him, bowed down before him,

¹⁶and said, There are fifty of us here, all strong men. Let us go and look for your master. Maybe the spirit of the LORD has carried him away and left him on some mountain or in some valley. No, you must not go, Elisha answered.

¹⁷But they insisted until he gave in and let them go. The fifty of them went and

looked high and low for Elijah for three days, but didn't find him.

¹⁸Then they returned to Elisha, who had waited at Jericho, and he said to them, Didn't I tell you not to go?

¹⁹Some men from Jericho went to Elisha and said, As you know, sir, this is a fine city, but the water is bad and causes miscarriages.

²⁰Put some salt in a new bowl and bring it to me, he ordered. They brought it to him,

²¹and he went to the spring, threw the salt in the water, and said, This is what the LORD says: I make this water pure, and it will not cause any more deaths or miscarriages.

²²And that water has been pure ever since, just as Elisha said it would be.

²³Elisha left Jericho to go to Bethel, and on the way some boys came out of a town and made fun of him. Get out of here, baldy! they shouted.

²⁴Elisha turned around, glared at them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the boys to pieces.

²⁵Elisha went on to Mount Carmel and later returned to Samaria.

3¹In the eighteenth year of the reign of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, Joram son of Ahab became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for twelve years.

²He sinned against the LORD, but he was not as bad as his father or his mother Jezebel; he pulled down the image his father had made for the worship of Baal.

³Yet, like King Jeroboam son of Nebat before him, he led Israel into sin and would not stop.

⁴King Mesha of Moab raised sheep, and every year he gave as tribute to the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool from 100,000 sheep.

⁵But when King Ahab of Israel died, Mesha rebelled against Israel.

⁶At once King Joram left Samaria and gathered all his troops.

⁷He sent word to King Jehoshaphat of Judah: The king of Moab has rebelled against me; will you join me in war against him? I will, King Jehoshaphat replied. I am at your disposal, and so are my men and my horses.

⁸What route shall we take for the attack? We will go the long way through the wilderness of Edom, Joram answered.

⁹So King Joram and the kings of Judah and Edom set out. After marching seven days, they ran out of water, and there was none left for the men or the pack animals.

¹⁰We're done for! King Joram exclaimed. The LORD has put the three of us at the mercy of the king of Moab!

¹¹King Jehoshaphat asked, Is there a prophet here through whom we can consult the LORD? An officer of King Joram's forces answered, Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He was Elijah's assistant.

¹²He is a true prophet, King Jehoshaphat said. So the three kings went to Elisha.

¹³Why should I help you? Elisha said to the king of Israel. Go and consult those prophets that your father and mother consulted. No! Joram replied. It is the LORD who has put us three kings at the mercy of the king of Moab.

¹⁴Elisha answered, By the living LORD, whom I serve, I swear that I would have nothing to do with you if I didn't respect your ally, King Jehoshaphat of Judah.

¹⁵Now get me a musician. As the musician played his harp, the power of the LORD came on Elisha,

¹⁶and he said, This is what the LORD says: Dig ditches all over this dry stream bed.

¹⁷Even though you will not see any rain or wind, this stream bed will be filled with water, and you, your livestock, and your pack animals will have plenty to drink.

¹⁸And Elisha continued, But this is an easy thing for the LORD to do; he will also give you victory over the Moabites.

¹⁹You will conquer all their beautiful fortified cities; you will cut down all their fruit trees, stop all their springs, and ruin all their fertile fields by covering them with stones.

²⁰The next morning, at the time of the regular morning sacrifice, water came flowing from the direction of Edom and covered the ground.

²¹ When the Moabites heard that the three kings had come to attack them, all the men who could bear arms, from the oldest to the youngest, were called out and stationed at the border.

²² When they got up the following morning, the sun was shining on the water, making it look as red as blood.

²³ It's blood! they exclaimed. The three enemy armies must have fought and killed each other! Let's go and loot their camp!

²⁴ But when they reached the camp, the Israelites attacked them and drove them back. The Israelites kept up the pursuit, slaughtering the Moabites

²⁵ and destroying their cities. As they passed by a fertile field, every Israelite would throw a stone on it until finally all the fields were covered; they also stopped up the springs and cut down the fruit trees. At last only the capital city of Kir Heres was left, and the slingers surrounded it and attacked it.

²⁶ When the king of Moab realized that he was losing the battle, he took seven hundred swordsmen with him and tried to force his way through the enemy lines

and escape to the king of Syria, but he failed.

²⁷ So he took his oldest son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him on the city wall as a sacrifice to the god of Moab. The Israelites were terrified and so they drew back from the city and returned to their own country.

4¹ The widow of a member of a group of prophets went to Elisha and said, Sir, my husband has died! As you know, he was a God-fearing man, but now a man he owed money to has come to take away my two sons as slaves in payment for my husband's debt.

² What shall I do for you? he asked. Tell me, what do you have at home? Nothing at all, except a small jar of olive oil, she answered.

³ Go to your neighbors and borrow as many empty jars as you can, Elisha told her.

⁴ Then you and your sons go into the house, close the door, and start pouring oil into the jars. Set each one aside as soon as it is full.

⁵ So the woman went into her house with her sons, closed the door, took the

small jar of olive oil, and poured oil into the jars as her sons brought them to her.

⁶When they had filled all the jars, she asked if there were any more. That was the last one, one of her sons answered. And the olive oil stopped flowing.

⁷She went back to Elisha, the prophet, who said to her, Sell the olive oil and pay all your debts, and there will be enough money left over for you and your sons to live on.

⁸One day Elisha went to Shunem, where a rich woman lived. She invited him to a meal, and from then on every time he went to Shunem he would have his meals at her house.

⁹She said to her husband, I am sure that this man who comes here so often is a holy man.

¹⁰Let's build a small room on the roof, put a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp in it, and he can stay there whenever he visits us.

¹¹One day Elisha returned to Shunem and went up to his room to rest.

¹²He told his servant Gehazi to go and call the woman. When she came,

¹³ he said to Gehazi, Ask her what I can do for her in return for all the trouble she has had in providing for our needs. Maybe she would like me to go to the king or the army commander and put in a good word for her. I have all I need here among my own people, she answered.

¹⁴ Elisha asked Gehazi, What can I do for her then? He answered, Well, she has no son, and her husband is an old man.

¹⁵ Tell her to come here, Elisha ordered. She came and stood in the doorway,

¹⁶ and Elisha said to her, By this time next year you will be holding a son in your arms. Oh! she exclaimed. Please, sir, don't lie to me. You are a man of God!

¹⁷ But, as Elisha had said, at about that time the following year she gave birth to a son.

¹⁸ Some years later, at harvest time, the boy went out one morning to join his father, who was in the field with the harvest workers.

¹⁹ Suddenly he cried out to his father, My head hurts! My head hurts! Carry the

boy to his mother, the father said to a servant.

²⁰The servant carried the boy back to his mother, who held him in her lap until noon, at which time he died.

²¹She carried him up to Elisha's room, put him on the bed and left, closing the door behind her.

²²Then she called her husband and said to him, Send a servant here with a donkey. I need to go to the prophet Elisha. I'll be back as soon as I can.

²³Why do you have to go today? her husband asked. It's neither a Sabbath nor a New Moon Festival. Never mind, she answered.

²⁴Then she had the donkey saddled, and ordered the servant, Make the donkey go as fast as it can, and don't slow down unless I tell you to.

²⁵So she set out and went to Mount Carmel, where Elisha was. Elisha saw her coming while she was still some distance away, and he said to his servant Gehazi, Look, there comes the woman from Shunem!

²⁶Hurry to her and find out if everything is all right with her, her husband, and

her son. She told Gehazi that everything was all right,

²⁷ but when she came to Elisha, she bowed down before him and took hold of his feet. Gehazi was about to push her away, but Elisha said, Leave her alone. Can't you see she's deeply distressed? And the LORD has not told me a thing about it.

²⁸ The woman said to him, Sir, did I ask you for a son? Didn't I tell you not to get my hopes up?

²⁹ Elisha turned to Gehazi and said, Hurry! Take my walking stick and go. Don't stop to greet anyone you meet, and if anyone greets you, don't take time to answer. Go straight to the house and hold my stick over the boy.

³⁰ The woman said to Elisha, I swear by my loyalty to the living LORD and to you that I will not leave you! So the two of them started back together.

³¹ Gehazi went on ahead and held Elisha's stick over the child, but there was no sound or any other sign of life. So he went back to meet Elisha and said, The boy didn't wake up.

³²When Elisha arrived, he went alone into the room and saw the boy lying dead on the bed.

³³He closed the door and prayed to the LORD.

³⁴Then he lay down on the boy, placing his mouth, eyes, and hands on the boy's mouth, eyes, and hands. As he lay stretched out over the boy, the boy's body started to get warm.

³⁵Elisha got up, walked around the room, and then went back and again stretched himself over the boy. The boy sneezed seven times and then opened his eyes.

³⁶Elisha called Gehazi and told him to call the boy's mother. When she came in, he said to her, Here's your son.

³⁷She fell at Elisha's feet, with her face touching the ground; then she took her son and left.

³⁸Once, when there was a famine throughout the land, Elisha returned to Gilgal. While he was teaching a group of prophets, he told his servant to put a big pot on the fire and make some stew for them.

³⁹ One of them went out in the fields to get some herbs. He found a wild vine and picked as many gourds as he could carry. He brought them back and sliced them up into the stew, not knowing what they were.

⁴⁰ The stew was poured out for the men to eat, but as soon as they tasted it they exclaimed to Elisha, It's poisoned! -- and wouldn't eat it.

⁴¹ Elisha asked for some meal, threw it into the pot, and said, Pour out some more stew for them. And then there was nothing wrong with it.

⁴² Another time, a man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing Elisha twenty loaves of bread made from the first barley harvested that year, and some freshly-cut heads of grain. Elisha told his servant to feed the group of prophets with this,

⁴³ but he answered, Do you think this is enough for a hundred men? Elisha replied, Give it to them to eat, because the LORD says that they will eat and still have some left over.

⁴⁴ So the servant set the food before them, and as the LORD had said, they all ate, and there was still some left over.

5¹ Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, was highly respected and esteemed by the king of Syria, because through Naaman the LORD had given victory to the Syrian forces. He was a great soldier, but he suffered from a dreaded skin disease.

² In one of their raids against Israel, the Syrians had carried off a little Israelite girl, who became a servant of Naaman's wife.

³ One day she said to her mistress, I wish that my master could go to the prophet who lives in Samaria! He would cure him of his disease.

⁴ When Naaman heard of this, he went to the king and told him what the girl had said.

⁵ The king said, Go to the king of Israel and take this letter to him. So Naaman set out, taking thirty thousand pieces of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of fine clothes.

⁶The letter that he took read: This letter will introduce my officer Naaman. I want you to cure him of his disease.

⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and exclaimed, How can the king of Syria expect me to cure this man? Does he think that I am God, with the power of life and death? It's plain that he is trying to start a quarrel with me!

⁸When the prophet Elisha heard what had happened, he sent word to the king: Why are you so upset? Send the man to me, and I'll show him that there is a prophet in Israel!

⁹So Naaman went with his horses and chariot and stopped at the entrance to Elisha's house.

¹⁰Elisha sent a servant out to tell him to go and wash himself seven times in the Jordan River, and he would be completely cured of his disease.

¹¹But Naaman left in a rage, saying, I thought that he would at least come out to me, pray to the LORD his God, wave his hand over the diseased spot, and cure me!

¹²Besides, aren't the rivers Abana and Pharpar, back in Damascus, better than any river in Israel? I could have washed in them and been cured!

¹³His servants went up to him and said, Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something difficult, you would have done it. Now why can't you just wash yourself, as he said, and be cured?

¹⁴So Naaman went down to the Jordan, dipped himself in it seven times, as Elisha had instructed, and he was completely cured. His flesh became firm and healthy like that of a child.

¹⁵He returned to Elisha with all his men and said, Now I know that there is no god but the God of Israel; so please, sir, accept a gift from me.

¹⁶Elisha answered, By the living LORD, whom I serve, I swear that I will not accept a gift. Naaman insisted that he accept it, but he would not.

¹⁷So Naaman said, If you won't accept my gift, then let me have two mule-loads of earth to take home with me, because from now on I will not offer sacrifices or burnt offerings to any god except the LORD.

¹⁸So I hope that the LORD will forgive me when I accompany my king to the temple of Rimmon, the god of Syria, and worship him. Surely the LORD will forgive me!

¹⁹Go in peace, Elisha said. And Naaman left. He had gone only a short distance,

²⁰when Elisha's servant Gehazi said to himself, My master has let Naaman get away without paying a thing! He should have accepted what that Syrian offered him. By the living LORD I will run after him and get something from him.

²¹So he set off after Naaman. When Naaman saw a man running after him, he got down from his chariot to meet him, and asked, Is something wrong?

²²No, Gehazi answered. But my master sent me to tell you that just now two members of the group of prophets in the hill country of Ephraim arrived, and he would like you to give them three thousand pieces of silver and two changes of fine clothes.

²³Please take six thousand pieces of silver, Naaman replied. He insisted on it, tied up the silver in two bags, gave them and two changes of fine clothes to two of

his servants, and sent them on ahead of Gehazi.

²⁴When they reached the hill where Elisha lived, Gehazi took the two bags and carried them into the house. Then he sent Naaman's servants back.

²⁵He went back into the house, and Elisha asked him, Where have you been? Oh, nowhere, sir, he answered.

²⁶But Elisha said, Wasn't I there in spirit when the man got out of his chariot to meet you? This is no time to accept money and clothes, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and cattle, or servants!

²⁷And now Naaman's disease will come upon you, and you and your descendants will have it forever! When Gehazi left, he had the disease -- his skin was as white as snow.

6¹One day the group of prophets that Elisha was in charge of complained to him, The place where we live is too small!

²Give us permission to go to the Jordan and cut down some trees, so that we can build a place to live. All right, Elisha answered.

³One of them urged him to go with them; he agreed,

⁴and they set out together. When they arrived at the Jordan, they began to work.

⁵As one of them was cutting down a tree, suddenly his iron ax head fell in the water. What shall I do, sir? he exclaimed to Elisha. It was a borrowed ax!

⁶Where did it fall? Elisha asked. The man showed him the place, and Elisha cut off a stick, threw it in the water, and made the ax head float.

⁷Take it out, he ordered, and the man reached down and picked it up.

⁸The king of Syria was at war with Israel. He consulted his officers and chose a place to set up his camp.

⁹But Elisha sent word to the king of Israel, warning him not to go near that place, because the Syrians were waiting in ambush there.

¹⁰So the king of Israel warned the people who lived in that place, and they were on guard. This happened several times.

¹¹The Syrian king became greatly upset over this; he called in his officers and

asked them, Which one of you is on the side of the king of Israel?

¹²One of them answered, No one is, Your Majesty. The prophet Elisha tells the king of Israel what you say even in the privacy of your own room.

¹³Find out where he is, the king ordered, and I will capture him. When he was told that Elisha was in Dothan,

¹⁴he sent a large force there with horses and chariots. They reached the town at night and surrounded it.

¹⁵Early the next morning Elisha's servant got up, went out of the house, and saw the Syrian troops with their horses and chariots surrounding the town. He went back to Elisha and exclaimed, We are doomed, sir! What shall we do?

¹⁶Don't be afraid, Elisha answered. We have more on our side than they have on theirs.

¹⁷Then he prayed, O LORD, open his eyes and let him see! The LORD answered his prayer, and Elisha's servant looked up and saw the hillside covered with horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

¹⁸When the Syrians attacked, Elisha prayed, O LORD, strike these men blind! The LORD answered his prayer and struck them blind.

¹⁹Then Elisha went to them and said, You are on the wrong road; this is not the town you are looking for. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are after. And he led them to Samaria.

²⁰As soon as they had entered the city, Elisha prayed, Open their eyes, LORD, and let them see. The LORD answered his prayer; he restored their sight, and they saw that they were inside Samaria.

²¹When the king of Israel saw the Syrians, he asked Elisha, Shall I kill them, sir? Shall I kill them?

²²No, he answered. Not even soldiers you had captured in combat would you put to death. Give them something to eat and drink, and let them return to their king.

²³So the king of Israel provided a great feast for them; and after they had eaten and drunk, he sent them back to the king of Syria. From then on the Syrians stopped raiding the land of Israel.

²⁴ Some time later King Benhadad of Syria led his entire army against Israel and laid siege to the city of Samaria.

²⁵ As a result of the siege the food shortage in the city was so severe that a donkey's head cost eighty pieces of silver, and half a pound of dove's dung cost five pieces of silver.

²⁶ The king of Israel was walking by on the city wall when a woman cried out, Help me, Your Majesty!

²⁷ He replied, If the LORD won't help you, what help can I provide? Do I have any wheat or wine?

²⁸ What's your trouble? She answered, The other day this woman here suggested that we eat my child, and then eat her child the next day.

²⁹ So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I told her that we would eat her son, but she had hidden him!

³⁰ Hearing this, the king tore his clothes in dismay, and the people who were close to the wall could see that he was wearing sackcloth under his clothes.

³¹ He exclaimed, May God strike me dead if Elisha is not beheaded before the day is over!

³²And he sent a messenger to get Elisha. Meanwhile Elisha was at home with some elders who were visiting him. Before the king's messenger arrived, Elisha said to the elders, That murderer is sending someone to kill me! Now, when he gets here, shut the door and don't let him come in. The king himself will be right behind him.

³³He had hardly finished saying this, when the king arrived and said, It's the LORD who has brought this trouble on us! Why should I wait any longer for him to do something?

7¹Elisha answered, Listen to what the LORD says! By this time tomorrow you will be able to buy in Samaria ten pounds of the best wheat or twenty pounds of barley for one piece of silver.

²The personal attendant of the king said to Elisha, That can't happen -- not even if the LORD himself were to send grain at once! You will see it happen, but you won't get to eat any of the food, Elisha replied.

³Four men who were suffering from a dreaded skin disease were outside the gates of Samaria, and they said to each

other, Why should we wait here until we die?

⁴It's no use going into the city, because we would starve to death in there; but if we stay here, we'll die also. So let's go to the Syrian camp; the worst they can do is kill us, but maybe they will spare our lives.

⁵So, as it began to get dark, they went to the Syrian camp, but when they reached it, no one was there.

⁶The Lord had made the Syrians hear what sounded like the advance of a large army with horses and chariots, and the Syrians thought that the king of Israel had hired Hittite and Egyptian kings and their armies to attack them.

⁷So that evening the Syrians had fled for their lives, abandoning their tents, horses, and donkeys, and leaving the camp just as it was.

⁸When the four men reached the edge of the camp, they went into a tent, ate and drank what was there, grabbed the silver, gold, and clothing they found, and went off and hid them; then they returned, entered another tent, and did the same thing.

⁹But then they said to each other, We shouldn't be doing this! We have good news, and we shouldn't keep it to ourselves. If we wait until morning to tell it, we are sure to be punished. Let's go right now and tell the king's officers!

¹⁰So they left the Syrian camp, went back to Samaria, and called out to the guards at the gates: We went to the Syrian camp and didn't see or hear anybody; the horses and donkeys have not been untied, and the tents are just as the Syrians left them.

¹¹The guards announced the news, and it was reported in the palace.

¹²It was still night, but the king got out of bed and said to his officials, I'll tell you what the Syrians are planning! They know about the famine here, so they have left their camp to go and hide in the countryside. They think that we will leave the city to find food, and then they will take us alive and capture the city.

¹³One of his officials said, The people here in the city are doomed anyway, like those that have already died. So let's send some men with five of the horses

that are left, so that we can find out what has happened.

¹⁴They chose some men, and the king sent them in two chariots with instructions to go and find out what had happened to the Syrian army.

¹⁵The men went as far as the Jordan, and all along the road they saw the clothes and equipment that the Syrians had abandoned as they fled. Then they returned and reported to the king.

¹⁶The people of Samaria rushed out and looted the Syrian camp. And as the LORD had said, ten pounds of the best wheat or twenty pounds of barley were sold for one piece of silver.

¹⁷It so happened that the king of Israel had put the city gate under the command of the officer who was his personal attendant. The officer was trampled to death there by the people and died, as Elisha had predicted when the king went to see him.

¹⁸Elisha had told the king that by that time the following day ten pounds of the best wheat or twenty pounds of barley would be sold in Samaria for one piece of silver,

¹⁹to which the officer had answered, That can't happen -- not even if the LORD himself were to send grain at once! And Elisha had replied, You will see it happen, but you won't get to eat any of the food.

²⁰And that is just what happened to him -- he died, trampled to death by the people at the city gate.

8¹ Now Elisha had told the woman who lived in Shunem, whose son he had brought back to life, that the LORD was sending a famine on the land, which would last for seven years, and that she should leave with her family and go and live somewhere else.

²She had followed his instructions and had gone with her family to live in Philistia for the seven years.

³At the end of the seven years she returned to Israel and went to the king to ask that her house and her land be restored to her.

⁴She found the king talking with Gehazi, Elisha's servant; the king wanted to know about Elisha's miracles.

⁵While Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had brought a dead person back to

life, the woman made her appeal to the king. Gehazi said to him, Your Majesty, here is the woman and here is her son whom Elisha brought back to life!

⁶In answer to the king's question, she confirmed Gehazi's story, and so the king called an official and told him to give back to her everything that was hers, including the value of all the crops that her fields had produced during the seven years she had been away.

⁷Elisha went to Damascus at a time when King Benhadad of Syria was sick. When the king was told that Elisha was there,

⁸he said to Hazael, one of his officials, Take a gift to the prophet and ask him to consult the LORD to find out whether or not I am going to get well.

⁹So Hazael loaded forty camels with all kinds of the finest products of Damascus and went to Elisha. When Hazael met him, he said, Your servant King Benhadad has sent me to ask you whether or not he will recover from his sickness.

¹⁰Elisha answered, The LORD has revealed to me that he will die; but go to him and tell him that he will recover.

¹¹Then Elisha stared at him with a horrified look on his face until Hazael became ill at ease. Suddenly Elisha burst into tears.

¹²Why are you crying, sir? Hazael asked. Because I know the horrible things you will do against the people of Israel, Elisha answered. You will set their fortresses on fire, slaughter their finest young men, batter their children to death, and rip open their pregnant women.

¹³How could I ever be that powerful? Hazael asked. I'm a nobody! The LORD has shown me that you will be king of Syria, Elisha replied.

¹⁴Hazael went back to Benhadad, who asked him, What did Elisha say? He told me that you would certainly get well, Hazael answered.

¹⁵But on the following day Hazael took a blanket, soaked it in water, and smothered the king. And Hazael succeeded Benhadad as king of Syria.

¹⁶In the fifth year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab as king of Israel, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat became king of Judah

¹⁷at the age of thirty-two, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eight years.

¹⁸His wife was Ahab's daughter, and like the family of Ahab he followed the evil ways of the kings of Israel. He sinned against the LORD,

¹⁹but the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah, because he had promised his servant David that his descendants would always continue to rule.

²⁰During Jehoram's reign Edom revolted against Judah and became an independent kingdom.

²¹So Jehoram set out with all his chariots to Zair, where the Edomite army surrounded them. During the night he and his chariot commanders managed to break out and escape, and his soldiers scattered to their homes.

²²Edom has been independent of Judah ever since. During this same period the city of Libnah also revolted.

²³ Everything else that Jehoram did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

²⁴ Jehoram died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City, and his son Ahaziah succeeded him as king.

²⁵ In the twelfth year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab as king of Israel, Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah

²⁶ at the age of twenty-two, and he ruled in Jerusalem for one year. His mother was Athaliah, the daughter of King Ahab and granddaughter of King Omri of Israel.

²⁷ Since Ahaziah was related to King Ahab by marriage, he sinned against the LORD, just as Ahab's family did.

²⁸ King Ahaziah joined King Joram of Israel in a war against King Hazael of Syria. The armies clashed at Ramoth in Gilead, and Joram was wounded in battle.

²⁹ He returned to the city of Jezreel to recover from his wounds, and Ahaziah went there to visit him.

9¹ Meanwhile the prophet Elisha called one of the young prophets and said

to him, Get ready and go to Ramoth in Gilead. Take this jar of olive oil with you,² and when you get there look for Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi. Take him to a private room away from his companions,

³pour this olive oil on his head, and say, The LORD proclaims that he anoints you king of Israel. Then leave there as fast as you can.

⁴So the young prophet went to Ramoth,⁵ where he found the army officers in a conference. He said, Sir, I have a message for you. Jehu asked, Which one of us are you speaking to? To you, sir, he replied.

⁶Then the two of them went indoors, and the young prophet poured the olive oil on Jehu's head and said to him, The LORD, the God of Israel, proclaims: I anoint you king of my people Israel.

⁷You are to kill your master the king, that son of Ahab, so that I may punish Jezebel for murdering my prophets and my other servants.

⁸All of Ahab's family and descendants are to die; I will get rid of every male in his family, young and old alike.

⁹I will treat his family as I did the families of King Jeroboam of Israel and of King Baasha of Israel.

¹⁰Jezebel will not be buried; her body will be eaten by dogs in the territory of Jezreel. After saying this, the young prophet left the room and fled.

¹¹Jehu went back to his fellow officers, who asked him, Is everything all right? What did that crazy fellow want with you? You know what he wanted, Jehu answered.

¹²No we don't! they replied. Tell us what he said! He told me that the LORD proclaims: I anoint you king of Israel.

¹³At once Jehu's fellow officers spread their cloaks at the top of the steps for Jehu to stand on, blew trumpets, and shouted, Jehu is king!

¹⁴Then Jehu plotted against King Joram, who was in Jezreel, where he had gone to recover from the wounds which he had received in the battle at Ramoth against King Hazael of Syria. So Jehu said to his fellow officers, If you are with me, make sure that no one slips out of Ramoth to go and warn the people in Jezreel.

¹⁵(9:14)

¹⁶Then he got into his chariot and set off for Jezreel. Joram had still not recovered, and King Ahaziah of Judah was there, visiting him.

¹⁷A guard on duty in the watchtower at Jezreel saw Jehu and his men approaching. I see some men riding up! he called out. Joram replied, Send a rider to find out if they are friends or enemies.

¹⁸The messenger rode out to Jehu and said to him, The king wants to know if you come as a friend. That's none of your business! Jehu answered. Fall in behind me. The guard on the watchtower reported that the messenger had reached the group but was not returning.

¹⁹Another messenger was sent out, who asked Jehu the same question. Again Jehu answered, That's none of your business! Fall in behind me.

²⁰Once more the guard reported that the messenger had reached the group but was not returning. And he added, The leader of the group is driving his chariot like a madman, just like Jehu!

²¹ Get my chariot ready, King Joram ordered. It was done, and he and King Ahaziah rode out, each in his own chariot, to meet Jehu. They met him at the field which had belonged to Naboth.

²² Are you coming in peace? Joram asked him. How can there be peace, Jehu answered, when we still have all the witchcraft and idolatry that your mother Jezebel started?

²³ It's treason, Ahaziah! Joram cried out, as he turned his chariot around and fled.

²⁴ Jehu drew his bow, and with all his strength shot an arrow that struck Joram in the back and pierced his heart. Joram fell dead in his chariot,

²⁵ and Jehu said to his aide Bidkar, Get his body and throw it in the field that belonged to Naboth. Remember that when you and I were riding together behind King Joram's father Ahab, the LORD spoke these words against Ahab:

²⁶ I saw the murder of Naboth and his sons yesterday. And I promise that I will punish you here in this same field. So take Joram's body, Jehu ordered his aide, and throw it in the field that

belonged to Naboth, so as to fulfill the LORD's promise.

²⁷ King Ahaziah saw what happened, so he fled in his chariot toward the town of Beth Haggan, pursued by Jehu. Kill him too! Jehu ordered his men, and they wounded him as he drove his chariot on the road up to Gur, near the town of Ibleam. But he managed to keep on going until he reached the city of Megiddo, where he died.

²⁸ His officials took his body back to Jerusalem in a chariot and buried him in the royal tombs in David's City.

²⁹ Ahaziah had become king of Judah in the eleventh year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel.

³⁰ Jehu arrived in Jezreel. Jezebel, having heard what had happened, put on eye shadow, arranged her hair, and stood looking down at the street from a window in the palace.

³¹ As Jehu came through the gate, she called out, You Zimri! You assassin! Why are you here?

³² Jehu looked up and shouted, Who is on my side? Two or three palace officials looked down at him from a window,

³³ and Jehu said to them, Throw her down! They threw her down, and her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses. Jehu drove his horses and chariot over her body,

³⁴ entered the palace, and had a meal. Only then did he say, Take that cursed woman and bury her; after all, she is a king's daughter.

³⁵ But the men who went out to bury her found nothing except her skull and the bones of her hands and feet.

³⁶ When they reported this to Jehu, he said, This is what the LORD said would happen, when he spoke through his servant Elijah: Dogs will eat Jezebel's body in the territory of Jezreel.

³⁷ Her remains will be scattered there like dung, so that no one will be able to identify them.

10¹ There were seventy descendants of King Ahab living in the city of Samaria. Jehu wrote a letter and sent copies to the rulers of the city, to the leading citizens, and to the guardians of Ahab's descendants. The letter read:

² You are in charge of the king's descendants, and you have at your

disposal chariots, horses, weapons, and fortified cities. So then, as soon as you receive this letter,

³ you are to choose the best qualified of the king's descendants, make him king, and fight to defend him.

⁴ The rulers of Samaria were terrified. How can we oppose Jehu, they said, when neither King Joram nor King Ahaziah could?

⁵ So the officer in charge of the palace and the official in charge of the city, together with the leading citizens and the guardians, sent this message to Jehu: We are your servants, and we are ready to do anything you say. But we will not make anyone king; do whatever you think best.

⁶ Jehu wrote them another letter: If you are with me and are ready to follow my orders, bring the heads of King Ahab's descendants to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow. The seventy descendants of King Ahab were under the care of the leading citizens of Samaria, who were bringing them up.

⁷ When Jehu's letter was received, the leaders of Samaria killed all seventy of

Ahab's descendants, put their heads in baskets, and sent them to Jehu at Jezreel.

⁸When Jehu was told that the heads of Ahab's descendants had been brought, he ordered them to be piled up in two heaps at the city gate and to be left there until the following morning.

⁹In the morning he went out to the gate and said to the people who were there, I was the one who plotted against King Joram and killed him; you are not responsible for that. But who killed all these?

¹⁰This proves that everything that the LORD said about the descendants of Ahab will come true. The LORD has done what he promised through his prophet Elijah.

¹¹Then Jehu put to death all the other relatives of Ahab living in Jezreel, and all his officers, close friends, and priests; not one of them was left alive.

¹²Jehu left Jezreel to go to Samaria. On the way, at a place called Shepherds' Camp,

¹³he met some relatives of the late King Ahaziah of Judah and asked them,

Who are you? Ahaziah's relatives, they answered. We are going to Jezreel to pay our respects to the children of Queen Jezebel and to the rest of the royal family.

¹⁴ Jehu ordered his men, Take them alive! They seized them, and he put them to death near a pit there. There were forty-two people in all, and not one of them was left alive.

¹⁵ Jehu started out again, and on his way he was met by Jonadab son of Rechab. Jehu greeted him and said, You and I think alike. Will you support me? I will, Jonadab answered. Give me your hand, then, Jehu replied. They clasped hands, and Jehu helped him up into the chariot,

¹⁶ saying, Come with me and see for yourself how devoted I am to the LORD. And they rode on together to Samaria.

¹⁷ When they arrived there, Jehu killed all of Ahab's relatives, not sparing even one. This is what the LORD had told Elijah would happen.

¹⁸ Jehu called the people of Samaria together and said, King Ahab served the

god Baal a little, but I will serve him much more.

¹⁹Call together all the prophets of Baal, all his worshipers, and all his priests. No one is excused; I am going to offer a great sacrifice to Baal, and whoever is not present will be put to death. (This was a trick on the part of Jehu by which he meant to kill all the worshipers of Baal.)

²⁰Then Jehu ordered, Proclaim a day of worship in honor of Baal! The proclamation was made,

²¹and Jehu sent word throughout all the land of Israel. All who worshiped Baal came; not one of them failed to come. They all went into the temple of Baal, filling it from one end to the other.

²²Then Jehu ordered the priest in charge of the sacred robes to bring the robes out and give them to the worshipers.

²³After that, Jehu himself went into the temple with Jonadab son of Rechab and said to the people there, Make sure that only worshipers of Baal are present and that no worshiper of the LORD has come in.

²⁴ Then he and Jonadab went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings to Baal. He had stationed eighty men outside the temple and had instructed them: You are to kill all these people; anyone who lets one of them escape will pay for it with his life!

²⁵ As soon as Jehu had presented the offerings, he said to the guards and officers, Go in and kill them all; don't let anyone escape! They went in with drawn swords, killed them all, and dragged the bodies outside. Then they went on into the inner sanctuary of the temple,

²⁶ brought out the sacred pillar that was there, and burned it.

²⁷ So they destroyed the sacred pillar and the temple, and turned the temple into a latrine -- which it still is today.

²⁸ That was how Jehu wiped out the worship of Baal in Israel.

²⁹ But he imitated the sin of King Jeroboam, who led Israel into the sin of worshiping the gold bull-calves he set up in Bethel and in Dan.

³⁰ The LORD said to Jehu, You have done to Ahab's descendants everything I wanted you to do. So I promise you that

your descendants, down to the fourth generation, will be kings of Israel.

³¹ But Jehu did not obey with all his heart the Law of the LORD, the God of Israel; instead, he followed the example of Jeroboam, who led Israel into sin.

³² At that time the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel's territory. King Hazael of Syria conquered all the Israelite territory

³³ east of the Jordan, as far south as the town of Aroer on the Arnon River -- this included the territories of Gilead and Bashan, where the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and East Manasseh lived.

³⁴ Everything else that Jehu did, including his brave deeds, is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

³⁵ He died and was buried in Samaria, and his son Jehoahaz succeeded him as king.

³⁶ Jehu had ruled in Samaria as king of Israel for twenty-eight years.

11 ¹ As soon as King Ahaziah's mother Athaliah learned of her son's murder, she gave orders for all the members of the royal family to be killed.

² Only Ahaziah's son Joash escaped. He was about to be killed with the others, but was rescued by his aunt Jehosheba, who was King Jehoram's daughter and Ahaziah's half sister. She took him and his nurse into a bedroom in the Temple and hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not killed.

³ For six years Jehosheba took care of the boy and kept him hidden in the Temple, while Athaliah ruled as queen.

⁴ But in the seventh year Jehoiada the priest sent for the officers in charge of the royal bodyguard and of the palace guards, and told them to come to the Temple, where he made them agree under oath to what he planned to do. He showed them King Ahaziah's son Joash

⁵ and gave them the following orders: When you come on duty on the Sabbath, one third of you are to guard the palace;

⁶ another third are to stand guard at the Sur Gate, and the other third are to stand guard at the gate behind the other guards.

⁷ The two groups that go off duty on the Sabbath are to stand guard at the Temple to protect the king.

⁸You are to guard King Joash with drawn swords and stay with him wherever he goes. Anyone who comes near you is to be killed.

⁹The officers obeyed Jehoiada's instructions and brought their men to him -- those going off duty on the Sabbath and those going on duty.

¹⁰He gave the officers the spears and shields that had belonged to King David and had been kept in the Temple,

¹¹and he stationed the men with drawn swords all around the front of the Temple, to protect the king.

¹²Then Jehoiada led Joash out, placed the crown on his head, and gave him a copy of the laws governing kingship. Then Joash was anointed and proclaimed king. The people clapped their hands and shouted, Long live the king!

¹³Queen Athaliah heard the noise being made by the guards and the people, so she hurried to the Temple, where the crowd had gathered.

¹⁴There she saw the new king standing by the column at the entrance of the Temple, as was the custom. He was surrounded by the officers and the

trumpeters, and the people were all shouting joyfully and blowing trumpets. Athaliah tore her clothes in distress and shouted, Treason! Treason!

¹⁵Jehoiada did not want Athaliah killed in the Temple area, so he ordered the army officers: Take her out between the rows of guards, and kill anyone who tries to rescue her.

¹⁶They seized her, took her to the palace, and there at the Horse Gate they killed her.

¹⁷The priest Jehoiada had King Joash and the people make a covenant with the LORD that they would be the LORD's people; he also made a covenant between the king and the people.

¹⁸Then the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down; they smashed the altars and the idols, and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, in front of the altars. Jehoiada put guards on duty at the Temple,

¹⁹and then he, the officers, the royal bodyguard, and the palace guards escorted the king from the Temple to the palace, followed by all the people. Joash

entered by the Guard Gate and took his place on the throne.

²⁰All the people were filled with happiness, and the city was quiet, now that Athaliah had been killed in the palace.

²¹Joash became king of Judah at the age of seven.

12¹In the seventh year of the reign of King Jehu of Israel, Joash became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for forty years. His mother was Zibiah from the city of Beersheba.

²Throughout his life he did what pleased the LORD, because Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

³However, the pagan places of worship were not destroyed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

⁴Joash called the priests and ordered them to save up the money paid in connection with the sacrifices in the Temple, both the dues paid for the regular sacrifices and the money given as freewill gifts.

⁵Each priest was to be responsible for the money brought by those he served,

and the money was to be used to repair the Temple, as needed.

⁶But by the twenty-third year of Joash's reign the priests still had not made any repairs in the Temple.

⁷So he called in Jehoiada and the other priests and asked them, Why aren't you repairing the Temple? From now on you are not to keep the money you receive; you must hand it over, so that the repairs can be made.

⁸The priests agreed to this and also agreed not to make the repairs in the Temple.

⁹Then Jehoiada took a box, made a hole in the lid, and placed the box by the altar, on the right side as one enters the Temple. The priests on duty at the entrance put in the box all the money given by the worshipers.

¹⁰Whenever there was a large amount of money in the box, the royal secretary and the High Priest would come, melt down the silver, and weigh it.

¹¹After recording the exact amount, they would hand the silver over to the men in charge of the work in the Temple,

and these would pay the carpenters, the builders,

¹²the masons, and the stone cutters, buy the timber and the stones used in the repairs, and pay all other necessary expenses.

¹³None of the money, however, was used to pay for making silver cups, bowls, trumpets, or tools for tending the lamps, or any other article of silver or of gold.

¹⁴It was all used to pay the workers and to buy the materials used in the repairs.

¹⁵The men in charge of the work were thoroughly honest, so there was no need to require them to account for the funds.

¹⁶The money given for the repayment offerings and for the offerings for sin was not deposited in the box; it belonged to the priests.

¹⁷At that time King Hazael of Syria attacked the city of Gath and conquered it; then he decided to attack Jerusalem.

¹⁸King Joash of Judah took all the offerings that his predecessors Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah had dedicated to the LORD, added to

them his own offerings and all the gold in the treasuries of the Temple and the palace, and sent them all as a gift to King Hazael, who then led his army away from Jerusalem.

¹⁹Everything else that King Joash did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

²⁰King Joash's officials plotted against him, and two of them, Jozacar son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer, killed him at the house built on the land that was filled in on the east side of Jerusalem, on the road that goes down to Silla. Joash was buried in the royal tombs in David's City, and his son Amaziah succeeded him as king.

²¹ (12: 20)

13¹In the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash son of Ahaziah as king of Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for seventeen years.

²Like King Jeroboam before him, he sinned against the LORD and led Israel into sin; he never gave up his evil ways.

³So the LORD was angry with Israel, and he allowed King Hazael of Syria and

his son Benhadad to defeat Israel time after time.

⁴Then Jehoahaz prayed to the LORD, and the LORD, seeing how harshly the king of Syria was oppressing the Israelites, answered his prayer.

⁵The LORD sent Israel a leader, who freed them from the Syrians, and so the Israelites lived in peace, as before.

⁶But they still did not give up the sins into which King Jeroboam had led Israel, but kept on committing them; and the image of the goddess Asherah remained in Samaria.

⁷Jehoahaz had no armed forces left except fifty cavalry troops, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers, because the king of Syria had destroyed the rest, trampling them down like dust.

⁸Everything else that Jehoahaz did and all his brave deeds are recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

⁹He died and was buried in Samaria, and his son Jehoash succeeded him as king.

¹⁰In the thirty-seventh year of the reign of King Joash of Judah, Jehoash son of

Jehoahaz became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for sixteen years.

¹¹ He too sinned against the LORD and followed the evil example of King Jeroboam, who had led Israel into sin.

¹² Everything else that Jehoash did, including his bravery in the war against King Amaziah of Judah, is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹³ Jehoash died and was buried in the royal tombs in Samaria, and his son Jeroboam II succeeded him as king.

¹⁴ The prophet Elisha was sick with a fatal disease, and as he lay dying, King Jehoash of Israel went to visit him. My father, my father! he exclaimed as he wept. You have been the mighty defender of Israel!

¹⁵ Get a bow and some arrows, Elisha ordered him. Jehoash got them,

¹⁶ and Elisha told him to get ready to shoot. The king did so, and Elisha placed his hands on the king's hands.

¹⁷ Then, following the prophet's instructions, the king opened the window that faced toward Syria. Shoot the arrow! Elisha ordered. As soon as the king shot the arrow, the prophet exclaimed, You

are the LORD's arrow, with which he will win victory over Syria. You will fight the Syrians in Aphek until you defeat them.

¹⁸Then Elisha told the king to take the other arrows and strike the ground with them. The king struck the ground three times, and then stopped.

¹⁹This made Elisha angry, and he said to the king, You should have struck five or six times, and then you would have won complete victory over the Syrians; but now you will defeat them only three times.

²⁰Elisha died and was buried. Every year bands of Moabites used to invade the land of Israel.

²¹One time during a funeral, one of those bands was seen, and the people threw the corpse into Elisha's tomb and ran off. As soon as the body came into contact with Elisha's bones, the man came back to life and stood up.

²²King Hazael of Syria oppressed the Israelites during all of Jehoahaz reign,

²³but the LORD was kind and merciful to them. He would not let them be destroyed, but helped them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob. He has never forgotten his people.

²⁴At the death of King Hazael of Syria his son Benhadad became king.

²⁵Then King Jehoash of Israel defeated Benhadad three times and recaptured the cities that had been taken by Benhadad during the reign of Jehoahaz, the father of Jehoash.

14¹In the second year of the reign of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz as king of Israel, Amaziah son of Joash became king of Judah

²at the age of twenty-five, and he ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years. His mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem.

³He did what was pleasing to the LORD, but he was not like his ancestor King David; instead, he did what his father Joash had done.

⁴He did not tear down the pagan places of worship, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

⁵As soon as Amaziah was firmly in power, he executed the officials who had killed his father, the king.

⁶However, he did not kill their children but followed what the LORD had

commanded in the Law of Moses: Parents are not to be put to death for crimes committed by their children, and children are not to be put to death for crimes committed by their parents; people are to be put to death only for a crime they themselves have committed.

⁷Amaziah killed ten thousand Edomite soldiers in Salt Valley; he captured the city of Sela in battle and called it Joktheel, the name it still has.

⁸Then Amaziah sent messengers to King Jehoash of Israel, challenging him to fight.

⁹But King Jehoash sent back the following reply: Once a thorn bush on the Lebanon Mountains sent a message to a cedar: Give your daughter in marriage to my son. A wild animal passed by and trampled the bush down.

¹⁰Now Amaziah, you have defeated the Edomites, and you are filled with pride. Be satisfied with your fame and stay at home. Why stir up trouble that will only bring disaster on you and your people?

¹¹But Amaziah refused to listen, so King Jehoash marched out with his men

and fought against him at Beth Shemesh in Judah.

¹²Amaziah's army was defeated, and all his soldiers fled to their homes.

¹³Jehoash took Amaziah prisoner, advanced on Jerusalem, and tore down the city wall from Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, a distance of two hundred yards.

¹⁴He took all the silver and gold he could find, all the Temple equipment and all the palace treasures, and carried them back to Samaria. He also took hostages with him.

¹⁵Everything else that Jehoash did, including his bravery in the war against King Amaziah of Judah, is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹⁶Jehoash died and was buried in the royal tombs in Samaria, and his son Jeroboam II succeeded him as king.

¹⁷King Amaziah of Judah lived fifteen years after the death of King Jehoash of Israel.

¹⁸Everything else that Amaziah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

¹⁹There was a plot in Jerusalem to assassinate Amaziah, so he fled to the city of Lachish, but his enemies followed him there and killed him.

²⁰His body was carried back to Jerusalem on a horse and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City.

²¹The people of Judah then crowned his sixteen-year-old son Uzziah as king.

²²Uzziah reconquered and rebuilt Elath after his father's death.

²³In the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah son of Joash as king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for forty-one years.

²⁴He sinned against the LORD, following the wicked example of his predecessor King Jeroboam son of Nebat, who led Israel into sin.

²⁵He reconquered all the territory that had belonged to Israel, from Hamath Pass in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. This was what the LORD, the God of Israel, had promised through his servant the prophet Jonah son of Amittai from Gath Hopher.

²⁶The LORD saw the terrible suffering of the Israelites; there was no one at all to help them.

²⁷But it was not the LORD's purpose to destroy Israel completely and forever, so he rescued them through King Jeroboam II.

²⁸Everything else that Jeroboam II did, his brave battles, and how he restored Damascus and Hamath to Israel, are all recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

²⁹Jeroboam died and was buried in the royal tombs, and his son Zechariah succeeded him as king.

15¹In the twenty-seventh year of the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel, Uzziah son of Amaziah became king of Judah

²at the age of sixteen, and he ruled in Jerusalem for fifty-two years. His mother was Jecoliah from Jerusalem.

³Following the example of his father, he did what was pleasing to the LORD.

⁴But the pagan places of worship were not destroyed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

⁵The LORD struck Uzziah with a dreaded skin disease that stayed with him the rest of his life. He lived in a separate house, relieved of all duties, while his son Jotham governed the country.

⁶Everything else that Uzziah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

⁷Uzziah died and was buried in the royal burial ground in David's City, and his son Jotham succeeded him as king.

⁸In the thirty-eighth year of the reign of King Uzziah of Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam II became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for six months.

⁹He, like his predecessors, sinned against the LORD. He followed the wicked example of King Jeroboam son of Nebat, who led Israel into sin.

¹⁰Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against King Zechariah, assassinated him at Ibleam, and succeeded him as king.

¹¹Everything else that Zechariah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹²So the promise was fulfilled which the LORD had made to King Jehu: Your descendants down to the fourth generation will be kings of Israel.

¹³In the thirty-ninth year of the reign of King Uzziah of Judah, Shallum son of Jabesh became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for one month.

¹⁴Menahem son of Gadi went from Tirzah to Samaria, assassinated Shallum, and succeeded him as king.

¹⁵Everything else that Shallum did, including an account of his conspiracy, is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹⁶As Menahem was on his way from Tirzah, he completely destroyed the city of Tappuah, its inhabitants, and the surrounding territory, because the city did not surrender to him. He even ripped open the bellies of all the pregnant women.

¹⁷In the thirty-ninth year of the reign of King Uzziah of Judah, Menahem son of Gadi became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for ten years.

¹⁸He sinned against the LORD, for until the day of his death he followed the

wicked example of King Jeroboam son of Nebat, who led Israel into sin.

¹⁹Tiglath Pileser, the emperor of Assyria, invaded Israel, and Menahem gave him thirty-eight tons of silver to gain his support in strengthening Menahem's power over the country.

²⁰Menahem got the money from the rich men of Israel by forcing each one to contribute fifty pieces of silver. So Tiglath Pileser went back to his own country.

²¹Everything else that Menahem did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

²²He died and was buried, and his son Pekahiah succeeded him as king.

²³In the fiftieth year of the reign of King Uzziah of Judah, Pekahiah son of Menahem became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for two years.

²⁴He sinned against the LORD, following the wicked example of King Jeroboam son of Nebat, who led Israel into sin.

²⁵An officer of Pekahiah's forces, Pekah son of Remaliah, plotted with fifty men from Gilead, assassinated Pekahiah in the palace's inner fortress in Samaria, and succeeded him as king.

²⁶Everything else that Pekahiah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

²⁷In the fifty-second year of the reign of King Uzziah of Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for twenty years.

²⁸He sinned against the LORD, following the wicked example of King Jeroboam son of Nebat, who led Israel into sin.

²⁹It was while Pekah was king that Tiglath Pileser, the emperor of Assyria, captured the cities of Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, and Hazor, and the territories of Gilead, Galilee, and Naphtali, and took the people to Assyria as prisoners.

³⁰In the twentieth year of the reign of Jotham son of Uzziah as king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah plotted against King Pekah, assassinated him, and succeeded him as king.

³¹Everything else that Pekah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

³²In the second year of the reign of Pekah son of Remaliah as king of Israel,

Jotham son of Uzziah became king of Judah

³³at the age of twenty-five, and he ruled in Jerusalem for sixteen years. His mother was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

³⁴Following the example of his father Uzziah, Jotham did what was pleasing to the LORD.

³⁵But the pagan places of worship were not destroyed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there. It was Jotham who built the North Gate of the Temple.

³⁶Everything else that Jotham did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

³⁷It was while he was king that the LORD first sent King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel to attack Judah.

³⁸Jotham died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City, and his son Ahaz succeeded him as king.

16¹In the seventeenth year of the reign of Pekah son of Remaliah as king of Israel, Ahaz son of Jotham became king of Judah

²at the age of twenty, and he ruled in Jerusalem for sixteen years. He did not follow the good example of his ancestor King David; instead, he did what was not pleasing to the LORD his God

³and followed the example of the kings of Israel. He even sacrificed his own son as a burnt offering to idols, imitating the disgusting practice of the people whom the LORD had driven out of the land as the Israelites advanced.

⁴At the pagan places of worship, on the hills, and under every shady tree, Ahaz offered sacrifices and burned incense.

⁵King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel attacked Jerusalem and besieged it, but could not defeat Ahaz.

⁶(At the same time the king of Edom regained control of the city of Elath and drove out the Judeans who lived there. The Edomites settled in Elath and still live there.)

⁷Ahaz sent men to Tiglath Pileser, the emperor of Assyria, with this message: I am your devoted servant. Come and rescue me from the kings of Syria and of Israel, who are attacking me.

⁸Ahaz took the silver and gold from the Temple and the palace treasury, and sent it as a present to the emperor.

⁹Tiglath Pileser, in answer to Ahaz plea, marched out with his army against Damascus, captured it, killed King Rezin, and took the people to Kir as prisoners.

¹⁰When King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Emperor Tiglath Pileser, he saw the altar there and sent back to Uriah the priest an exact model of it, down to the smallest details.

¹¹So Uriah built an altar just like it and finished it before Ahaz returned.

¹²On his return from Damascus, Ahaz saw that the altar was finished,

¹³so he burned animal sacrifices and grain offerings on it and poured a wine offering and the blood of a fellowship offering on it.

¹⁴The bronze altar dedicated to the LORD was between the new altar and the Temple, so Ahaz moved it to the north side of his new altar.

¹⁵Then he ordered Uriah: Use this large altar of mine for the morning burnt offerings and the evening grain offerings, for the burnt offerings and grain offerings

of the king and the people, and for the people's wine offerings. Pour on it the blood of all the animals that are sacrificed. But keep the bronze altar for me to use for divination.

¹⁶Uriah did as the king commanded.

¹⁷King Ahaz took apart the bronze carts used in the Temple and removed the basins that were on them. He also took the bronze tank from the backs of the twelve bronze bulls and placed it on a stone foundation.

¹⁸And in order to please the Assyrian emperor, Ahaz also removed from the Temple the platform for the royal throne and closed up the king's private entrance to the Temple.

¹⁹Everything else that King Ahaz did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

²⁰Ahaz died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City, and his son Hezekiah succeeded him as king.

17¹In the twelfth year of the reign of King Ahaz of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel, and he ruled in Samaria for nine years.

²He sinned against the LORD, but not as much as the kings who had ruled Israel before him.

³Emperor Shalmaneser of Assyria made war against him; Hoshea surrendered to Shalmaneser and paid him tribute every year.

⁴But one year Hoshea sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, asking for his help, and stopped paying the annual tribute to Assyria. When Shalmaneser learned of this, he had Hoshea arrested and put in prison.

⁵Then Shalmaneser invaded Israel and besieged Samaria. In the third year of the siege,

⁶which was the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, the Assyrian emperor captured Samaria, took the Israelites to Assyria as prisoners, and settled some of them in the city of Halah, some near the Habor River in the district of Gozan and some in the cities of Media.

⁷Samaria fell because the Israelites sinned against the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the king of Egypt and had led them out of Egypt. They worshiped other gods,

⁸ followed the customs of the people whom the LORD had driven out as his people advanced, and adopted customs introduced by the kings of Israel.

⁹ The Israelites did things that the LORD their God disapproved of. They built pagan places of worship in all their towns, from the smallest village to the largest city.

¹⁰ On all the hills and under every shady tree they put up stone pillars and images of the goddess Asherah,

¹¹ and they burned incense on all the pagan altars, following the practice of the people whom the LORD had driven out of the land. They aroused the LORD's anger with all their wicked deeds

¹² and disobeyed the LORD's command not to worship idols.

¹³ The LORD had sent his messengers and prophets to warn Israel and Judah: Abandon your evil ways and obey my commands, which are contained in the Law I gave to your ancestors and which I handed on to you through my servants the prophets.

¹⁴But they would not obey; they were stubborn like their ancestors, who had not trusted in the LORD their God.

¹⁵They refused to obey his instructions, they did not keep the covenant he had made with their ancestors, and they disregarded his warnings. They worshiped worthless idols and became worthless themselves, and they followed the customs of the surrounding nations, disobeying the LORD's command not to imitate them.

¹⁶They broke all the laws of the LORD their God and made two metal bull-calves to worship; they also made an image of the goddess Asherah, worshiped the stars, and served the god Baal.

¹⁷They sacrificed their sons and daughters as burnt offerings to pagan gods; they consulted mediums and fortunetellers, and they devoted themselves completely to doing what is wrong in the LORD's sight, and so aroused his anger.

¹⁸The LORD was angry with the Israelites and banished them from his sight, leaving only the kingdom of Judah.

¹⁹But even the people of Judah did not obey the laws of the LORD their God; they imitated the customs adopted by the people of Israel.

²⁰The LORD rejected all the Israelites, punishing them and handing them over to cruel enemies until at last he had banished them from his sight.

²¹After the LORD had separated Israel from Judah, the Israelites made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam caused them to abandon the LORD and led them into terrible sins.

²²They followed Jeroboam and continued to practice all the sins he had committed,

²³until at last the LORD banished them from his sight, as he had warned through his servants the prophets that he would do. So the people of Israel were taken into exile to Assyria, where they still live.

²⁴The emperor of Assyria took people from the cities of Babylon, Cuth, Ivvah, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the exiled Israelites. They took possession of these cities and lived there.

²⁵When they first settled there, they did not worship the LORD, and so he sent lions, which killed some of them.

²⁶The emperor of Assyria was told that the people he had settled in the cities of Samaria did not know the law of the god of that land, and so the god had sent lions, which were killing them.

²⁷So the emperor commanded: Send back one of the priests we brought as prisoners; have him go back and live there, in order to teach the people the law of the god of that land.

²⁸So an Israelite priest who had been deported from Samaria went and lived in Bethel, where he taught the people how to worship the LORD.

²⁹But the people who settled in Samaria continued to make their own idols, and they placed them in the shrines that the Israelites had built. Each different group made idols in the cities they were living in:

³⁰the people of Babylon made idols of the god Succoth Benoth; the people of Cuth, idols of Nergal; the people of Hamath, idols of Ashima;

³¹ the people of Ivvah, idols of Nibhaz and Tartak; and the people of Sepharvaim sacrificed their children as burnt offerings to their gods Adrammelech and Anammelech.

³² These people also worshiped the LORD and chose from among their own number all sorts of people to serve as priests at the pagan places of worship and to offer sacrifices for them there.

³³ So they worshiped the LORD, but they also worshiped their own gods according to the customs of the countries from which they had come.

³⁴ They still carry on their old customs to this day. They do not worship the LORD nor do they obey the laws and commands which he gave to the descendants of Jacob, whom he named Israel.

³⁵ The LORD had made a covenant with them and had ordered them: Do not worship other gods; do not bow down to them or serve them or offer sacrifices to them.

³⁶ You shall obey me, the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt with great

power and strength; you are to bow down to me and offer sacrifices to me.

³⁷You shall always obey the laws and commands that I wrote for you. You shall not obey other gods,

³⁸and you shall not forget the covenant I made with you.

³⁹You shall obey me, the LORD your God, and I will rescue you from your enemies.

⁴⁰But those people would not listen, and they continued to follow their old customs.

⁴¹So those people worshiped the LORD, but they also worshiped their idols; and to this day their descendants continue to do the same.

18¹In the third year of the reign of Hoshea son of Elah as king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz became king of Judah

²at the age of twenty-five, and he ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years. His mother was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.

³Following the example of his ancestor King David, he did what was pleasing to the LORD.

⁴ He destroyed the pagan places of worship, broke the stone pillars, and cut down the images of the goddess Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze snake that Moses had made, which was called Nehushtan. Up to that time the people of Israel had burned incense in its honor.

⁵ Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel; Judah never had another king like him, either before or after his time.

⁶ He was faithful to the LORD and never disobeyed him, but carefully kept all the commands that the LORD had given Moses.

⁷ So the LORD was with him, and he was successful in everything he did. He rebelled against the emperor of Assyria and refused to submit to him.

⁸ He defeated the Philistines and raided their settlements, from the smallest village to the largest city, including Gaza and its surrounding territory.

⁹ In the fourth year of Hezekiah's reign -- which was the seventh year of King Hoshea's reign over Israel -- Emperor Shalmaneser of Assyria invaded Israel and besieged Samaria.

¹⁰In the third year of the siege Samaria fell; this was the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign and the ninth year of Hoshea's reign.

¹¹The Assyrian emperor took the Israelites to Assyria as prisoners and settled some of them in the city of Halah, some near the Habor River in the district of Gozan, and some in the cities of Media.

¹²Samaria fell because the Israelites did not obey the LORD their God, but broke the covenant he had made with them and disobeyed all the laws given by Moses, the servant of the LORD. They would not listen and they would not obey.

¹³In the fourteenth year of the reign of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib, the emperor of Assyria, attacked the fortified cities of Judah and conquered them.

¹⁴Hezekiah sent a message to Sennacherib, who was in Lachish: I have done wrong; please stop your attack, and I will pay whatever you demand. The emperor's answer was that Hezekiah should send him ten tons of silver and one ton of gold.

¹⁵Hezekiah sent him all the silver in the Temple and in the palace treasury;

¹⁶he also stripped the gold from the temple doors and the gold with which he himself had covered the doorposts, and he sent it all to Sennacherib.

¹⁷The Assyrian emperor sent a large army from Lachish to attack Hezekiah at Jerusalem; it was commanded by his three highest officials. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they occupied the road where the cloth makers work by the ditch that brings water from the upper pool.

¹⁸Then they sent for King Hezekiah, and three of his officials went out to meet them: Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace; Shebna, the court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, who was in charge of the records.

¹⁹One of the Assyrian officials told them that the emperor wanted to know what made King Hezekiah so confident.

²⁰He demanded, Do you think that words can take the place of military skill and might? Who do you think will help you rebel against Assyria?

²¹ You are expecting Egypt to help you, but that would be like using a reed as a walking stick -- it would break and jab your hand. That is what the king of Egypt is like when anyone relies on him.

²² The Assyrian official went on, Or will you tell me that you are relying on the LORD your God? It was the LORD's shrines and altars that Hezekiah destroyed, when he told the people of Judah and Jerusalem to worship only at the altar in Jerusalem.

²³ I will make a bargain with you in the name of the emperor. I will give you two thousand horses if you can find that many men to ride them!

²⁴ You are no match for even the lowest ranking Assyrian official, and yet you expect the Egyptians to send you chariots and cavalry!

²⁵ Do you think I have attacked your country and destroyed it without the LORD's help? The LORD himself told me to attack it and destroy it.

²⁶ Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah told the official, Speak Aramaic to us, sir. We understand it. Don't speak Hebrew; all the people on the wall are listening.

²⁷ He replied, Do you think you and the king are the only ones the emperor sent me to say all these things to? No, I am also talking to the people who are sitting on the wall, who will have to eat their excrement and drink their urine, just as you will.

²⁸ Then the official stood up and shouted in Hebrew, Listen to what the emperor of Assyria is telling you!

²⁹ He warns you not to let Hezekiah deceive you. Hezekiah can't save you.

³⁰ And don't let him persuade you to rely on the LORD. Don't think that the LORD will save you and that he will stop our Assyrian army from capturing your city.

³¹ Don't listen to Hezekiah. The emperor of Assyria commands you to come out of the city and surrender. You will all be allowed to eat grapes from your own vines and figs from your own trees, and to drink water from your own wells --

³² until the emperor resettles you in a country much like your own, where there are vineyards to give wine and there is grain for making bread; it is a land of olives, olive oil, and honey. If you do

what he commands, you will not die, but live. Don't let Hezekiah fool you into thinking that the LORD will rescue you.

³³Did the gods of any other nations save their countries from the emperor of Assyria?

³⁴Where are they now, the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Did anyone save Samaria?

³⁵When did any of the gods of all these countries ever save their country from our emperor? Then what makes you think the LORD can save Jerusalem?

³⁶The people kept quiet, just as King Hezekiah had told them to; they did not say a word.

³⁷Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah tore their clothes in grief, and went and reported to the king what the Assyrian official had said.

19¹As soon as King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes in grief, put on sackcloth, and went to the Temple of the LORD.

²He sent Eliakim, the official in charge of the palace, Shebna, the court secretary, and the senior priests to the

prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They also were wearing sackcloth.

³This is the message which he told them to give Isaiah: Today is a day of suffering; we are being punished and are in disgrace. We are like a woman who is ready to give birth, but is too weak to do it.

⁴The Assyrian emperor has sent his chief official to insult the living God. May the LORD your God hear these insults and punish those who spoke them. So pray to God for those of our people who survive.

⁵When Isaiah received King Hezekiah's message,

⁶he sent back this answer: The LORD tells you not to let the Assyrians frighten you with their claims that he cannot save you.

⁷The LORD will cause the emperor to hear a rumor that will make him go back to his own country, and the LORD will have him killed there.

⁸The Assyrian official learned that the emperor had left Lachish and was fighting against the nearby city of Libnah; so he went there to consult him.

⁹Word reached the Assyrians that the Egyptian army, led by King Tirhakah of Ethiopia, was coming to attack them. When the emperor heard this, he sent a letter to King Hezekiah of Judah

¹⁰to tell him, The god you are trusting in has told you that you will not fall into my hands, but don't let that deceive you.

¹¹You have heard what an Assyrian emperor does to any country he decides to destroy. Do you think that you can escape?

¹²My ancestors destroyed the cities of Gozan, Haran, and Rezep, and killed the people of Betheden who lived in Telassar, and none of their gods could save them.

¹³Where are the kings of the cities of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?

¹⁴King Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went to the Temple, placed the letter there in the presence of the LORD,

¹⁵and prayed, O LORD, the God of Israel, seated on your throne above the winged creatures, you alone are God,

ruling all the kingdoms of the world. You created the earth and the sky.

¹⁶Now, LORD, look at what is happening to us. Listen to all the things that Sennacherib is saying to insult you, the living God.

¹⁷We all know, LORD, that the emperors of Assyria have destroyed many nations, made their lands desolate,

¹⁸and burned up their gods -- which were no gods at all, only images of wood and stone made by human hands.

¹⁹Now, LORD our God, rescue us from the Assyrians, so that all the nations of the world will know that only you, O LORD, are God.

²⁰Then Isaiah sent a message telling King Hezekiah that in answer to the king's prayer

²¹the LORD had said, The city of Jerusalem laughs at you, Sennacherib, and makes fun of you.

²²Whom do you think you have been insulting and ridiculing? You have been disrespectful to me, the holy God of Israel.

²³You sent your messengers to boast to me that with all your chariots you

had conquered the highest mountains of Lebanon. You boasted that there you cut down the tallest cedars and the finest cypress trees and that you reached the deepest parts of the forests.

²⁴You boasted that you dug wells and drank water in foreign lands and that the feet of your soldiers tramped the Nile River dry.

²⁵Have you never heard that I planned all this long ago? And now I have carried it out. I gave you the power to turn fortified cities into piles of rubble.

²⁶The people who lived there were powerless; they were frightened and stunned. They were like grass in a field or weeds growing on a roof when the hot east wind blasts them.

²⁷But I know everything about you, what you do and where you go. I know how you rage against me.

²⁸I have received the report of that rage and that pride of yours, and now I will put a hook through your nose and a bit in your mouth, and take you back by the same road you came.

²⁹Then Isaiah said to King Hezekiah, Here is a sign of what will happen.

This year and next you will have only wild grain to eat, but the following year you will be able to plant your grain and harvest it, and plant vines and eat grapes.

³⁰Those in Judah who survive will flourish like plants that send roots deep into the ground and produce fruit.

³¹There will be people in Jerusalem and on Mount Zion who will survive, because the LORD is determined to make this happen.

³²And this is what the LORD has said about the Assyrian emperor: He will not enter this city or shoot a single arrow against it. No soldiers with shields will come near the city, and no siege mounds will be built around it.

³³He will go back by the same road he came, without entering this city. I, the LORD, have spoken.

³⁴I will defend this city and protect it, for the sake of my own honor and because of the promise I made to my servant David.

³⁵That night an angel of the LORD went to the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000

soldiers. At dawn the next day there they lay, all dead!

³⁶Then the Assyrian emperor Sennacherib withdrew and returned to Nineveh.

³⁷One day, when he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, two of his sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, killed him with their swords and then escaped to the land of Ararat. Another of his sons, Esarhaddon, succeeded him as emperor.

20¹About this time King Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and said to him, The LORD tells you that you are to put everything in order, because you will not recover. Get ready to die.

²Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed:

³Remember, LORD, that I have served you faithfully and loyally and that I have always tried to do what you wanted me to. And he began to cry bitterly.

⁴Isaiah left the king, but before he had passed through the central courtyard of the palace the LORD told him

⁵ to go back to Hezekiah, ruler of the LORD's people, and say to him, I, the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you, and in three days you will go to the Temple.

⁶ I will let you live fifteen years longer. I will rescue you and this city Jerusalem from the emperor of Assyria. I will defend this city, for the sake of my own honor and because of the promise I made to my servant David.

⁷ Then Isaiah told the king's attendants to put on his boil a paste made of figs, and he would get well.

⁸ King Hezekiah asked, What is the sign to prove that the LORD will heal me and that three days later I will be able to go to the Temple?

⁹ Isaiah replied, The LORD will give you a sign to prove that he will keep his promise. Now, would you prefer to have the shadow on the stairway go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?

¹⁰ Hezekiah answered, It's easy to have the shadow go forward ten steps! Have it go back ten steps.

¹¹ Isaiah prayed to the LORD, and the LORD made the shadow go back ten steps on the stairway set up by King Ahaz.

¹² About that same time the king of Babylonia, Merodach Baladan, the son of Baladan, heard that King Hezekiah had been sick, so he sent him a letter and a present.

¹³ Hezekiah welcomed the messengers and showed them his wealth -- his silver and gold, his spices and perfumes, and all his military equipment. There was nothing in his storerooms or anywhere in his kingdom that he did not show them.

¹⁴ Then the prophet Isaiah went to King Hezekiah and asked, Where did these men come from and what did they say to you? Hezekiah answered, They came from a very distant country, from Babylonia.

¹⁵ What did they see in the palace? They saw everything. There is nothing in the storerooms that I didn't show them.

¹⁶ Isaiah then told the king, The LORD Almighty says that

¹⁷ a time is coming when everything in your palace, everything that your

ancestors have stored up to this day, will be carried off to Babylonia. Nothing will be left.

¹⁸Some of your own direct descendants will be taken away and made eunuchs to serve in the palace of the king of Babylonia.

¹⁹King Hezekiah understood this to mean that there would be peace and security during his lifetime, so he replied, The message you have given me from the LORD is good.

²⁰Everything else that King Hezekiah did, his brave deeds, and an account of how he built a reservoir and dug a tunnel to bring water into the city, are all recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

²¹Hezekiah died, and his son Manasseh succeeded him as king.

21 ¹Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for fifty-five years. His mother was Hephzibah.

²Following the disgusting practices of the nations whom the LORD had driven out of the land as his people advanced, Manasseh sinned against the LORD.

³ He rebuilt the pagan places of worship that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he built altars for the worship of Baal and made an image of the goddess Asherah, as King Ahab of Israel had done. Manasseh also worshiped the stars.

⁴ He built pagan altars in the Temple, the place that the LORD had said was where he should be worshiped.

⁵ In the two courtyards of the Temple he built altars for the worship of the stars.

⁶ He sacrificed his son as a burnt offering. He practiced divination and magic and consulted fortunetellers and mediums. He sinned greatly against the LORD and stirred up his anger.

⁷ He placed the symbol of the goddess Asherah in the Temple, the place about which the LORD had said to David and his son Solomon: Here in Jerusalem, in this Temple, is the place that I have chosen out of all the territory of the twelve tribes of Israel as the place where I am to be worshiped.

⁸ And if the people of Israel will obey all my commands and keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them, then

I will not allow them to be driven out of the land that I gave to their ancestors.

⁹But the people of Judah did not obey the LORD, and Manasseh led them to commit even greater sins than those committed by the nations whom the LORD had driven out of the land as his people advanced.

¹⁰Through his servants the prophets the LORD said,

¹¹King Manasseh has done these disgusting things, things far worse than what the Canaanites did; and with his idols he has led the people of Judah into sin.

¹²So I, the LORD God of Israel, will bring such a disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that everyone who hears about it will be stunned.

¹³I will punish Jerusalem as I did Samaria, as I did King Ahab of Israel and his descendants. I will wipe Jerusalem clean of its people, as clean as a plate that has been wiped and turned upside down.

¹⁴I will abandon the people who survive, and will hand them over to their

enemies, who will conquer them and plunder their land.

¹⁵I will do this to my people because they have sinned against me and have stirred up my anger from the time their ancestors came out of Egypt to this day.

¹⁶Manasseh killed so many innocent people that the streets of Jerusalem were flowing with blood; he did this in addition to leading the people of Judah into idolatry, causing them to sin against the LORD.

¹⁷Everything else that Manasseh did, including the sins he committed, is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

¹⁸Manasseh died and was buried in the palace garden, the garden of Uzza, and his son Amon succeeded him as king.

¹⁹Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for two years. His mother was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz from the town of Jotbah.

²⁰Like his father Manasseh, he sinned against the LORD;

²¹ he imitated his father's actions, and he worshiped the idols that his father had worshiped.

²² He rejected the LORD, the God of his ancestors, and disobeyed the LORD's commands.

²³ Amon's officials plotted against him and assassinated him in the palace.

²⁴ The people of Judah killed Amon's assassins and made his son Josiah king.

²⁵ Everything else that Amon did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

²⁶ Amon was buried in the tomb in the garden of Uzza, and his son Josiah succeeded him as king.

22¹ Josiah was eight years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for thirty-one years. His mother was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah from the town of Bozkath.

² Josiah did what was pleasing to the LORD; he followed the example of his ancestor King David, strictly obeying all the laws of God.

³ In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the court secretary Shaphan, the son of Azaliah and

grandson of Meshullam, to the Temple with the order:

⁴Go to the High Priest Hilkiyah and get a report on the amount of money that the priests on duty at the entrance to the Temple have collected from the people.

⁵Tell him to give the money to the men who are in charge of the repairs in the Temple. They are to pay

⁶the carpenters, the builders, and the masons, and buy the timber and the stones used in the repairs.

⁷The men in charge of the work are thoroughly honest, so there is no need to require them to account for the funds.

⁸Shaphan delivered the king's order to Hilkiyah, and Hilkiyah told him that he had found the book of the Law in the Temple. Hilkiyah gave him the book, and Shaphan read it.

⁹Then he went back to the king and reported: Your servants have taken the money that was in the Temple and have handed it over to the men in charge of the repairs.

¹⁰And then he said, I have here a book that Hilkiyah gave me. And he read it aloud to the king.

¹¹ When the king heard the book being read, he tore his clothes in dismay,

¹² and gave the following order to Hilkiah the priest, to Ahikam son of Shaphan, to Achbor son of Micaiah, to Shaphan, the court secretary, and to Asaiah, the king's attendant:

¹³ Go and consult the LORD for me and for all the people of Judah about the teachings of this book. The LORD is angry with us because our ancestors have not done what this book says must be done.

¹⁴ Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to consult a woman named Huldah, a prophet who lived in the newer part of Jerusalem. (Her husband Shallum, the son of Tikvah and grandson of Harhas, was in charge of the Temple robes.) They described to her what had happened,

¹⁵ and she told them to go back to the king and give him

¹⁶ the following message from the LORD: I am going to punish Jerusalem and all its people, as written in the book that the king has read.

¹⁷They have rejected me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and so have stirred up my anger by all they have done. My anger is aroused against Jerusalem, and it will not die down.

¹⁸As for the king himself, this is what I, the LORD God of Israel, say: You listened to what is written in the book,

¹⁹and you repented and humbled yourself before me, tearing your clothes and weeping, when you heard how I threatened to punish Jerusalem and its people. I will make it a terrifying sight, a place whose name people will use as a curse. But I have heard your prayer,

²⁰and the punishment which I am going to bring on Jerusalem will not come until after your death. I will let you die in peace. The men returned to King Josiah with this message.

23¹ King Josiah summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem,
²and together they went to the Temple, accompanied by the priests and the prophets and all the rest of the people, rich and poor alike. Before them all the king read aloud the whole book of the

covenant which had been found in the Temple.

³He stood by the royal column and made a covenant with the LORD to obey him, to keep his laws and commands with all his heart and soul, and to put into practice the demands attached to the covenant, as written in the book. And all the people promised to keep the covenant.

⁴Then Josiah ordered the High Priest Hilkiah, his assistant priests, and the guards on duty at the entrance to the Temple to bring out of the Temple all the objects used in the worship of Baal, of the goddess Asherah, and of the stars. The king burned all these objects outside the city near Kidron Valley and then had the ashes taken to Bethel.

⁵He removed from office the priests that the kings of Judah had ordained to offer sacrifices on the pagan altars in the cities of Judah and in places near Jerusalem -- all the priests who offered sacrifices to Baal, to the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars.

⁶He removed from the Temple the symbol of the goddess Asherah, took it

out of the city to Kidron Valley, burned it, pounded its ashes to dust, and scattered it over the public burying ground.

⁷ He destroyed the living quarters in the Temple occupied by the temple prostitutes. (It was there that women wove robes used in the worship of Asherah.)

⁸ He brought to Jerusalem the priests who were in the cities of Judah, and throughout the whole country he desecrated the altars where they had offered sacrifices. He also tore down the altars dedicated to the goat demons near the gate built by Joshua, the city governor, which was to the left of the main gate as one enters the city.

⁹ Those priests were not allowed to serve in the Temple, but they could eat the unleavened bread provided for their fellow priests.

¹⁰ King Josiah also desecrated Topheth, the pagan place of worship in Hinnom Valley, so that no one could sacrifice his son or daughter as a burnt offering to the god Molech.

¹¹ He also removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the

worship of the sun, and he burned the chariots used in this worship. (These were kept in the temple courtyard, near the gate and not far from the living quarters of Nathan Melech, a high official.)

¹²The altars which the kings of Judah had built on the palace roof above King Ahaz quarters, King Josiah tore down, along with the altars put up by King Manasseh in the two courtyards of the Temple; he smashed the altars to bits and threw them into Kidron Valley.

¹³Josiah desecrated the altars that King Solomon had built east of Jerusalem, south of the Mount of Olives, for the worship of disgusting idols -- Astarte the goddess of Sidon, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Molech the god of Ammon.

¹⁴King Josiah broke the stone pillars to pieces, cut down the symbols of the goddess Asherah, and the ground where they had stood he covered with human bones.

¹⁵Josiah also tore down the place of worship in Bethel, which had been built by King Jeroboam son of Nebat, who led Israel into sin. Josiah pulled down the

altar, broke its stones into pieces, and pounded them to dust; he also burned the image of Asherah.

¹⁶Then Josiah looked around and saw some tombs there on the hill; he had the bones taken out of them and burned on the altar. In this way he desecrated the altar, doing what the prophet had predicted long before during the festival as King Jeroboam was standing by the altar. King Josiah looked around and saw the tomb of the prophet who had made this prediction.

¹⁷Whose tomb is that? he asked. The people of Bethel answered, It is the tomb of the prophet who came from Judah and predicted these things that you have done to this altar.

¹⁸Leave it as it is, Josiah ordered. His bones are not to be moved. So his bones were not moved, neither were those of the prophet who had come from Samaria.

¹⁹In every city of Israel King Josiah tore down all the pagan places of worship which had been built by the kings of Israel, who thereby aroused the LORD's

anger. He did to all those altars what he had done in Bethel.

²⁰He killed all the pagan priests on the altars where they served, and he burned human bones on every altar. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

²¹King Josiah ordered the people to celebrate the Passover in honor of the LORD their God, as written in the book of the covenant.

²²No Passover like this one had ever been celebrated by any of the kings of Israel or of Judah, since the time when judges ruled the nation.

²³Now at last, in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, the Passover was celebrated in Jerusalem.

²⁴In order to enforce the laws written in the book that the High Priest Hilkiah had found in the Temple, King Josiah removed from Jerusalem and the rest of Judah all the mediums and fortunetellers, and all the household gods, idols, and all other pagan objects of worship.

²⁵There had never been a king like him before, who served the LORD with all his heart, mind, and strength, obeying all

the Law of Moses; nor has there been a king like him since.

²⁶But the LORD's fierce anger had been aroused against Judah by what King Manasseh had done, and even now it did not die down.

²⁷The LORD said, I will do to Judah what I have done to Israel: I will banish the people of Judah from my sight, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and the Temple, the place I said was where I should be worshiped.

²⁸Everything else that King Josiah did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

²⁹While Josiah was king, King Neco of Egypt led an army to the Euphrates River to help the emperor of Assyria. King Josiah tried to stop the Egyptian army at Megiddo and was killed in battle.

³⁰His officials placed his body in a chariot and took it back to Jerusalem, where he was buried in the royal tombs. The people of Judah chose Josiah's son Joahaz and anointed him king.

³¹Joahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for three months. His

mother was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah from the city of Libnah.

³²Following the example of his ancestors, he sinned against the LORD.

³³His reign ended when King Neco of Egypt took him prisoner in Riblah, in the land of Hamath, and made Judah pay 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold as tribute.

³⁴King Neco made Josiah's son Eliakim king of Judah as successor to Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Joahaz was taken to Egypt by King Neco, and there he died.

³⁵King Jehoiakim collected a tax from the people in proportion to their wealth, in order to raise the amount needed to pay the tribute demanded by the king of Egypt.

³⁶Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother was Zebidah, the daughter of Pedaiiah from the town of Rumah.

³⁷Following the example of his ancestors, Jehoiakim sinned against the LORD.

24¹ While Jehoiakim was king, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia invaded Judah, and for three years Jehoiakim was forced to submit to his rule; then he rebelled.

²The LORD sent armed bands of Babylonians, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites against Jehoiakim to destroy Judah, as the LORD had said through his servants the prophets that he would do.

³This happened at the LORD's command, in order to banish the people of Judah from his sight because of all the sins that King Manasseh had committed,

⁴and especially because of all the innocent people he had killed. The LORD could not forgive Manasseh for that.

⁵Everything that Jehoiakim did is recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah.

⁶Jehoiakim died, and his son Jehoiachin succeeded him as king.

⁷The king of Egypt and his army never marched out of Egypt again, because the king of Babylonia now controlled all the territory that had belonged to Egypt, from the Euphrates River to the northern border of Egypt.

⁸Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for three months. His mother was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem.

⁹Following the example of his father, Jehoiachin sinned against the LORD.

¹⁰It was during his reign that the Babylonian army, commanded by King Nebuchadnezzar's officers, marched against Jerusalem and besieged it.

¹¹During the siege Nebuchadnezzar himself came to Jerusalem,

¹²and King Jehoiachin, along with his mother, his sons, his officers, and the palace officials, surrendered to the Babylonians. In the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign he took Jehoiachin prisoner

¹³and carried off to Babylon all the treasures in the Temple and the palace. As the LORD had foretold, Nebuchadnezzar broke up all the gold utensils which King Solomon had made for use in the Temple.

¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar carried away as prisoners the people of Jerusalem, all the royal princes, and all the leading men,

ten thousand in all. He also deported all the skilled workers, including the blacksmiths, leaving only the poorest of the people behind in Judah.

¹⁵Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon as a prisoner, together with Jehoiachin's mother, his wives, his officials, and the leading men of Judah.

¹⁶Nebuchadnezzar deported all the important men to Babylonia, seven thousand in all, and one thousand skilled workers, including the blacksmiths, all of them able-bodied men fit for military duty.

¹⁷Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah king of Judah and changed his name to Zedekiah.

¹⁸Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah from the city of Libnah.

¹⁹King Zedekiah sinned against the LORD, just as King Jehoiakim had done.

²⁰The LORD became so angry with the people of Jerusalem and Judah that he banished them from his sight.

25¹ Zedekiah rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, and so Nebuchadnezzar came with all his army and attacked Jerusalem on the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. They set up camp outside the city, built siege walls around it,

² and kept it under siege until Zedekiah's eleventh year.

³ On the ninth day of the fourth month of that same year, when the famine was so bad that the people had nothing left to eat,

⁴ the city walls were broken through. Although the Babylonians were surrounding the city, all the soldiers escaped during the night. They left by way of the royal garden, went through the gateway connecting the two walls, and fled in the direction of the Jordan Valley.

⁵ But the Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah, captured him in the plains near Jericho, and all his soldiers deserted him.

⁶ Zedekiah was taken to King Nebuchadnezzar, who was in the city

of Riblah, and there Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him.

⁷ While Zedekiah was looking on, his sons were put to death; then Nebuchadnezzar had Zedekiah's eyes put out, placed him in chains, and took him to Babylon.

⁸ On the seventh day of the fifth month of the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, Nebuzaradan, adviser to the king and commander of his army, entered Jerusalem.

⁹ He burned down the Temple, the palace, and the houses of all the important people in Jerusalem,

¹⁰ and his soldiers tore down the city walls.

¹¹ Then Nebuzaradan took away to Babylonia the people who were left in the city, the remaining skilled workers, and those who had deserted to the Babylonians.

¹² But he left in Judah some of the poorest people, who owned no property, and put them to work in the vineyards and fields.

¹³The Babylonians broke in pieces the bronze columns and the carts that were in the Temple, together with the large bronze tank, and they took all the bronze to Babylon.

¹⁴They also took away the shovels and the ash containers used in cleaning the altar, the tools used in tending the lamps, the bowls used for catching the blood from the sacrifices, the bowls used for burning incense, and all the other bronze articles used in the Temple service.

¹⁵They took away everything that was made of gold or silver, including the small bowls and the pans used for carrying live coals.

¹⁶The bronze objects that King Solomon had made for the Temple -- the two columns, the carts, and the large tank -- were too heavy to weigh.

¹⁷The two columns were identical: each one was 27 feet high, with a bronze capital on top, 4 1/2 feet high. All around each capital was a bronze grillwork decorated with pomegranates made of bronze.

¹⁸In addition, Nebuzaradan, the commanding officer, took away as prisoners Seraiah the High Priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank, and the three other important Temple officials.

¹⁹From the city he took the officer who had been in command of the troops, five of the king's personal advisers who were still in the city, the commander's assistant, who was in charge of military records, and sixty other important men.

²⁰Nebuzaradan took them to the king of Babylonia, who was in the city of Riblah

²¹in the territory of Hamath. There the king had them beaten and put to death. So the people of Judah were carried away from their land into exile.

²²King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia made Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, governor of Judah, and placed him in charge of all those who had not been taken away to Babylonia.

²³When the Judean officers and soldiers who had not surrendered heard about this, they joined Gedaliah at Mizpah. These officers were Ishmael son of

Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth from the town of Netophah, and Jezaniah from Maacah.

²⁴Gedaliah said to them, I give you my word that there is no need for you to be afraid of the Babylonian officials. Settle in this land, serve the king of Babylonia, and all will go well with you.

²⁵But in the seventh month of that year, Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama, a member of the royal family, went to Mizpah with ten men, attacked Gedaliah, and killed him. He also killed the Israelites and Babylonians who were there with him.

²⁶Then all the Israelites, rich and poor alike, together with the army officers, left and went to Egypt, because they were afraid of the Babylonians.

²⁷In the year that Evilmerodach became king of Babylonia, he showed kindness to King Jehoiachin of Judah by releasing him from prison. This happened on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh year after Jehoiachin had been taken away as prisoner.

²⁸ Evilmerodach treated him kindly and gave him a position of greater honor than he gave the other kings who were exiles with him in Babylonia.

²⁹ So Jehoiachin was permitted to change from his prison clothes and to dine at the king's table for the rest of his life.

³⁰ Each day, for as long as he lived, he was given a regular allowance for his needs.

1 Chronicles

1 ¹ Adam was the father of Seth, Seth was the father of Enosh, Enosh the father of Kenan,

² Kenan the father of Mahalalel, Mahalalel the father of Jared.

³ Jared was the father of Enoch, who was the father of Methuselah; Methuselah was the father of Lamech,

⁴ who was the father of Noah. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

⁵ The sons of Japheth -- Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras -- were the ancestors of the peoples who bear their names.

⁶ The descendants of Gomer were the people of Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁷ The descendants of Javan were the people of Elishah, Spain, Cyprus, and Rhodes.

⁸ The sons of Ham -- Cush, Egypt, Libya, and Canaan -- were the ancestors of the peoples who bear their names.

⁹The descendants of Cush were the people of Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were the people of Sheba and Dedan.

¹⁰(Cush had a son named Nimrod, who became the world's first great conqueror.)

¹¹The descendants of Egypt were the people of Lydia, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh,

¹²Pathrus, Casluh, and of Crete (from whom the Philistines were descended).

¹³Canaan's sons -- Sidon, the oldest, and Heth -- were the ancestors of the peoples who bear their names.

¹⁴Canaan was also the ancestor of the Jebusites, the Amorites, Girgashites,

¹⁵Hivites, Arkites, Sinites,

¹⁶Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites.

¹⁷Shem's sons -- Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshek -- were the ancestors of the peoples who bear their names.

¹⁸Arpachshad was the father of Shelah, who was the father of Eber.

¹⁹Eber had two sons; one was named Peleg, because during his time the

people of the world were divided, and the other was named Joktan.

²⁰The descendants of Joktan were the people of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

²¹Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

²²Ebal, Abimael, Sheba,

²³Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab.

²⁴The family line from Shem to Abram is as follows: Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah,

²⁵Eber, Peleg, Reu,

²⁶Serug, Nahor, Terah,

²⁷and Abram (also known as Abraham).

²⁸Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael.

²⁹The sons of Ishmael became the heads of twelve tribes: Nebaioth (from the name of Ishmael's oldest son), Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

³⁰Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema,

³¹Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

³²Abraham had a concubine named Keturah, who bore him six sons: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan had two sons: Sheba and Dedan.

³³ Midian had five sons: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah.

³⁴ Abraham's son Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob.

³⁵ Esau's sons were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

³⁶ Eliphaz became the ancestor of the following tribes: Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna, and Amalek.

³⁷ And Reuel became the ancestor of the tribes of Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

³⁸ The original inhabitants of Edom were descended from the following sons of Seir: Lotan, who was the ancestor of the clans of Hori and Homam. (Lotan had a sister named Timna.) Shobal, who was the ancestor of the clans of Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. Zibeon, who had two sons, Aiah and Anah. Anah was the father of Dishon, and Dishon was the ancestor of the clans of Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. Ezer, who was the ancestor of the clans of Bilhan, Zaavan, and Jaakan. Dishan, who was the ancestor of the clans of Uz and Aran.

³⁹ (1: 38)

⁴⁰ (1: 38)

⁴¹ (1: 38)

⁴² (1: 38)

⁴³ The following kings ruled the land of Edom one after the other, in the time before there were any kings in Israel: Bela son of Beor from Dinhabah Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah Husham from the region of Teman Hadad son of Bedad from Avith (he defeated the Midianites in a battle in the country of Moab) Samlah from Masrekah Shaul from Rehoboth-on-the-River Baal Hanan son of Achbor Hadad from Pau (his wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Mezahab)

⁴⁴ (1: 43)

⁴⁵ (1: 43)

⁴⁶ (1: 43)

⁴⁷ (1: 43)

⁴⁸ (1: 43)

⁴⁹ (1: 43)

⁵⁰ (1: 43)

⁵¹ The people of Edom were divided into the following tribes: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth,

⁵² Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,

⁵³ Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,

⁵⁴Magdiel, and Iram.

2¹Jacob had twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun,

²Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

³Judah had five sons in all. By his wife Bathshua, a Canaanite, he had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. His oldest son, Er, was so evil that the LORD killed him.

⁴By his daughter-in-law Tamar, Judah had two more sons, Perez and Zerah.

⁵Perez had two sons, Hezron and Hamul.

⁶His brother Zerah had five sons: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda.

⁷Achan son of Carmi, one of Zerah's descendants, brought disaster on the people of Israel by keeping loot that had been devoted to God.

⁸Ethan had one son, Azariah.

⁹Hezron had three sons: Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb.

¹⁰The family line from Ram to Jesse is as follows: Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon (a prominent man of the tribe of Judah),

¹¹Salmon, Boaz,

¹² Obed, and Jesse.

¹³ Jesse had seven sons. In order of age they were: Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah,

¹⁴ Nethanel, Raddai,

¹⁵ Ozem, and David.

¹⁶ He also had two daughters, Zeruiah and Abigail. Jesse's daughter Zeruiah had three sons: Abishai, Joab, and Asahel.

¹⁷ His other daughter Abigail married Jether, a descendant of Ishmael, and they had a son named Amasa.

¹⁸ Hezron's son Caleb married Azubah and had a daughter named Jerioth. She had three sons: Jeshar, Shobab, and Ardon.

¹⁹ After the death of Azubah, Caleb married Ephrath, and they had a son named Hur.

²⁰ Hur's son was Uri, and his grandson was Bezalel.

²¹ When Hezron was sixty years old, he married Machir's daughter, the sister of Gilead. They had a son named Segub,

²² and Segub had a son named Jair. Jair ruled twenty-three cities in the territory of Gilead.

²³ But the kingdoms of Geshur and Aram conquered sixty towns there, including the villages of Jair and Kenath, and the towns nearby. All the people who lived there were descendants of Machir, the father of Gilead.

²⁴ After Hezron died, his son Caleb married Ephrath, his father's widow. They had a son named Ashhur, who founded the town of Tekoa.

²⁵ Jerahmeel, the oldest son of Hezron, had five sons: Ram, the oldest, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah.

²⁶ Ram had three sons: Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. Jerahmeel had another wife, a woman named Atarah, and they had a son, Onam.

²⁷ (2: 26)

²⁸ Onam had two sons, Shammai and Jada, and Shammai also had two sons, Nadab and Abishur.

²⁹ Abishur married a woman named Abihail, and they had two sons, Ahban and Molid.

³⁰ Abishur's brother Nadab had two sons, Seled and Appaim, but Seled died without having any sons.

³¹ Appaim was the father of Ishi, Ishi was the father of Sheshan, and Sheshan the father of Ahlai.

³² Jada, the brother of Shammai, had two sons, Jether and Jonathan, but Jether died without having any sons.

³³ Jonathan had two sons, Peleth and Zaza. All these were descendants of Jerahmeel.

³⁴ Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. He had an Egyptian servant named Jarha,

³⁵ to whom he gave one of his daughters in marriage. They had a son named Attai.

³⁶ The family line from Attai to Elishama is as follows: Attai, Nathan, Zabad,

³⁷ Ephlal, Obed,

³⁸ Jehu, Azariah,

³⁹ Helez, Eleasah,

⁴⁰ Sismai, Shallum,

⁴¹ Jekamiah, and Elishama.

⁴² The oldest son of Caleb, Jerahmeel's brother, was named Mesha. Mesha was the father of Ziph, who was the father of Mareshah, who was the father of Hebron.

⁴³ Hebron had four sons: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema.

⁴⁴ Shema was the father of Raham and the grandfather of Jorkeam. Rekem, Shema's brother, was the father of Shammai,

⁴⁵ who was the father of Maon, who was the father of Bethzur.

⁴⁶ Caleb had a concubine named Ephah, and by her he had three more sons: Haran, Moza, and Gazez. Haran also had a son named Gazez.

⁴⁷ (A man named Jahdai had six sons: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.)

⁴⁸ Caleb had another concubine, Maacah, who bore him two sons, Sheber and Tirhanah.

⁴⁹ Later she had two more sons: Shaaph, who founded the town of Madmannah; and Shevah, who founded the towns of Machbenah and Gibeon. In addition, Caleb had a daughter named Achsah.

⁵⁰ The following are also descendants of Caleb. Hur was the oldest son of Caleb and his wife Ephrath. Hur's son Shobal founded Kiriath Jearim,

⁵¹ his second son Salma founded Bethlehem, and his third son Hareph founded Bethgader.

⁵² Shobal, the founder of Kiriath Jearim, was the ancestor of the people of Haroeh, of half the inhabitants of Menuhoth,

⁵³ and of the following clans that lived in Kiriath Jearim: the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites, and Mishraitites. (The people of the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol were members of these clans.)

⁵⁴ Salma, the founder of Bethlehem, was the ancestor of the people of Netophath, of Atroth Beth Joab, and of the Zorites, who were one of the two clans in Manahath.

⁵⁵ (The following clans of experts in writing and copying documents lived in the town of Jabez: the Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Sucathites. They were Kenites who had intermarried with the Rechabites.)

3¹ The following, in order of age, are David's sons who were born while he was in Hebron: Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel Daniel, whose mother was Abigail from Carmel Absalom, whose mother was Maacah,

daughter of King Talmi of Geshur
Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith
Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital
Ithream, whose mother was Eglah

² (3: 1)

³ (3: 1)

⁴All six were born in Hebron during the
seven and a half years that David ruled
there. In Jerusalem he ruled as king for
thirty-three years,

⁵and many sons were born to him
there. His wife Bathsheba, daughter of
Ammiel, bore him four sons: Shimea,
Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon.

⁶He had nine other sons: I Bhar, Elishua,
Elpelet,

⁷Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,

⁸Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

⁹In addition to all these sons, David
had sons by his concubines. He also had
a daughter, Tamar.

¹⁰This is the line of King Solomon's
descendants from father to son:
Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa,
Jehoshaphat,

¹¹Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash,

¹²Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham,

¹³Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh,

¹⁴ Amon, and Josiah.

¹⁵ Josiah had four sons: Johanan, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Joahaz.

¹⁶ Jehoiakim had two sons: Jehoiachin and Zedekiah.

¹⁷ These are the descendants of King Jehoiachin, who was taken prisoner by the Babylonians. Jehoiachin had seven sons: Shealtiel,

¹⁸ Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

¹⁹ Pedaiah had two sons, Zerubbabel and Shimei. Zerubbabel was the father of two sons, Meshullam and Hananiah, and one daughter, Shelomith.

²⁰ He had five other sons: Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab Hesus.

²¹ Hananiah had two sons, Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah. Jeshaiiah was the father of Rephaiah, who was the father of Arnan, the father of Obadiah, the father of Shecaniah.

²² Shecaniah had one son, Shemaiah, and five grandsons: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat.

²³ Neariah had three sons: Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam.

²⁴ Elioenai had seven sons: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiiah, and Anani.

4¹ These are some of the descendants of Judah: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.

² Shobal was the father of Reaiah, who was the father of Jahath, the father of Ahumai and Lahad, the ancestors of the people who lived in Zorah.

³ Hur was the oldest son of his father Caleb's wife Ephrath, and his descendants founded the city of Bethlehem. Hur had three sons: Etam, Penuel, and Ezer. Etam had three sons: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash, and one daughter, Hazzelponi. Penuel founded the city of Gedor, and Ezer founded Hushah.

⁴ (4: 3)

⁵ Ashhur, who founded the town of Tekoa, had two wives, Helah and Naarah.

⁶ He and Naarah had four sons: Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and Haahashtari.

⁷ Ashhur and Helah had three sons: Zereth, Izhar, and Ethnan.

⁸Koz was the father of Anub and Zobebah, and the ancestor of the clans descended from Aharhel son of Harum.

⁹There was a man named Jabez, who was the most respected member of his family. His mother had given him the name Jabez, because his birth had been very painful.

¹⁰But Jabez prayed to the God of Israel, Bless me, God, and give me much land. Be with me and keep me from anything evil that might cause me pain. And God gave him what he prayed for.

¹¹Caleb, the brother of Shuhah, had a son, Mehir. Mehir was the father of Eshton,

¹²who had three sons: Bethrapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah. Tehinnah was the founder of the city of Nahash. The descendants of these men lived in Recah.

¹³Kenaz had two sons, Othniel and Seraiah. Othniel also had two sons, Hathath and Meonothai.

¹⁴Meonothai was the father of Ophrah. Seraiah was the father of Joab, the founder of Handcraft Valley, where all the people were skilled workers.

¹⁵ Caleb son of Jephunneh had three sons: Iru, Elah, and Naam. And Elah was the father of Kenaz.

¹⁶ Jehallelel had four sons: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.

¹⁷ Ezrah had four sons: Jether, Mered, Ephraim, and Jalon. Mered married Bithiah, a daughter of the king of Egypt, and they had a daughter, Miriam, and two sons, Shammai and Ishbah. Ishbah founded the town of Eshtemoa. Mered also married a woman from the tribe of Judah, and they had three sons: Jered, who founded the town of Gedor; Heber, founder of the town of Socoh; and Jekuthiel, founder of the town of Zanoah.

¹⁸ (4: 17)

¹⁹ Hodiah married the sister of Naham. Their descendants founded the clan of Garm, which lived in the town of Keilah, and the clan of Maacath, which lived in the town of Eshtemoa.

²⁰ Shimon had four sons: Amnon, Rinnah, Benhanan, and Tilon. Ishi had two sons: Zoheth and Benzoheth.

²¹ Shelah was one of Judah's sons. His descendants included Er, who founded the town of Lecah; Laadah, founder of

the town of Mareshah; the clan of linen weavers, who lived in the town of Beth Ashbea;

²² Jokim and the people who lived in the town of Cozeba; and Joash and Saraph, who married Moabite women and then settled in Bethlehem. (These traditions are very old.)

²³ They were potters in the service of the king and lived in the towns of Netaim and Gederah.

²⁴ Simeon had five sons: Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul.

²⁵ Shaul's son was Shallum, his grandson was Mibsam, and his great-grandson was Mishma.

²⁶ Then from Mishma the line descended through Hammuel, Zaccur, and Shimei.

²⁷ Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but his relatives had fewer children, and the tribe of Simeon did not grow as much as the tribe of Judah did.

²⁸ Down to the time of King David the descendants of Simeon lived in the following towns: Beersheba, Moladah, Hazarshual,

²⁹ Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad,

³⁰ Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag,

³¹ Beth Marcaboth, Hazarsusim, Bethbiri, and Shaaraim.

³² They also lived in five other places: Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan,

³³ and the surrounding villages, as far southwest as the town of Baalath. These are the records which they kept of their families and of the places where they lived.

³⁴ The following men were the heads of their clans: Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah, Joel, Jehu (the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel), Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, Ziza (the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, a descendant of Jedaiah, Shimri, and Shemaiah). Because their families continued to grow,

³⁵ (4: 34)

³⁶ (4: 34)

³⁷ (4: 34)

³⁸ (4: 34)

³⁹ they spread out westward almost to Gerar and pastured their sheep on the eastern side of the valley in which that city is located.

⁴⁰They found plenty of fertile pasture lands there in a stretch of open country that was quiet and peaceful. The people who had lived there before were Hamites.

⁴¹In the time of King Hezekiah of Judah, the men named above went to Gerar and destroyed the tents and huts of the people who lived there. They drove the people out and settled there permanently because there was plenty of pasture for their sheep.

⁴²Five hundred other members of the tribe of Simeon went east to Edom. They were led by the sons of Ishi: Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel.

⁴³There they killed the surviving Amalekites, and they have lived there ever since.

5¹ These are the descendants of Reuben, the oldest of Jacob's sons. (Because he had sex with one of his father's concubines, he lost the rights belonging to the first-born son, and those rights were given to Joseph.

²It was the tribe of Judah, however, that became the strongest and provided a ruler for all the tribes.)

³Reuben, the oldest of Jacob's sons, had four sons: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

⁴These are the descendants of Joel from generation to generation: Shemaiah, Gog, Shimei, Micah, Reaiah, Baal, and Beerah. The Assyrian emperor, Tiglath Pileser, captured Beerah, a leader of the tribe, and deported him.

⁵(5: 4)

⁶(5: 4)

⁷The family records list the following clan leaders in the tribe of Reuben: Jeiel, Zechariah,

⁸and Bela, the son of Azaz and grandson of Shema, of the clan of Joel. This clan lived in Aroer and in the territory from there north to Nebo and Baal Meon.

⁹They had large herds in the land of Gilead, and so they occupied the land as far east as the desert that stretches all the way to the Euphrates River.

¹⁰In the time of King Saul the tribe of Reuben attacked the Hagrites, killed them in battle, and occupied their land in the eastern part of Gilead.

¹¹ The tribe of Gad lived to the north of Reuben in the land of Bashan as far east as Salecah.

¹² Joel was the founder of the leading clan, and Shapham of the second most important clan. Janai and Shaphat were founders of other clans in Bashan.

¹³ The other members of the tribe belonged to the following seven clans: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber.

¹⁴ They were descendants of Abihail son of Huri, whose ancestors were traced back as follows: Abihail, Huri, Jaroah, Gilead, Michael, Jeshishai, Jahdo, Buz.

¹⁵ Ahi, the son of Abdiel and grandson of Guni, was head of these clans.

¹⁶ They lived in the territory of Bashan and Gilead, in the towns there and all over the pasture lands of Sharon.

¹⁷ (These records were compiled in the days of King Jotham of Judah and King Jeroboam II of Israel.)

¹⁸ In the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh there were 44,760 soldiers, well-trained in the use of shields, swords, and bows.

¹⁹They went to war against the Hagrite tribes of Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab.

²⁰They put their trust in God and prayed to him for help, and God answered their prayers and made them victorious over the Hagarites and their allies.

²¹They captured from the enemy 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, and 2,000 donkeys, and took 100,000 prisoners of war.

²²They killed many of the enemy, because the war was God's will. And they went on living in that territory until the exile.

²³The people of East Manasseh settled in the territory of Bashan as far north as Baal Hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon, and their population increased greatly.

²⁴The following were the heads of their clans: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were all outstanding soldiers, well-known leaders of their clans.

²⁵But the people were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors and deserted him to worship the gods of the nations whom God had driven out of the land.

²⁶ So God caused Emperor Pul of Assyria (also known as Tiglath Pileser) to invade their country. He deported the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh and settled them permanently in Halah, Habor, and Hara, and by the Gozan River.

6 ¹ Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

² Kohath had four sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

³ Amram had two sons, Aaron and Moses, and one daughter, Miriam. Aaron had four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

⁴ The descendants of Eleazar from generation to generation are as follows: Phinehas, Abishua,

⁵ Bukki, Uzzi,

⁶ Zerariah, Meraioth,

⁷ Amariah, Ahitub,

⁸ Zadok, Ahimaaz,

⁹ Azariah, Johanan,

¹⁰ Azariah (the one who served in the Temple which King Solomon built in Jerusalem),

¹¹ Amariah, Ahitub,

¹² Zadok, Shallum,

¹³ Hilkiah, Azariah,

¹⁴ Seraiah, Jehozadak.

¹⁵ King Nebuchadnezzar deported Jehozadak along with the other people of Judah and Jerusalem whom the LORD sent into exile.

¹⁶ Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹⁷ Each of them also had sons. Gershon was the father of Libni and Shimei;

¹⁸ Kohath was the father of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel;

¹⁹ and Merari was the father of Mahli and Mushi.

²⁰ These are the descendants of Gershon from generation to generation: Libni, Jahath, Zimmah,

²¹ Joah, Iddo, Zerah, Jeatherai.

²² These are the descendants of Kohath from generation to generation: Amminadab, Korah, Assir,

²³ Elkanah, Ebiasaph, Assir,

²⁴ Tahath, Uriel, Uziah, Shaul.

²⁵ Elkanah had two sons, Amasai and Ahimoth.

²⁶ These are Ahimoth's descendants from generation to generation: Elkanah, Zophai, Nahath,

²⁷ Eliab, Jeroham, Elkanah.

²⁸Samuel had two sons: Joel, the older, and Abijah, the younger.

²⁹These are the descendants of Merari from generation to generation: Mahli, Libni, Shimei, Uzzah,

³⁰Shimea, Haggiah, Asaiah.

³¹These are the men whom King David put in charge of the music at the place of worship in Jerusalem after the Covenant Box was moved there.

³²They took regular turns of duty at the Tent of the LORD's presence during the time before King Solomon built the Temple.

³³The family lines of those who held this office are as follows: The clan of Kohath: Heman, the leader of the first choir, was the son of Joel. His family line went back to Jacob as follows: Heman, Joel, Samuel,

³⁴Elkanah, Jeroham, Eliel, Toah,

³⁵Zuph, Elkanah, Mahath, Amasai,

³⁶Elkanah, Joel, Azariah, Zephaniah,

³⁷Tahath, Assir, Ebiasaph, Korah,

³⁸Izhar, Kohath, Levi, Jacob.

³⁹Asaph was leader of the second choir. His family line went back to Levi as follows: Asaph, Berechiah, Shimea,

⁴⁰ Michael, Baaseiah, Malchijah,

⁴¹ Ethni, Zerah, Adaijah,

⁴² Ethan, Zimmah, Shimei,

⁴³ Jahath, Gershon, Levi.

⁴⁴ Ethan of the clan of Merari was the leader of the third choir. His family line went back to Levi as follows: Ethan, Kishi, Abdi, Malluch,

⁴⁵ Hashabiah, Amaziah, Hilkiah,

⁴⁶ Amzi, Bani, Shemer,

⁴⁷ Mahli, Mushi, Merari, Levi.

⁴⁸ The other Levites were assigned all the other duties at the place of worship.

⁴⁹ Aaron and his descendants presented the offerings of incense and offered the sacrifices that were burnt on the altar. They were responsible for all the worship in the Most Holy Place and for the sacrifices by which God forgives Israel's sins. They did all this in accordance with the instructions given by Moses, God's servant.

⁵⁰ This is the line of Aaron's descendants: Eleazar, Phinehas, Abishua,

⁵¹ Bukki, Uzzi, Zerahiah,

⁵² Meraioth, Amariah, Ahitub,

⁵³ Zadok, Ahimaaz.

⁵⁴This is the territory assigned to the descendants of Aaron of the clan of Kohath. They received the first share of the land assigned to the Levites.

⁵⁵This included Hebron in the territory of Judah and the pasture lands around it.

⁵⁶The fields and villages, however, that belonged to the city were assigned to Caleb son of Jephunneh.

⁵⁷The following towns were assigned to Aaron's descendants: Hebron, a city of refuge, Jattir, and the towns of Libnah, Eshtemoa, Hilen, Debir, Ashan, and Beth Shemesh, with their pasture lands.

⁵⁸(6: 57)

⁵⁹(6: 57)

⁶⁰In the territory of Benjamin they were assigned the following towns with their pasture lands: Geba, Alemeth, and Anathoth. This made a total of thirteen towns for all their families to live in.

⁶¹Ten towns in the territory of West Manasseh were assigned by lot to the rest of the clan of Kohath, family by family.

⁶²To the clan of Gershon, family by family, were assigned thirteen towns

in the territories of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and East Manasseh in Bashan.

⁶³In the same way, twelve towns in the territories of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun were assigned to the clan of Merari, family by family.

⁶⁴In this way the people of Israel assigned towns for the Levites to live in, together with the pasture lands around the towns.

⁶⁵(The towns in the territories of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, mentioned above, were also assigned by drawing lots.)

⁶⁶Some of the families of the clan of Kohath were assigned towns and pasture lands in the territory of Ephraim:

⁶⁷Shechem, the city of refuge in the hills of Ephraim, Gezer,

⁶⁸Jokmeam, Beth Horon,

⁶⁹Aijalon, and Gath Rimmon.

⁷⁰In the territory of West Manasseh they were assigned the towns of Aner and Bileam with the surrounding pasture lands.

⁷¹The families of the clan of Gershon were assigned the following towns, with the surrounding pasture lands: In the

territory of East Manasseh: Golan in Bashan, and Ashtaroth.

⁷²In the territory of Issachar: Kedesh, Daberath,

⁷³Ramoth, and Anem.

⁷⁴In the territory of Asher: Mashal, Abdon,

⁷⁵Hukok, and Rehob.

⁷⁶In the territory of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon, and Kiriathaim.

⁷⁷The remaining families of the clan of Merari were assigned the following towns with the surrounding pasture lands: In the territory of Zebulun: Rimmono and Tabor.

⁷⁸In the territory of Reuben, east of the Jordan River beyond Jericho: Bezer on the plateau, Jahzah,

⁷⁹Kedemoth, and Mephaath.

⁸⁰In the territory of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim,

⁸¹Heshbon, and Jazer.

7 ¹Issachar had four sons: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

²Tola had six sons: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Shemuel.

They were heads of families of the clan of Tola and were famous soldiers. At the

time of King David their descendants numbered 22,600.

³Uzzi had one son, Izrahiah. Izrahiah and his four sons, Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah, were all heads of families.

⁴They had so many wives and children that their descendants were able to provide 36,000 men for military duty.

⁵The official records of all the families of the tribe of Issachar listed 87,000 men eligible for military duty.

⁶Benjamin had three sons: Bela, Becher, and Jediael.

⁷Bela had five sons: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri. They were heads of families in the clan and were all famous soldiers. Their descendants included 22,034 men eligible for military duty.

⁸Becher had nine sons: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth.

⁹The official record of their descendants by families listed 20,200 men eligible for military duty.

¹⁰Jediael had one son, Bilhan, and Bilhan had seven sons: Jeush, Benjamin,

Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar.

¹¹ They were heads of families in the clan and were all famous soldiers. Their descendants included 17,200 men eligible for military duty.

¹² Shuppim and Huppim also belonged to this tribe. Dan had one son, Hushim.

¹³ Naphtali had four sons: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum. (They were descendants of Bilhah.)

¹⁴ By his Aramean concubine, Manasseh had two sons, Asriel and Machir. Machir was the father of Gilead.

¹⁵ Machir found a wife for Huppim and one for Shuppim. His sister's name was Maacah. Machir's second son was Zelophehad, and he had only daughters.

¹⁶ Maacah, Machir's wife, gave birth to two sons, whom they named Peresh and Sheresh. Peresh had two sons, Ulam and Rakem,

¹⁷ and Ulam had a son named Bedan. These are all descendants of Gilead, the son of Machir and grandson of Manasseh.

¹⁸ Gilead's sister Hammolecheth had three sons: Ishod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.

¹⁹(Shemida had four sons: Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.)

²⁰These are the descendants of Ephraim from generation to generation: Shuthelah, Bered, Tahath, Eleadah, Tahath,

²¹Zabad, Shuthelah. Ephraim had two other sons besides Shuthelah: Ezer and Elead, who were killed when they tried to steal the livestock belonging to the native inhabitants of Gath.

²²Their father Ephraim mourned for them for many days, and his relatives came to comfort him.

²³Then he had intercourse with his wife again, and she became pregnant and had a son. They named him Beriah, because of the trouble that had come to their family.

²⁴Ephraim had a daughter named Sheerah. She built the towns of Upper and Lower Beth Horon, and Uzen Sheerah.

²⁵Ephraim also had a son named Rephah, whose descendants were as follows: Resheph, Telah, Tahan,

²⁶Ladan, Ammihud, Elishama,

²⁷Nun, Joshua.

²⁸The territory which they took and settled included Bethel and the towns around it, as far east as Naaran and as far west as Gezer and the towns around it. It also included the cities of Shechem and Ayyah, and the towns around them.

²⁹The descendants of Manasseh controlled the cities of Beth Shan, Taanach, Megiddo, and Dor, and the towns around them. All these are the places where the descendants of Joseph son of Jacob lived.

³⁰These are the descendants of Asher. He had four sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah; and one daughter, Serah.

³¹Beriah had two sons, Heber and Malchiel. (Malchiel founded the city of Birzaith.)

³²Heber had three sons: Japhlet, Shomer, and Hotham; and one daughter, Shua.

³³Japhlet also had three sons: Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath.

³⁴His brother Shomer had three sons: Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram.

³⁵His brother Hotham had four sons: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.

³⁶The descendants of Zophah were Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah,

³⁷Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Beera.

³⁸The descendants of Jether were Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara,

³⁹and the descendants of Ulla were Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia.

⁴⁰All of these were descendants of Asher. They were heads of families, famous fighting men, outstanding leaders. Asher's descendants included 26,000 men eligible for military duty.

8¹ Benjamin had five sons. In order of age they were Bela, Ashbel, Aharah,

²Nohah, and Rapha.

³The descendants of Bela were Addar, Gera, Abihud,

⁴Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah,

⁵Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram.

⁶The descendants of Ehud were Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera. They were heads of families that lived in Geba, but which were forced out and went to live in Manahath. Gera, the father of Uzza and Ahihud, led them in this move.

⁷(8: 6)

⁸Shaharaim divorced two wives, Hushim and Baara. Later, when he lived in the country of Moab, he married Hodesh and had seven sons: Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam,

⁹(8: 8)

¹⁰Jeuz, Sachia, and Mirmah. His sons all became heads of families.

¹¹He also had two sons by Hushim: Abitub and Elpaal.

¹²Elpaal had three sons: Eber, Misham, and Shemed. It was Shemed who built the cities of Ono and Lod and the surrounding villages.

¹³Beriah and Shema were heads of families that settled in the city of Aijalon and drove out the people who lived in the city of Gath.

¹⁴Beriah's descendants included Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth,

¹⁵Zebadiah, Arad, Eder,

¹⁶Michael, Ishpah, and Joha.

¹⁷Elpaal's descendants included Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber,

¹⁸Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab.

¹⁹Shimei's descendants included Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi,

²⁰Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel,

²¹ Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath.

²² Shashak's descendants included Ishpan, Eber, Eliel,

²³ Abdon, Zichri, Hanan,

²⁴ Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah,

²⁵ Iphdeiah, and Penuel.

²⁶ Jeroham's descendants included Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah,

²⁷ Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri.

²⁸ These were the ancestral heads of families and their principal descendants who lived in Jerusalem.

²⁹ Jeiel founded the city of Gibeon and settled there. His wife was named Maacah,

³⁰ and his oldest son, Abdon. His other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab,

³¹ Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah,

³² and Mikloth, the father of Shimeah. Their descendants lived in Jerusalem near other families of their clan.

³³ Ner was the father of Kish, and Kish was the father of King Saul. Saul had four sons: Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal.

³⁴ Jonathan was the father of Meribbaal, who was the father of Micah.

³⁵ Micah had four sons: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz.

³⁶ Ahaz was the father of Jehoaddah, who was the father of three sons: Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was the father of Moza,

³⁷ Moza the father of Binea, Binea of Raphah, Raphah of Eleasah, and Eleasah of Azel.

³⁸ Azel had six sons: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan.

³⁹ Azel's brother Eshek had three sons: Ulam, Jeush, and Eliphelet.

⁴⁰ Ulam's sons were outstanding soldiers and archers. He had a hundred and fifty sons and grandsons in all. All those named above were members of the tribe of Benjamin.

9¹ All the people of Israel were listed according to their families, and this information was recorded in The Book of the Kings of Israel. The people of Judah had been deported to Babylon as punishment for their sins.

² The first to return to their property in the cities included Israelite citizens, priests, Levites, and Temple workers.

³ People from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh went to live in Jerusalem.

⁴ There were 690 families of the tribe of Judah who lived in Jerusalem. The descendants of Judah's son Perez had as their leader Uthai, the son of Ammihud and grandson of Omri. His other ancestors included Imri and Bani. The descendants of Judah's son Shelah had as their leader Asaiah, who was the head of his family. The descendants of Judah's son Zerah had Jeuel as their leader.

⁵ (9: 4)

⁶ (9: 4)

⁷ The following members of the tribe of Benjamin lived in Jerusalem: Sallu son of Meshullam, who was the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah Ibneiah son of Jeroham Elah, the son of Uzzi and grandson of Michri Meshullam son of Shephatiah, who was the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah

⁸ (9: 7)

⁹ There were 956 families of this tribe living there. All the men named above were heads of families.

¹⁰The following priests lived in Jerusalem: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, and Jachin Azariah son of Hilkiah (the chief official in the Temple), whose ancestors included Meshullam, Zadok, Meraioth, and Ahitub Adaiah son of Jeroham, whose ancestors included Pashhur and Malchijah Maasai son of Adiel, whose ancestors included Jahzerah, Meshullam, Meshillemith, and Immer

¹¹ (9: 10)

¹² (9: 10)

¹³The priests who were heads of families totaled 1,760. They were experts in all the work carried on in the Temple.

¹⁴The following Levites lived in Jerusalem: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, whose ancestors included Azrikam and Hashabiah, of the clan of Merari Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal Mattaniah son of Mica, whose ancestors included Zichri and Asaph Obadiah son of Shemaiah, whose ancestors included Galal and Jeduthun Berechiah, the son of Asa and grandson of Elkanah, who lived in the territory that belonged to the town of Netophah

¹⁵ (9: 14)

¹⁶ (9: 14)

¹⁷ The following Temple guards lived in Jerusalem: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, and Ahiman. Shallum was their leader.

¹⁸ Down to that time members of their clans had been stationed at the eastern entrance to the King's Gate. Formerly they had stood guard at the gates to the camps of the Levites.

¹⁹ Shallum, the son of Kore and grandson of Ebiasaph, together with his fellow members of the clan of Korah, was responsible for guarding the entrance to the Tent of the LORD's presence, just as their ancestors had been when they were in charge of the LORD's camp.

²⁰ Phinehas son of Eleazar -- may the LORD be with him! -- had supervised them at one time.

²¹ Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was also a guard at the entrance to the Tent of the LORD's presence.

²² In all, 212 men were chosen as guards for the entrances and gates. They were registered according to the villages where they lived. It was King David and

the prophet Samuel who had put their ancestors in these responsible positions.

²³They and their descendants continued to guard the gates to the Temple.

²⁴There was a gate facing in each direction, north, south, east, and west, and each had a chief guard.

²⁵These guards were assisted by their relatives, who lived in the villages and who had to take turns at guard duty for seven days at a time.

²⁶The four chief guards were Levites and had the final responsibility. They were also responsible for the rooms in the Temple and for the supplies kept there.

²⁷They lived near the Temple, because it was their duty to guard it and to open the gates every morning.

²⁸Other Levites were responsible for the utensils used in worship. They checked them out and checked them back in every time they were used.

²⁹Others were in charge of the other sacred equipment, and of the flour, wine, olive oil, incense, and spices.

³⁰But the responsibility for mixing the spices belonged to the priests.

³¹ A Levite named Mattithiah, oldest son of Shallum, of the clan of Korah, was responsible for preparing the baked offerings.

³² Members of the clan of Kohath were responsible for preparing the sacred bread for the Temple every Sabbath.

³³ Some Levite families were responsible for the Temple music. The heads of these families lived in some of the Temple buildings and were free from other duties, because they were on call day and night.

³⁴ The men named above were heads of Levite families, according to their ancestral lines. They were the leaders who lived in Jerusalem.

³⁵ Jeiel founded the city of Gibeon and settled there. His wife was named Maacah.

³⁶ His oldest son was Abdon, and his other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab,

³⁷ Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth,

³⁸ the father of Shimeah. Their descendants lived in Jerusalem near other families of their clan.

³⁹Ner was the father of Kish, and Kish was the father of Saul. Saul had four sons: Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal.

⁴⁰Jonathan was the father of Meribbaal, who was the father of Micah.

⁴¹Micah had four sons: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz.

⁴²Ahaz was the father of Jarah, who was the father of three sons: Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was the father of Moza,

⁴³Moza the father of Binea, Binea of Rephaiah, Rephaiah of Eleasah, and Eleasah of Azel.

⁴⁴Azel had six sons: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan.

10¹The Philistines fought a battle against the Israelites on Mount Gilboa. Many Israelites were killed there, and the rest of them, including King Saul and his sons, fled.

²But the Philistines caught up with them and killed three of Saul's sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua.

³The fighting was heavy around Saul, and he was hit by enemy arrows and badly wounded.

⁴ He said to the young man carrying his weapons, Draw your sword and kill me, to keep these godless Philistines from gloating over me. But the young man was too terrified to do it. So Saul took his own sword and threw himself on it.

⁵ The young man saw that Saul was dead, so he too threw himself on his sword and died.

⁶ So Saul and his three sons all died together, and none of his descendants ever ruled.

⁷ When the Israelites who lived in Jezreel Valley heard that the army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and ran off. Then the Philistines came and occupied them.

⁸ The day after the battle the Philistines went to plunder the corpses, and they found the bodies of Saul and his sons lying on Mount Gilboa.

⁹ They cut off Saul's head, stripped off his armor, and sent messengers with them throughout Philistia to tell the good news to their idols and to their people.

¹⁰They put his weapons in one of their temples and hung his head in the temple of their god Dagon.

¹¹When the people of Jabesh in Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul,

¹²the bravest men went and got the bodies of Saul and his sons and took them to Jabesh. They buried them there under an oak and fasted for seven days.

¹³Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD. He disobeyed the LORD's commands; he tried to find guidance by consulting the spirits of the dead

¹⁴instead of consulting the LORD. So the LORD killed him and gave control of the kingdom to David son of Jesse.

11 ¹All the people of Israel went to David at Hebron and said to him, We are your own flesh and blood.

²In the past, even when Saul was still our king, you led the people of Israel in battle, and the LORD your God promised you that you would lead his people and be their ruler.

³So all the leaders of Israel came to King David at Hebron. He made a sacred alliance with them, they anointed him,

and he became king of Israel, just as the LORD had promised through Samuel.

⁴King David and all the Israelites went and attacked the city of Jerusalem. It was then known as Jebus, and the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land, were still living there.

⁵The Jebusites told David he would never get inside the city, but David captured their fortress of Zion, and it became known as David's City.

⁶David said, The first man to kill a Jebusite will be commander of the army! Joab, whose mother was Zeruah, led the attack and became commander.

⁷Because David went to live in the fortress, it came to be called David's City.

⁸He rebuilt the city, starting at the place where land was filled in on the east side of the hill, and Joab restored the rest of the city.

⁹David grew stronger and stronger, because the LORD Almighty was with him.

¹⁰This is the list of David's famous soldiers. Together with the rest of the people of Israel, they helped him become

king, as the LORD had promised, and they kept his kingdom strong.

¹¹First was Jashobeam of the clan of Hachmon, the leader of The Three. He fought with his spear against three hundred men and killed them all in one battle.

¹²Next among the famous Three was Eleazar son of Dodo, of the clan of Ahoh.

¹³He fought on David's side against the Philistines at the battle of Pas Dammim. He was in a barley field when the Israelites started to run away,

¹⁴so he and his men took a stand in the middle of the field and fought the Philistines. The LORD gave him a great victory.

¹⁵One day three of the thirty leading soldiers went to a rock where David was staying near Adullam Cave, while a band of Philistines was camping in Rephaim Valley.

¹⁶At that time David was on a fortified hill, and a group of Philistines had occupied Bethlehem.

¹⁷David got homesick and said, How I wish someone would bring me a drink

of water from the well by the gate in Bethlehem!

¹⁸The three famous soldiers forced their way through the Philistine camp, drew some water from the well, and brought it back to David. But he would not drink it; instead he poured it out as an offering to the LORD

¹⁹and said, I could never drink this! It would be like drinking the blood of these men who risked their lives! So he refused to drink it. These were the brave deeds of the three famous soldiers.

²⁰Joab's brother Abishai was the leader of The Famous Thirty. He fought with his spear against three hundred men and killed them, and became famous among The Thirty.

²¹He was the most famous of The Thirty and became their leader, but he was not as famous as The Three.

²²Benaiah son of Jehoiada from Kabzeel was a famous soldier; he did many brave deeds, including killing two great Moabite warriors. He once went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.

²³He also killed an Egyptian, a huge man seven and a half feet tall, who was armed with a gigantic spear. Benaiah attacked him with a club, snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with it.

²⁴Those were the brave deeds of Benaiah, who was one of The Thirty.

²⁵He was outstanding among The Thirty, but not as famous as The Three. David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

²⁶These are the other outstanding soldiers: Asahel, Joab's brother Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem Shammoth from Harod Helez from Pelet Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa Abiezer from Anathoth Sibbecai from Hushah Ilai from Ahoh Maharai from Netophah Heled son of Baanah from Netophah Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah in Benjamin Benaiah from Pirathon Hurai from the valleys near Gaash Abiel from Arbah Azmaveth from Bahurum Eliahba from Shaalbon Hashem from Gizon Jonathan son of Shagee from Harar Ahiam son of Sachar from Harar Eliphai son of Ur Hopher from Mecherah Ahijah from Pelon Hezro from

Carmel Naarai son of Ezbai Joel brother of Nathan Mibhar son of Hagri Zelek from Ammon Naharai, Joab's armorbearer, from Beeroth Ira and Gareb from Jattir Uriah the Hittite Zabad son of Ahlai Adina son of Shiza (a leading member of the tribe of Reuben, with his own group of thirty soldiers) Hanan son of Maacah Joshaphat from Mithan Uzzia from Ashterah Shamma and Jeiel, sons of Hotham, from Aroer Jediael and Joha, sons of Shimri, from Tiz Eliel from Mahavah Jeribai and Joshaviah, sons of Elnaam Ithmah from Moab Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel from Zobah

²⁷ (11: 26)

²⁸ (11: 26)

²⁹ (11: 26)

³⁰ (11: 26)

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³³ (11: 26)

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⁴⁴ (11: 26)

⁴⁵ (11: 26)

⁴⁶ (11: 26)

⁴⁷ (11: 26)

12¹ David was living in Ziklag, where he had gone to escape from King Saul. There he was joined by many experienced, reliable soldiers,

² members of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Saul belonged. They could shoot arrows and sling stones either right-handed or left-handed.

³ They were under the command of Ahiezer and Joash, sons of Shemaah, from Gibeah. These were the soldiers: Jeziel and Pelet, sons of Azmaveth Beracah and Jehu from Anathoth Ishmaiah from Gibeon, a famous soldier and one of the leaders of The Thirty Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johannan, and Jozabad, from Gederah Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, and Shephatiah, from Hariph Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, of the clan of

Korah Joelah and Zebadiah, sons of Jeroham, from Gedor

⁴ (12: 3)

⁵ (12: 3)

⁶ (12: 3)

⁷ (12: 3)

⁸ These are the names of the famous, experienced soldiers from the tribe of Gad who joined David's troops when he was at the desert fort. They were experts with shields and spears, as fierce looking as lions and as quick as mountain deer.

⁹ They were ranked in the following order: Ezer, Obadiah, Eliab, Mishmannah, Jeremiah, Attai, Eliel, Johanan, Elzabad, Jeremiah, and Machbannai.

¹⁰ (12: 9)

¹¹ (12: 9)

¹² (12: 9)

¹³ (12: 9)

¹⁴ Some of these men from the tribe of Gad were senior officers in command of a thousand men, and others were junior officers in command of a hundred.

¹⁵ In the first month of one year, the time when the Jordan River overflowed its banks, they crossed the river,

scattering the people who lived in the valleys both east and west of the river.

¹⁶Once a group of men from the tribes of Benjamin and Judah went out to the fort where David was.

¹⁷David went to meet them and said, If you are coming as friends to help me, you are welcome here. Join us! But if you intend to betray me to my enemies, even though I have not tried to hurt you, the God of our ancestors will know it and punish you.

¹⁸God's spirit took control of one of them, Amasai, who later became the commander of The Thirty, and he called out, David son of Jesse, we are yours! Success to you and those who help you! God is on your side. David welcomed them and made them officers in his army.

¹⁹Some soldiers from the tribe of Manasseh went over to David's side when he was marching out with the Philistines to fight King Saul. Actually he did not help the Philistines, for their kings were afraid that he would betray them to his former master Saul, so they sent him back to Ziklag.

²⁰These are the soldiers from Manasseh who went over to David's side when he was returning: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediahel, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai. In Manasseh they had all commanded units of a thousand men.

²¹They served David as officers over his troops, because they were all outstanding soldiers. Later they were officers in the Israelite army.

²²Almost every day new men joined David's forces, so that his army was soon enormous.

²³When David was at Hebron, many trained soldiers joined his army to help make him king in place of Saul, as the LORD had promised. Their numbers were as follows: Judah: 6,800 well-equipped men, armed with shields and spears; Simeon: 7,100 well-trained men; Levi: 4,600 men; Followers of Jehoiada, descendant of Aaron: 3,700 men; Relatives of Zadok, an able young fighter: 22 leading men; Benjamin (Saul's own tribe): 3,000 men (most of the people of Benjamin had remained loyal to Saul); Ephraim: 20,800 men famous in their own clans;

West Manasseh: 18,000 men chosen to go and make David king; Issachar: 200 leaders, together with the men under their command (these leaders knew what Israel should do and the best time to do it); Zebulun: 50,000 loyal and reliable men ready to fight, trained to use all kinds of weapons; Naphtali: 1,000 leaders, together with 37,000 men armed with shields and spears; Dan: 28,600 trained men; Asher: 40,000 men ready for battle; Tribes east of the Jordan -- Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh: 120,000 men trained to use all kinds of weapons.

²⁴ (12: 23)

²⁵ (12: 23)

²⁶ (12: 23)

²⁷ (12: 23)

²⁸ (12: 23)

²⁹ (12: 23)

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³¹ (12: 23)

³² (12: 23)

³³ (12: 23)

³⁴ (12: 23)

³⁵ (12: 23)

³⁶ (12: 23)

³⁷ (12: 23)

³⁸All these soldiers, ready for battle, went to Hebron, determined to make David king over all Israel. All the rest of the people of Israel were united in the same purpose.

³⁹They spent three days there with David, feasting on the food and drink which their relatives had prepared for them.

⁴⁰From as far away as the northern tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali, people came bringing donkeys, camels, mules, and oxen loaded with food -- flour, figs, raisins, wine, and olive oil. They also brought cattle and sheep to kill and eat. All this was an expression of the joy that was felt throughout the whole country.

13¹ King David consulted with all the officers in command of units of a thousand men and units of a hundred men.

²Then he announced to all the people of Israel, If you give your approval and if it is the will of the LORD our God, let us send messengers to the rest of our people and to the priests and Levites in

their towns, and tell them to assemble here with us.

³Then we will go and get God's Covenant Box, which was ignored while Saul was king.

⁴The people were pleased with the suggestion and agreed to it.

⁵So David assembled the people of Israel from all over the country, from the Egyptian border in the south to Hamath Pass in the north, in order to bring the Covenant Box from Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem.

⁶David and the people went to the city of Baalah, that is, to Kiriath Jearim, in the territory of Judah, to get the Covenant Box of God, which bears the name of the LORD enthroned above the winged creatures.

⁷At Abinadab's house they brought out the Covenant Box and put it on a new cart. Uzzah and Ahio guided the cart,

⁸while David and all the people danced with all their might to honor God. They sang and played musical instruments -- harps, drums, cymbals, and trumpets.

⁹As they came to the threshing place of Chidon, the oxen stumbled, and

Uzzah reached out and took hold of the Covenant Box.

¹⁰At once the LORD became angry with Uzzah and killed him for touching the Box. He died there in God's presence,

¹¹and so that place has been called Perez Uzzah ever since. David was furious because the LORD had punished Uzzah in anger.

¹²Then David was afraid of God and said, How can I take the Covenant Box with me now?

¹³So David did not take it with him to Jerusalem. Instead, he left it at the house of a man named Obed Edom, a native of the city of Gath.

¹⁴It stayed there three months, and the LORD blessed Obed Edom's family and everything that belonged to him.

14¹King Hiram of Tyre sent a trade mission to David; he provided him with cedar logs and with stonemasons and carpenters to build a palace.

²And so David realized that the LORD had established him as king of Israel and was making his kingdom prosperous for the sake of his people.

³There in Jerusalem, David married more wives and had more sons and daughters.

⁴The following children were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet,

⁶Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,

⁷Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

⁸When the Philistines heard that David had now been made king over the whole country of Israel, their army went out to capture him. So David marched out to meet them.

⁹The Philistines arrived at Rephaim Valley and began plundering.

¹⁰David asked God, Shall I attack the Philistines? Will you give me the victory? The LORD answered, Yes, attack! I will give you the victory!

¹¹So David attacked them at Baal Perazim and defeated them. He said, God has used me to break through the enemy army like a flood. So that place is called Baal Perazim.

¹²When the Philistines fled, they left their idols behind, and David gave orders for them to be burned.

¹³ Soon the Philistines returned to the valley and started plundering it again.

¹⁴ Once more David consulted God, who answered, Don't attack them from here, but go around and get ready to attack them from the other side, near the balsam trees.

¹⁵ When you hear the sound of marching in the treetops, then attack, because I will be marching ahead of you to defeat the Philistine army.

¹⁶ David did what God had commanded, and so he drove the Philistines back from Gibeon all the way to Gezer.

¹⁷ David's fame spread everywhere, and the LORD made every nation afraid of him.

15 ¹ For his own use, David built houses in David's City. He also prepared a place for God's Covenant Box and put up a tent for it.

² Then he said, Only Levites should carry the Covenant Box, because they are the ones the LORD chose to carry it and to serve him forever.

³ So David summoned all the people of Israel to Jerusalem in order to bring

the Covenant Box to the place he had prepared for it.

⁴Next he sent for the descendants of Aaron and for the Levites.

⁵From the Levite clan of Kohath came Uriel, in charge of 120 members of his clan;

⁶from the clan of Merari came Asaiah, in charge of 220;

⁷from the clan of Gershon, Joel, in charge of 130;

⁸from the clan of Elizaphan, Shemaiah, in charge of 200;

⁹from the clan of Hebron, Eliel, in charge of 80;

¹⁰and from the clan of Uzziel, Amminadab, in charge of 112.

¹¹David called in the priests Zadok and Abiathar and the six Levites, Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab.

¹²He said to the Levites, You are the leaders of the Levite clans. Purify yourselves and your fellow Levites, so that you can bring the Covenant Box of the LORD God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it.

¹³ Because you were not there to carry it the first time, the LORD our God punished us for not worshiping him as we should have done.

¹⁴ Then the priests and the Levites purified themselves in order to move the Covenant Box of the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁵ The Levites carried it on poles on their shoulders, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

¹⁶ David commanded the leaders of the Levites to assign various Levites to sing and to play joyful music on harps and cymbals.

¹⁷ From the clans of singers they chose the following men to play the brass cymbals: Heman son of Joel, his relative Asaph son of Berechiah, and Ethan son of Kushaiah, of the clan of Merari. To assist them they chose the following Levites to play the high-pitched harps: Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah. To play the low-pitched harps they chose the following Levites: Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Azaziah, and the Temple guards, Obed Edom and Jeiel.

¹⁸ (15: 17)

¹⁹ (15: 17)

²⁰ (15: 17)

²¹ (15: 17)

²² Because of his skill in music Chenaniah was chosen to be in charge of the levitical musicians.

²³ Berechiah and Elkanah, along with Obed Edom and Jehiah, were chosen as guards for the Covenant Box. The priests Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer were chosen to blow trumpets in front of the Covenant Box.

²⁴ (15: 23)

²⁵ So King David, the leaders of Israel, and the military commanders went to the house of Obed Edom to get the Covenant Box, and they had a great celebration.

²⁶ They sacrificed seven bulls and seven sheep, to make sure that God would help the Levites who were carrying the Covenant Box.

²⁷ David was wearing a robe made of the finest linen, and so were the musicians, Chenaniah their leader, and the Levites who carried the Box. David also wore a linen ephod.

²⁸So all the Israelites accompanied the Covenant Box up to Jerusalem with shouts of joy, the sound of trumpets, horns, and cymbals, and the music of harps.

²⁹As the Box was being brought into the city, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked out of the window and saw King David dancing and leaping for joy, and she was disgusted with him.

16¹They took the Covenant Box to the tent which David had prepared for it and put it inside. Then they offered sacrifices and fellowship offerings to God.

²After David had finished offering the sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD

³and distributed food to them all. He gave each man and woman in Israel a loaf of bread, a piece of roasted meat, and some raisins.

⁴David appointed some of the Levites to lead the worship of the LORD, the God of Israel, in front of the Covenant Box, by singing and praising him.

⁵Asaph was appointed leader, with Zechariah as his assistant. Jeiel,

Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed Edom, and Jeiel were to play harps. Asaph was to sound the cymbals,

⁶and two priests, Benaiah and Jahaziel, were to blow trumpets regularly in front of the Covenant Box.

⁷It was then that David first gave Asaph and the other Levites the responsibility for singing praises to the LORD.

⁸Give thanks to the LORD, proclaim his greatness; tell the nations what he has done.

⁹Sing praise to the LORD; tell the wonderful things he has done.

¹⁰Be glad that we belong to him; let all who worship him rejoice!

¹¹Go to the LORD for help, and worship him continually.

¹²You descendants of Jacob, God's servant, descendants of Israel, whom God chose, remember the miracles that God performed and the judgments that he gave.

¹³(16:12)

¹⁴The LORD is our God; his commands are for all the world.

¹⁵ Never forget God's covenant, which he made to last forever,

¹⁶ the covenant he made with Abraham, the promise he made to Isaac.

¹⁷ The LORD made a covenant with Jacob, one that will last forever.

¹⁸ I will give you the land of Canaan, he said. It will be your own possession.

¹⁹ God's people were few in number, strangers in the land of Canaan.

²⁰ They wandered from country to country, from one kingdom to another.

²¹ But God let no one oppress them; to protect them, he warned the kings:

²² Don't harm my chosen servants; do not touch my prophets.

²³ Sing to the LORD, all the world! Proclaim every day the good news that he has saved us.

²⁴ Proclaim his glory to the nations, his mighty deeds to all peoples.

²⁵ The LORD is great and is to be highly praised; he is to be honored more than all the gods.

²⁶ The gods of all other nations are only idols, but the LORD created the heavens.

²⁷ Glory and majesty surround him, power and joy fill his Temple.

²⁸ Praise the LORD, all people on earth, praise his glory and might.

²⁹ Praise the LORD's glorious name; bring an offering and come into his Temple. Bow down before the Holy One when he appears;

³⁰ tremble before him, all the earth! The earth is set firmly in place and cannot be moved.

³¹ Be glad, earth and sky! Tell the nations that the LORD is king.

³² Roar, sea, and every creature in you; be glad, fields, and everything in you!

³³ The trees in the woods will shout for joy when the LORD comes to rule the earth.

³⁴ Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good; his love is eternal.

³⁵ Say to him, Save us, O God our Savior; gather us together; rescue us from the nations, so that we may be thankful and praise your holy name.

³⁶ Praise the LORD, the God of Israel! Praise him now and forever! Then all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.

³⁷ King David put Asaph and the other Levites in permanent charge of the

worship that was held at the place where the Covenant Box was kept. They were to perform their duties there day by day.

³⁸Obed Edom son of Jeduthun and sixty-eight men of his clan were to assist them. Hosah and Obed Edom were in charge of guarding the gates.

³⁹Zadok the priest and his fellow priests, however, were in charge of the worship of the LORD at the place of worship in Gibeon.

⁴⁰Every morning and evening they were to burn sacrifices whole on the altar in accordance with what was written in the Law which the LORD gave to Israel.

⁴¹There with them were Heman and Jeduthun and the others who were specifically chosen to sing praises to the LORD for his eternal love.

⁴²Heman and Jeduthun also had charge of the trumpets and cymbals and the other instruments which were played when the songs of praise were sung. The members of Jeduthun's clan were in charge of guarding the gates.

⁴³Then everyone went home, and David went home to spend some time with his family.

17 ¹ King David was now living in his palace. One day he sent for the prophet Nathan and said to him, Here I am living in a house built of cedar, but the LORD's Covenant Box is kept in a tent!

² Nathan answered, Do whatever you have in mind, because God is with you.

³ But that night God said to Nathan,

⁴ Go and tell my servant David that I say to him, You are not the one to build a temple for me to live in.

⁵ From the time I rescued the people of Israel from Egypt until now I have never lived in a temple; I have always lived in tents and moved from place to place.

⁶ In all my traveling with the people of Israel I never asked any of the leaders that I appointed why they had not built me a temple made of cedar.

⁷ So tell my servant David that I, the LORD Almighty, say to him, I took you from looking after sheep in the fields and made you the ruler of my people Israel.

⁸ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have defeated all your enemies as you advanced. I will make

you as famous as the greatest leaders in the world.

⁹I have chosen a place for my people Israel and have settled them there, where they will live without being oppressed any more. Ever since they entered this land they have been attacked by violent people, but this will not happen again. I promise to defeat all your enemies and to give you descendants.

¹⁰(17: 9)

¹¹When you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will make one of your sons king and will keep his kingdom strong.

¹²He will be the one to build a temple for me, and I will make sure that his dynasty continues forever.

¹³I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will not withdraw my support from him as I did from Saul, whom I removed so that you could be king.

¹⁴I will put him in charge of my people and my kingdom forever. His dynasty will never end.

¹⁵Nathan told David everything that God had revealed to him.

¹⁶Then King David went into the Tent of the LORD's presence, sat down, and prayed, I am not worthy of what you have already done for me, LORD God, nor is my family.

¹⁷Yet now you are doing even more; you have made promises about my descendants in the years to come, and you, LORD God, are already treating me like someone great.

¹⁸What more can I say to you! You know me well, and yet you honor me, your servant.

¹⁹It was your will and purpose to do this for me and to show me my future greatness.

²⁰LORD, there is none like you; we have always known that you alone are God.

²¹There is no other nation on earth like Israel, whom you rescued from slavery to make them your own people. The great and wonderful things you did for them spread your fame throughout the world. You rescued your people from Egypt and drove out other nations as your people advanced.

²²You have made Israel your own people forever, and you, LORD, have become their God.

²³And now, O LORD, fulfill for all time the promise you made about me and my descendants, and do what you said you would.

²⁴Your fame will be great, and people will forever say, The LORD Almighty is God over Israel. And you will preserve my dynasty for all time.

²⁵I have the courage to pray this prayer to you, my God, because you have revealed all this to me, your servant, and have told me that you will make my descendants kings.

²⁶You, LORD, are God, and you have made this wonderful promise to me.

²⁷I ask you to bless my descendants so that they will continue to enjoy your favor. You, LORD, have blessed them, and your blessing will rest on them forever.

18¹ Some time later King David attacked the Philistines again and defeated them. He took out of their control the city of Gath and its surrounding villages.

² He also defeated the Moabites, who became his subjects and paid taxes to him.

³ Next, David attacked King Hadadezer of the Syrian state of Zobah, near the territory of Hamath, because Hadadezer was trying to gain control of the territory by the upper Euphrates River.

⁴ David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand cavalry troops, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He kept enough horses for a hundred chariots and crippled all the rest.

⁵ When the Syrians of Damascus sent an army to help King Hadadezer, David attacked it and killed twenty-two thousand men.

⁶ Then he set up military camps in their territory, and they became his subjects and paid taxes to him. The LORD made David victorious everywhere.

⁷ David captured the gold shields carried by Hadadezer's officials and took them to Jerusalem.

⁸ He also took a great quantity of bronze from Tibhath and Kun, cities ruled by Hadadezer. (Solomon later used this

bronze to make the tank, the columns, and the bronze utensils for the Temple.)

⁹King Toi of Hamath heard that David had defeated Hadadezer's entire army.

¹⁰So he sent his son Joram to greet King David and congratulate him for his victory over Hadadezer, against whom Toi had fought many times. Joram brought David presents made of gold, silver, and bronze.

¹¹King David dedicated them for use in worship, along with the silver and gold he took from the nations he conquered -- Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek.

¹²Abishai, whose mother was Zeruah, defeated the Edomites in Salt Valley and killed eighteen thousand of them.

¹³He set up military camps throughout Edom, and the people there became King David's subjects. The LORD made David victorious everywhere.

¹⁴David ruled over all Israel and made sure that his people were always treated fairly and justly.

¹⁵Abishai's brother Joab was commander of the army; Jehoshaphat

son of Ahilud was in charge of the records;

¹⁶Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests; Seraiah was court secretary;

¹⁷Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in charge of David's bodyguards; and King David's sons held high positions in his service.

19¹ Some time later King Nahash of Ammon died, and his son Hanun became king.

²King David said, I must show loyal friendship to Hanun, as his father Nahash did to me. So David sent messengers to express his sympathy. When they arrived in Ammon and called on King Hanun,

³the Ammonite leaders said to the king, Do you think that it is in your father's honor that David has sent these men to express sympathy to you? Of course not! He has sent them here as spies to explore the land, so that he can conquer it!

⁴Hanun seized David's messengers, shaved off their beards, cut off their clothes at the hips, and sent them away.

⁵They were too ashamed to return home. When David heard what had happened, he sent word for them to stay in Jericho and not return until their beards had grown again.

⁶King Hanun and the Ammonites realized that they had made David their enemy, so they paid nearly forty tons of silver to hire chariots and charioteers from Upper Mesopotamia and from the Syrian states of Maacah and Zobah.

⁷The thirty-two thousand chariots they hired and the army of the king of Maacah came and camped near Medeba. The Ammonites too came out from all their cities and got ready to fight.

⁸When David heard what was happening, he sent out Joab and the whole army.

⁹The Ammonites marched out and took up their position at the entrance to Rabbah, their capital city, and the kings who had come to help took up their position in the open countryside.

¹⁰Joab saw that the enemy troops would attack him in front and from the rear, so he chose the best of Israel's

soldiers and put them in position facing the Syrians.

¹¹ He placed the rest of his troops under the command of his brother Abishai, who put them in position facing the Ammonites.

¹² Joab said to him, If you see that the Syrians are defeating me, come and help me, and if the Ammonites are defeating you, I will go and help you.

¹³ Be strong and courageous! Let's fight hard for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD's will be done.

¹⁴ Joab and his men advanced to attack, and the Syrians fled.

¹⁵ When the Ammonites saw the Syrians running away, they fled from Abishai and retreated into the city. Then Joab went back to Jerusalem.

¹⁶ The Syrians realized that they had been defeated by the Israelites, so they brought troops from the Syrian states on the east side of the Euphrates River and placed them under the command of Shobach, commander of the army of King Hadadezer of Zobah.

¹⁷When David heard of it, he gathered the Israelite troops, crossed the Jordan River, and put them in position facing the Syrians. The fighting began,

¹⁸and the Israelites drove the Syrian army back. David and his men killed seven thousand Syrian chariot drivers and forty thousand foot soldiers. They also killed the Syrian commander, Shobach.

¹⁹When the kings who were subject to Hadadezer realized that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became his subjects. (19-20) The Syrians were never again willing to help the Ammonites.

20¹The following spring, at the time of the year when kings usually go to war, Joab led out the army and invaded the land of Ammon; King David, however, stayed in Jerusalem. They besieged the city of Rabbah, attacked it, and destroyed it.

²The Ammonite idol Molech had a gold crown which weighed about seventy-five pounds. In it there was a jewel, which David took and put in his own crown. He

also took a large amount of loot from the city.

³He took the people of the city and put them to work with saws, iron hoes, and axes. He did the same to the people of all the other towns of Ammon. Then he and his men returned to Jerusalem.

⁴Later on, war broke out again with the Philistines at Gezer. This was when Sibbecai from Hushah killed a giant named Sippai, and the Philistines were defeated.

⁵There was another battle with the Philistines, and Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath from Gath, whose spear had a shaft as thick as the bar on a weaver's loom.

⁶Another battle took place at Gath, where there was a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He was a descendant of the ancient giants.

⁷He defied the Israelites, and Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shammah, killed him.

⁸These three, who were killed by David and his men, were descendants of the giants at Gath.

21 ¹ Satan wanted to bring trouble on the people of Israel, so he made David decide to take a census.

² David gave orders to Joab and the other officers, Go through Israel, from one end of the country to the other, and count the people. I want to know how many there are.

³ Joab answered, May the LORD make the people of Israel a hundred times more numerous than they are now! Your Majesty, they are all your servants. Why do you want to do this and make the whole nation guilty?

⁴ But the king made Joab obey the order. Joab went out, traveled through the whole country of Israel, and then returned to Jerusalem.

⁵ He reported to King David the total number of men capable of military service: 1,100,000 in Israel and 470,000 in Judah.

⁶ Because Joab disapproved of the king's command, he did not take any census of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin.

⁷ God was displeased with what had been done, so he punished Israel.

⁸David said to God, I have committed a terrible sin in doing this! Please forgive me. I have acted foolishly.

⁹Then the LORD said to Gad, David's prophet,

¹⁰Go and tell David that I am giving him three choices. I will do whichever he chooses.

¹¹Gad went to David, told him what the LORD had said, and asked, Which is it to be?

¹²Three years of famine? Or three months of running away from the armies of your enemies? Or three days during which the LORD attacks you with his sword and sends an epidemic on your land, using his angel to bring death throughout Israel? What answer shall I give the LORD?

¹³David replied to Gad, I am in a desperate situation! But I don't want to be punished by people. Let the LORD himself be the one to punish me, because he is merciful.

¹⁴So the LORD sent an epidemic on the people of Israel, and seventy thousand of them died.

¹⁵Then he sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem, but he changed his mind and said to the angel, Stop! That's enough! The angel was standing by the threshing place of Araunah, a Jebusite.

¹⁶David saw the angel standing in midair, holding his sword in his hand, ready to destroy Jerusalem. Then David and the leaders of the people -- all of whom were wearing sackcloth -- bowed low, with their faces touching the ground.

¹⁷David prayed, O God, I am the one who did wrong. I am the one who ordered the census. What have these poor people done? LORD, my God, punish me and my family, and spare your people.

¹⁸The angel of the LORD told Gad to command David to go and build an altar to the LORD at Araunah's threshing place.

¹⁹David obeyed the LORD's command and went, as Gad had told him to.

²⁰There at the threshing place Araunah and his four sons were threshing wheat, and when they saw the angel, the sons ran and hid.

²¹ As soon as Araunah saw King David approaching, he left the threshing place and bowed low, with his face touching the ground.

²² David said to him, Sell me your threshing place, so that I can build an altar to the LORD, to stop the epidemic. I'll give you the full price.

²³ Take it, Your Majesty, Araunah said, and do whatever you wish. Here are these oxen to burn as an offering on the altar, and here are the threshing boards to use as fuel, and wheat to give as an offering. I give it all to you.

²⁴ But the king answered, No, I will pay you the full price. I will not give as an offering to the LORD something that belongs to you, something that costs me nothing.

²⁵ And he paid Araunah six hundred gold coins for the threshing place.

²⁶ He built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He prayed, and the LORD answered him by sending fire from heaven to burn the sacrifices on the altar.

²⁷ The LORD told the angel to put his sword away, and the angel obeyed.

²⁸ David saw by this that the LORD had answered his prayer, so he offered sacrifices on the altar at Araunah's threshing place.

²⁹ The Tent of the LORD's presence which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar on which sacrifices were burned were still at the place of worship at Gibeon at this time;

³⁰ but David was not able to go there to worship God, because he was afraid of the sword of the LORD's angel.

22¹ So David said, This is where the Temple of the LORD God will be. Here is the altar where the people of Israel are to offer burnt offerings.

² King David gave orders for all the foreigners living in the land of Israel to assemble, and he put them to work. Some of them prepared stone blocks for building the Temple.

³ He supplied a large amount of iron for making nails and clamps for the wooden gates, and so much bronze that no one could weigh it.

⁴ He had the people of Tyre and Sidon bring him a large number of cedar logs.

⁵ David thought, The Temple that my son Solomon is to build must be splendid and world-famous. But he is young and inexperienced, so I must make preparations for it. So David got large amounts of the materials ready before he died.

⁶ He sent for his son Solomon and commanded him to build a temple for the LORD, the God of Israel.

⁷ David said to him, Son, I wanted to build a temple to honor the LORD my God.

⁸ But the LORD told me that I had killed too many people and fought too many wars. And so, because of all the bloodshed I have caused, he would not let me build a temple for him.

⁹ He did, however, make me a promise. He said, You will have a son who will rule in peace, because I will give him peace from all his enemies. His name will be Solomon, because during his reign I will give Israel peace and security.

¹⁰He will build a temple for me. He will be my son, and I will be his father. His dynasty will rule Israel forever.

¹¹David continued, Now, son, may the LORD your God be with you, and may he keep his promise to make you successful in building a temple for him.

¹²And may the LORD your God give you insight and wisdom so that you may govern Israel according to his Law.

¹³If you obey all the laws which the LORD gave to Moses for Israel, you will be successful. Be determined and confident, and don't let anything make you afraid.

¹⁴As for the Temple, by my efforts I have accumulated almost four thousand tons of gold and nearly forty thousand tons of silver to be used in building it. Besides that, there is an unlimited supply of bronze and iron. I also have wood and stone ready, but you must get more.

¹⁵You have many workers. There are stonecutters to work in the quarries, and there are masons and carpenters, as well as a large number of skilled workers of every sort who can work

¹⁶with gold, silver, bronze, and iron. Now begin the work, and may the LORD be with you.

¹⁷David commanded all the leaders of Israel to help Solomon.

¹⁸He said, The LORD your God has been with you and given you peace on all sides. He let me conquer all the people who used to live in this land, and they are now subject to you and to the LORD.

¹⁹Now serve the LORD your God with all your heart and soul. Start building the Temple, so that you can place in it the Covenant Box of the LORD and all the other sacred objects used in worshiping him.

23¹When David was very old, he made his son Solomon king of Israel.

²King David brought together all the Israelite leaders and all the priests and Levites.

³He took a census of all the male Levites aged thirty or older. The total was thirty-eight thousand.

⁴The king assigned twenty-four thousand to administer the work of the

Temple, six thousand to keep records and decide disputes,

⁵four thousand to do guard duty, and four thousand to praise the LORD, using the musical instruments provided by the king for this purpose.

⁶David divided the Levites into three groups, according to their clans: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

⁷Gershon had two sons: Ladan and Shimei.

⁸Ladan had three sons: Jehiel, Zetham, and Joel,

⁹who were the heads of the clans descended from Ladan. (Shimei had three sons: Shelomoth, Haziël, and Haran.)

¹⁰Shimei had four sons: Jahath, Zina, Jeush, and Beriah, in order of age. Jeush and Beriah did not have many descendants, so they were counted as one clan.

¹¹ (23: 10)

¹²Kohath had four sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

¹³His oldest son, Amram, was the father of Aaron and Moses. (Aaron and his descendants were set apart to be in

charge of the sacred objects forever, to burn incense in the worship of the LORD, to serve him, and to bless the people in his name.

¹⁴But the sons of Moses, the man of God, were included among the Levites.)

¹⁵Moses had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

¹⁶The leader among Gershom's sons was Shebuel.

¹⁷Eliezer had only one son, Rehabiah, but Rehabiah had many descendants.

¹⁸Kohath's second son, Izhar, had a son, Shelomith, the head of the clan.

¹⁹Kohath's third son, Hebron, had four sons: Jeriah, Amariah, Jahaziel, and Jekameam.

²⁰Kohath's fourth son, Uzziel, had two sons, Micah and Isshiah.

²¹Merari had two sons, Mahli and Mushi. Mahli also had two sons, Eleazar and Kish,

²²but Eleazar died without having any sons, only daughters. His daughters married their cousins, the sons of Kish.

²³Merari's second son, Mushi, had three sons: Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth.

²⁴ These were the descendants of Levi, by clans and families, every one of them registered by name. Each of his descendants, twenty years of age or older, had a share in the work of the LORD's Temple.

²⁵ David said, The LORD God of Israel has given peace to his people, and he himself will live in Jerusalem forever.

²⁶ So there is no longer any need for the Levites to carry the Tent of the LORD's presence and all the equipment used in worship.

²⁷ On the basis of David's final instructions all Levites were registered for service when they reached the age of twenty,

²⁸ and were assigned the following duties: to help the priests descended from Aaron with the Temple worship, to take care of its courtyards and its rooms, and to keep undefiled everything that is sacred;

²⁹ to be responsible for the bread offered to God, the flour used in offerings, the wafers made without yeast, the baked offerings, and the

flour mixed with olive oil; to weigh and measure the Temple offerings;

³⁰and to praise and glorify the LORD every morning and every evening

³¹and whenever offerings to the LORD are burned on the Sabbath, the New Moon Festival, and other festivals. Rules were made specifying the number of Levites assigned to do this work each time. The Levites were assigned the duty of worshiping the LORD for all time.

³²They were given the responsibility of taking care of the Tent of the LORD's presence and the Temple, and of assisting their relatives, the priests descended from Aaron, in the Temple worship.

24¹These are the groups to which the descendants of Aaron belong. Aaron had four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

²Nadab and Abihu died before their father did, and left no descendants, so their brothers Eleazar and Ithamar became priests.

³King David organized the descendants of Aaron into groups according to their duties. He was assisted in this by

Zadok, a descendant of Eleazar, and by Ahimelech, a descendant of Ithamar.

⁴The descendants of Eleazar were organized into sixteen groups, while the descendants of Ithamar were organized into eight; this was done because there were more male heads of families among the descendants of Eleazar.

⁵Since there were Temple officials and spiritual leaders among the descendants of both Eleazar and Ithamar, assignments were made by drawing lots.

⁶The descendants of Eleazar and of Ithamar took turns drawing lots. Then they were registered by Shemaiah son of Nethanel, a Levite secretary. The king, his officials, the priest Zadok, Ahimelech son of Abiathar, and the heads of the priestly families and of the Levite families, were all witnesses.

⁷This is the order in which the twenty-four family groups were given their assignments: 1) Jehoiarib; 2) Jedaijah; 3) Harim; 4) Seorim; 5) Malchijah; 6) Mijamin; 7) Hakkoz; 8) Abijah; 9) Jeshua; 10) Shecaniah; 11) Eliashib; 12) Jakim; 13) Huppah; 14) Jeshebeab; 15) Bilgah; 16) Immer; 17) Hezir; 18)

Happizzez; 19) Pethahiah; 20) Jehezkel;
21) Jachin; 22) Gamul; 23) Delaiah; 24)
Maaziah.

⁸ (24: 7)

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¹⁹ These men were registered according to their assignments for going to the Temple and performing the duties established by their ancestor Aaron in obedience to the commands of the LORD God of Israel.

²⁰ These are other heads of families descended from Levi: Jehdeiah, a descendant of Amram through Shebuel;

²¹ Isshiah, a descendant of Rehabiah;

²² Jahath, a descendant of Izhar through Shelomith;

²³ Jeriah, Amariah, Jehaziel, and Jekameam, sons of Hebron, in order of age;

²⁴ Shamir, a descendant of Uzziel through Micah;

²⁵ Zechariah, a descendant of Uzziel through Isshiah, Micah's brother;

²⁶ Mahli, Mushi, and Jaaziah, descendants of Merari.

²⁷ Jaaziah had three sons: Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri.

²⁸ Mahli had two sons, Eleazar and Kish. Eleazar had no sons, but Kish had one son, Jerahmeel.

²⁹ (24: 28)

³⁰ Mushi had three sons: Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth. These are the families of the Levites.

³¹ The head of each family and one of his younger brothers drew lots for their assignments, just as their relatives, the priests descended from Aaron, had done. King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites were witnesses.

25 ¹ King David and the leaders of the Levites chose the following Levite clans to lead the worship services:

Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. They were to proclaim God's messages, accompanied by the music of harps and cymbals. This is the list of persons chosen to lead the worship, with the type of service that each group performed:

²The four sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah. They were under the direction of Asaph, who proclaimed God's messages whenever the king commanded.

³The six sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah. Under the direction of their father they proclaimed God's message, accompanied by the music of harps, and sang praise and thanks to the LORD.

⁴The fourteen sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth.

⁵God gave to Heman, the king's prophet, these fourteen sons and also three daughters, as he had promised, in order to give power to Heman.

⁶All of his sons played cymbals and harps under their father's direction, to

accompany the Temple worship. And Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under orders from the king.

⁷All these twenty-four men were experts; and their fellow Levites were trained musicians. There were 288 men in all.

⁸To determine the assignment of duties they all drew lots, whether they were young or old, experts or beginners.

⁹These 288 men were divided according to families into twenty-four groups of twelve, with a leader in charge of each group. This is the order in which they were on duty: 1) Joseph of the family of Asaph; 2) Gedaliah; 3) Zaccur; 4) Zeri; 5) Nethaniah; 6) Bukkiah; 7) Asharelah; 8) Jeshaiiah; 9) Mattaniah; 10) Shimei; 11) Uzziel; 12) Hashabiah; 13) Shebuel; 14) Mattithiah; 15) Jerimoth; 16) Hananiah; 17) Joshbekashah; 18) Hanani; 19) Mallothi; 20) Eliathah; 21) Hothir; 22) Giddalti; 23) Mahazioth; 24) Romamti Ezer.

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26¹ These are the assignments of work for the Levites who served as Temple guards. From the clan of Korah there was Meshelemiah son of Kore, of the family of Asaph.

² He had seven sons, listed in order of age: Zechariah, Jediael, Zebadiah, Jathniel,

³ Elam, Jehohanan, and Eliehoenai.

⁴There was also Obed Edom, whom God blessed by giving him eight sons, listed in order of age: Shemaiah, Jehozabad, Joah, Sachar, Nethanel,

⁵Ammiel, Issachar, and Peullethai.

⁶Obed Edom's oldest son, Shemaiah, had six sons: Othni, Rephael, Obed, Elzabad, Elihu, and Semachiah. They were important men in their clan because of their great ability; the last two were especially talented.

⁷(26:6)

⁸Obed Edom's family furnished a total of sixty-two highly qualified men for this work.

⁹Meshelemiah's family furnished eighteen qualified men.

¹⁰From the clan of Merari there was Hosah, who had four sons: Shimri (his father made him the leader, even though he was not the oldest son),

¹¹Hilkiah, Tebaliah, and Zechariah.

In all there were thirteen members of Hosah's family who were Temple guards.

¹²The Temple guards were divided into groups, according to families, and they were assigned duties in the Temple, just as the other Levites were.

¹³Each family, regardless of size, drew lots to see which gate it would be responsible for.

¹⁴Shelemiah drew the east gate, and his son Zechariah, a man who always gave good advice, drew the north gate.

¹⁵Obed Edom was allotted the south gate, and his sons were allotted to guard the storerooms.

¹⁶Shuppim and Hosah were allotted the west gate and the Shallecheth Gate on the upper road. Guard duty was divided into assigned periods, one after another.

¹⁷On the east, six guards were on duty each day, on the north, four, and on the south, four. Four guards were stationed at the storerooms daily, two at each storeroom.

¹⁸Near the western pavilion there were four guards by the road and two at the pavilion itself.

¹⁹This is the assignment of guard duty to the clan of Korah and the clan of Merari.

²⁰Others of their fellow Levites were in charge of the Temple treasury and the storerooms for gifts dedicated to God.

²¹ Ladan, one of the sons of Gershon, was the ancestor of several family groups, including the family of his son Jehiel.

²² Ladan's two other sons, Zetham and Joel, had charge of the Temple treasury and storerooms.

²³ Duties were also assigned to the descendants of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

²⁴ Shebuel, of the clan of Moses' son Gershom, was the chief official responsible for the Temple treasury.

²⁵ Through Gershom's brother Eliezer he was related to Shelomith. Eliezer was the father of Rehabiah, who was the father of Jeshaiah, the father of Joram, the father of Zichri, the father of Shelomith.

²⁶ Shelomith and the members of his family were in charge of all the gifts dedicated to God by King David, the heads of families, leaders of clan groups, and army officers.

²⁷ They took some of the loot they captured in battle and dedicated it for use in the Temple.

²⁸Shelomith and his family were in charge of everything that had been dedicated for use in the Temple, including the gifts brought by the prophet Samuel, by King Saul, by Abner son of Ner, and by Joab son of Zeruah.

²⁹Among the descendants of Izhar, Chenaniah and his sons were assigned administrative duties: keeping records and settling disputes for the people of Israel.

³⁰Among the descendants of Hebron, Hashabiah and seventeen hundred of his relatives, all outstanding men, were put in charge of the administration of all religious and civil matters in Israel west of the Jordan River.

³¹Jeriah was the leader of the descendants of Hebron. In the fortieth year that David was king, an investigation was made of the family line of Hebron's descendants, and outstanding soldiers belonging to this family were found living at Jazer in the territory of Gilead.

³²King David chose twenty-seven hundred outstanding heads of families from Jeriah's relatives and put them in

charge of administering all religious and civil matters in Israel east of the Jordan River -- the territories of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh.

27 ¹This is the list of the Israelite heads of families and clan leaders and their officials who administered the work of the kingdom. Each month of the year a different group of twenty-four thousand men was on duty under the commander for that month.

²The following were the commanders for each month: First month: Jashobeam son of Zabdiel (he was a member of the clan of Perez, a part of the tribe of Judah) Second month: Dodai, a descendant of Ahohi (Mikloth was his second in command) Third month: Benaiah son of Jehoiada the priest; he was the leader of The Thirty (his son Ammizabad succeeded him as commander of this group) Fourth month: Asahel, brother of Joab (his son Zebadiah succeeded him) Fifth month: Shamhuth, a descendant of Izhar Sixth month: Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa Seventh month: Helez, an Ephraimite from Pelon Eighth month: Sibbecai from Hushah (he was a member

of the clan of Zerah, a part of the tribe of Judah) Ninth month: Abiezer from Anathoth in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin Tenth month: Maharai from Netophah (he was a member of the clan of Zerah) Eleventh month: Benaiah from Pirathon in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim Twelfth month: Heldai from Netophah (he was a descendant of Othniel)

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¹⁶ This is the list of the administrators of the tribes of Israel: Tribe ~ ~ Administrator; Reuben ~ ~ Eliezer son of Zichri; Simeon ~ ~ Shephatiah son of Maacah; Levi ~ ~ Hashabiah son of

Kemuel; Aaron ~ ~ Zadok; Judah ~ ~
Elihu, one of King David's brothers;
Issachar ~ ~ Omri son of Michael;
Zebulun ~ ~ Ishmaiah son of Obadiah;
Naphtali ~ ~ Jeremoth son of Azriel;
Ephraim ~ ~ Hoshea son of Azaziah; West
Manasseh ~ ~ Joel son of Pedaiiah; East
Manasseh ~ ~ Iddo son of Zechariah;
Benjamin ~ ~ Jaasiel son of Abner; Dan
~ ~ Azarel son of Jeroham

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¹⁸ (27: 16)

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²³ King David did not take a census of the people who were under the age of twenty, because of the LORD's promise to make the people of Israel as numerous as the stars in the sky.

²⁴ Joab, whose mother was Zeruah, began to take a census, but he did not complete it. God punished Israel because of this census, so the final figures were never recorded in King David's official records.

²⁵This is the list of those who administered the royal property: Royal storerooms: Azmaveth son of Adiel
Local storerooms: Jonathan son of Uzziah
Farm labor: Ezri son of Chelub
Vineyards: Shimei from Ramah
Wine cellars: Zabdi from Shepham
Olive and sycamore trees (in the western foothills): Baal Hanan from Geder
Olive oil storage: Joash
Cattle in the Plain of Sharon: Shitrai from Sharon
Cattle in the valleys: Shaphat son of Adlai
Camels: Obil, an Ishmaelite
Donkeys: Jehdeiah from Meronoth
Sheep and goats: Jaziz, a Hagrite

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²⁸ (27: 25)

²⁹ (27: 25)

³⁰ (27: 25)

³¹ (27: 25)

³²Jonathan, King David's uncle, was a skillful adviser and a scholar. He and Jehiel son of Hachmoni were in charge of the education of the king's sons.

³³Ahithophel was adviser to the king, and Hushai the Archite was the king's friend and counselor.

³⁴After Ahithophel died, Abiathar and Jehoiada son of Benaiah became advisers. Joab was commander of the royal army.

28¹ King David commanded all the officials of Israel to assemble in Jerusalem. So all the officials of the tribes, the officials who administered the work of the kingdom, the leaders of the clans, the supervisors of the property and livestock that belonged to the king and his sons -- indeed all the palace officials, leading soldiers, and important men -- gathered in Jerusalem.

²David stood before them and addressed them: My friends, listen to me. I wanted to build a permanent home for the Covenant Box, the footstool of the LORD our God. I have made preparations for building a temple to honor him,

³but he has forbidden me to do it, because I am a soldier and have shed too much blood.

⁴The LORD, the God of Israel, chose me and my descendants to rule Israel forever. He chose the tribe of Judah to provide leadership, and out of Judah he chose my father's family. From all that

family it was his pleasure to take me and make me king over all Israel.

⁵He gave me many sons, and out of them all he chose Solomon to rule over Israel, the LORD's kingdom.

⁶The LORD said to me, Your son Solomon is the one who will build my Temple. I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.

⁷I will make his kingdom last forever if he continues to obey carefully all my laws and commands as he does now.

⁸So now, my people, in the presence of our God and of this assembly of all Israel, the LORD's people, I charge you to obey carefully everything that the LORD our God has commanded us, so that you may continue to possess this good land and so that you may hand it on to succeeding generations forever.

⁹And to Solomon he said, My son, I charge you to acknowledge your father's God and to serve him with an undivided heart and a willing mind. He knows all our thoughts and desires. If you go to him, he will accept you; but if you turn away from him, he will abandon you forever.

¹⁰You must realize that the LORD has chosen you to build his holy Temple. Now do it -- and do it with determination.

¹¹David gave Solomon the plans for all the Temple buildings, for the storerooms and all the other rooms, and for the Most Holy Place, where sins are forgiven.

¹²He also gave him the plans for all he had in mind for the courtyards and the rooms around them, and for the storerooms for the Temple equipment and the gifts dedicated to the LORD.

¹³David also gave him the plans for organizing the priests and Levites to perform their duties, to do the work of the Temple, and to take care of all the Temple utensils.

¹⁴He gave instructions as to how much silver and gold was to be used for making the utensils,

¹⁵for each lamp and lampstand,

¹⁶for the silver tables, and for each gold table on which were placed the loaves of bread offered to God.

¹⁷He also gave instructions as to how much pure gold was to be used in making forks, bowls, and jars, how much silver and gold in making dishes,

¹⁸and how much pure gold in making the altar on which incense was burned and in making the chariot for the winged creatures that spread their wings over the LORD's Covenant Box.

¹⁹King David said, All this is contained in the plan written according to the instructions which the LORD himself gave me to carry out.

²⁰King David said to his son Solomon, Be confident and determined. Start the work and don't let anything stop you. The LORD God, whom I serve, will be with you. He will not abandon you, but he will stay with you until you finish the work to be done on his Temple.

²¹The priests and the Levites have been assigned duties to perform in the Temple. Workers with every kind of skill are eager to help you, and all the people and their leaders are at your command.

29¹ King David announced to the whole assembly: My son Solomon is the one whom God has chosen, but he is still young and lacks experience. The work to be done is tremendous, because this is not a palace for people but a temple for the LORD God.

²I have made every effort to prepare materials for the Temple -- gold, silver, bronze, iron, timber, precious stones and gems, stones for mosaics, and quantities of marble.

³Over and above all this that I have provided, I have given silver and gold from my personal property because of my love for God's Temple.

⁴I have given 115 tons of the finest gold and 265 tons of pure silver for decorating the walls of the Temple

⁵and for all the objects which the skilled workers are to make. Now who else is willing to give a generous offering to the LORD?

⁶Then the heads of the clans, the officials of the tribes, the commanders of the army, and the administrators of the royal property volunteered to give

⁷the following for the work on the Temple: 190 tons of gold, 380 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, and 3,750 tons of iron.

⁸Those who had precious stones gave them to the Temple treasury, which was administered by Jehiel of the Levite clan of Gershon.

⁹The people had given willingly to the LORD, and they were happy that so much had been given. King David also was extremely happy.

¹⁰There in front of the whole assembly King David praised the LORD. He said, LORD God of our ancestor Jacob, may you be praised forever and ever!

¹¹You are great and powerful, glorious, splendid, and majestic. Everything in heaven and earth is yours, and you are king, supreme ruler over all.

¹²All riches and wealth come from you; you rule everything by your strength and power; and you are able to make anyone great and strong.

¹³Now, our God, we give you thanks, and we praise your glorious name.

¹⁴Yet my people and I cannot really give you anything, because everything is a gift from you, and we have only given back what is yours already.

¹⁵You know, O LORD, that we pass through life like exiles and strangers, as our ancestors did. Our days are like a passing shadow, and we cannot escape death.

¹⁶O LORD, our God, we have brought together all this wealth to build a temple to honor your holy name, but it all came from you and all belongs to you.

¹⁷I know that you test everyone's heart and are pleased with people of integrity. In honesty and sincerity I have willingly given all this to you, and I have seen how your people who are gathered here have been happy to bring offerings to you.

¹⁸LORD God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, keep such devotion forever strong in your people's hearts and keep them always faithful to you.

¹⁹Give my son Solomon a wholehearted desire to obey everything that you command and to build the Temple for which I have made these preparations.

²⁰Then David commanded the people, Praise the LORD your God! And the whole assembly praised the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and they bowed low and gave honor to the LORD and also to the king.

²¹The following day they killed animals as sacrifices, dedicating them to the LORD, and then gave them to the people

to eat. In addition, they sacrificed a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, which they burned whole on the altar. They also brought the offerings of wine.

²² So that day they were very happy as they ate and drank in the presence of the LORD. For a second time they proclaimed Solomon king. In the name of the LORD they anointed him as their ruler and Zadok as priest.

²³ So Solomon succeeded his father David on the throne which the LORD had established. He was a successful king, and the whole nation of Israel obeyed him.

²⁴ All the officials and soldiers, and even all of David's other sons, promised to be loyal to Solomon as king.

²⁵ The LORD made the whole nation stand in awe of Solomon, and he made him more glorious than any other king that had ruled Israel.

²⁶ David son of Jesse ruled over all Israel

²⁷ for forty years. He ruled in Hebron for seven years and in Jerusalem for thirty-three.

²⁸He died at a ripe old age, wealthy and respected, and his son Solomon succeeded him as king.

²⁹The history of King David from beginning to end is recorded in the records of the three prophets, Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.

³⁰The records tell how he ruled, how powerful he was, and all the things that happened to him, to Israel, and to the surrounding kingdoms.

2 Chronicles

1 ¹ Solomon, the son of King David, took firm control of the kingdom of Israel, and the LORD his God blessed him and made him very powerful.

² King Solomon gave an order to all the officers in charge of units of a thousand men and of a hundred men, all the government officials, all the heads of families, and all the rest of the people,

³ commanding them to go with him to the place of worship at Gibeon. They went there because that was where the Tent of the LORD's presence was located, which Moses, the LORD's servant, had made in the wilderness.

⁴ (The Covenant Box, however, was in Jerusalem, kept in a tent which King David had set up when he brought the Box from Kiriath Jearim.)

⁵ The bronze altar which had been made by Bezalel, the son of Uri and grandson of Hur, was also in Gibeon in front of the Tent of the LORD's presence. King

Solomon and all the people worshiped the LORD there.

⁶In front of the Tent the king worshiped the LORD by offering sacrifices on the bronze altar; he had a thousand animals killed and burned whole on it.

⁷That night God appeared to Solomon and asked, What would you like me to give you?

⁸Solomon answered, You always showed great love for my father David, and now you have let me succeed him as king.

⁹O LORD God, fulfill the promise you made to my father. You have made me king over a people who are so many that they cannot be counted,

¹⁰so give me the wisdom and knowledge I need to rule over them. Otherwise, how would I ever be able to rule this great people of yours?

¹¹God replied to Solomon, You have made the right choice. Instead of asking for wealth or treasure or fame or the death of your enemies or even for long life for yourself, you have asked for wisdom and knowledge so that you can

rule my people, over whom I have made you king.

¹²I will give you wisdom and knowledge. And in addition, I will give you more wealth, treasure, and fame than any king has ever had before or will ever have again.

¹³So Solomon left the place of worship at Gibeon, where the Tent of the LORD's presence was, and returned to Jerusalem. There he ruled over Israel.

¹⁴He built up a force of fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand cavalry horses. Some of them he kept in Jerusalem, and the rest he stationed in various other cities.

¹⁵During his reign silver and gold became as common in Jerusalem as stone, and cedar was as plentiful as ordinary sycamore in the foothills of Judah.

¹⁶The king's agents controlled the export of horses from Musri and Cilicia,

¹⁷and the export of chariots from Egypt. They supplied the Hittite and Syrian kings with horses and chariots, selling chariots for 600 pieces of silver each and horses for 150 each.

2¹ King Solomon decided to build a temple where the LORD would be worshiped, and also to build a palace for himself.

²He put 70,000 men to work transporting materials, and 80,000 to work cutting stone in the hill country. There were 3,600 others responsible for supervising the work.

³Solomon sent a message to King Hiram of Tyre: Do business with me as you did with my father, King David, when you sold him cedar logs for building his palace.

⁴I am building a temple to honor the LORD my God. It will be a holy place where my people and I will worship him by burning incense of fragrant spices, where we will present offerings of sacred bread to him continuously, and where we will offer burnt offerings every morning and evening, as well as on Sabbaths, New Moon Festivals, and other holy days honoring the LORD our God. He has commanded Israel to do this forever.

⁵I intend to build a great temple, because our God is greater than any other god.

⁶Yet no one can really build a temple for God, because even all the vastness of heaven cannot contain him. How then can I build a temple that would be anything more than a place to burn incense to God?

⁷Now send me a man with skill in engraving, in working gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and in making blue, purple, and red cloth. He will work with the craftsmen of Judah and Jerusalem whom my father David selected.

⁸I know how skillful your lumbermen are, so send me cedar, cypress, and juniper logs from Lebanon. I am ready to send my men to assist yours

⁹in preparing large quantities of timber, because this temple I intend to build will be large and magnificent.

¹⁰As provisions for your lumbermen, I will send you 100,000 bushels of wheat, 100,000 bushels of barley, 110,000 gallons of wine, and 110,000 gallons of olive oil.

¹¹King Hiram sent Solomon a letter in reply. He wrote, Because the LORD loves his people, he has made you their king.

¹²Praise the LORD God of Israel, Creator of heaven and earth! He has given King David a wise son, full of understanding and skill, who now plans to build a temple for the LORD and a palace for himself.

¹³I am sending you a wise and skillful master metalworker named Hiram.

¹⁴His mother was a member of the tribe of Dan and his father was a native of Tyre. He knows how to make things out of gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood. He can work with blue, purple, and red cloth, and with linen. He can do all sorts of engraving and can follow any design suggested to him. Let him work with your skilled workers and with those who worked for your father, King David.

¹⁵So now send us the wheat, barley, wine, and olive oil that you promised.

¹⁶In the mountains of Lebanon we will cut down all the cedars you need, tie them together in rafts, and float them by sea as far as Joppa. From there you can take them to Jerusalem.

¹⁷King Solomon took a census of all the foreigners living in the land of Israel, similar to the census his father David

had taken. There were 153,600 resident foreigners.

¹⁸He assigned 70,000 of them to transport materials and 80,000 to cut stones in the mountains, and appointed 3,600 supervisors to make sure the work was done.

3¹ King David, Solomon's father, had already prepared a place for the Temple. It was in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared to David, at the place which Araunah the Jebusite had used as a threshing place. King Solomon began the construction

²in the second month of the fourth year that he was king.

³The Temple which King Solomon built was 90 feet long and 30 feet wide.

⁴The entrance room was the full width of the Temple, 30 feet, and was 180 feet high. The inside of the room was overlaid with pure gold.

⁵The main room was paneled with cedar and overlaid with fine gold, in which were worked designs of palm trees and chain patterns.

⁶The king decorated the Temple with beautiful precious stones and with gold imported from the land of Parvaim.

⁷He used the gold to overlay the Temple walls, the rafters, the entryways, and the doors. On the walls the workers carved designs of winged creatures.

⁸The inner room, called the Most Holy Place, was 30 feet long and 30 feet wide, which was the full width of the Temple. Twenty-five tons of gold were used to cover the walls of the Most Holy Place;

⁹twenty ounces of gold were used for making nails, and the walls of the upper rooms were also covered with gold.

¹⁰The king also had his workers make two winged creatures out of metal, cover them with gold, and place them in the Most Holy Place,

¹¹where they stood side by side facing the entrance. Each had two wings, each wing 7 1/2 feet long, which were spread out so that they touched each other in the center of the room and reached to the wall on either side of the room, stretching across the full width of 30 feet.

¹²(3: 11)

¹³(3:11)

¹⁴A curtain for the Most Holy Place was made of linen and of other material, which was dyed blue, purple, and red, with designs of the winged creatures worked into it.

¹⁵The king had two columns made, each one 52 feet tall, and placed them in front of the Temple. Each one had a capital 7 1/2 feet tall.

¹⁶The tops of the columns were decorated with a design of interwoven chains and one hundred bronze pomegranates.

¹⁷The columns were set at the sides of the Temple entrance: the one on the south side was named Jachin and the one on the north side was named Boaz.

4¹ King Solomon had a bronze altar made, which was 30 feet square and 15 feet high.

²He also made a round tank of bronze, 7 1/2 feet deep, 15 feet in diameter, and 45 feet in circumference.

³All around the outer edge of the rim of the tank were two rows of decorations, one above the other. The decorations were in the shape of bulls, which had

been cast all in one piece with the rest of the tank.

⁴The tank rested on the backs of twelve bronze bulls that faced outward, three facing in each direction.

⁵The sides of the tank were 3 inches thick. Its rim was like the rim of a cup, curving outward like the petals of a flower. The tank held about 15,000 gallons.

⁶They also made ten basins, five to be placed on the south side of the Temple and five on the north side. They were to be used to rinse the parts of the animals that were burned as sacrifices. The water in the large tank was for the priests to use for washing.

⁷They made ten gold lampstands according to the usual pattern, and ten tables, and placed them in the main room of the Temple, five lampstands and five tables on each side. They also made a hundred gold bowls.

⁸(4: 7)

⁹They made an inner courtyard for the priests, and also an outer courtyard. The doors in the gates between the courtyards were covered with bronze.

¹⁰The tank was placed near the southeast corner of the Temple.

¹¹Huram also made pots, shovels, and bowls. He completed all the objects that he had promised King Solomon he would make for the Temple: The two columns The two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the columns The design of interwoven chains on each capital The 400 bronze pomegranates arranged in two rows around the design of each capital The ten carts The ten basins The tank The twelve bulls supporting the tank The pots, shovels, and forks Huram the master metalworker made all these objects out of polished bronze, as King Solomon had commanded, for use in the Temple of the LORD.

¹²(4: 11)

¹³(4: 11)

¹⁴(4: 11)

¹⁵(4: 11)

¹⁶(4: 11)

¹⁷The king had them all made in the foundry between Sukkoth and Zeredah in the Jordan Valley.

¹⁸So many objects were made that no one determined the total weight of the bronze used.

¹⁹King Solomon also had gold furnishings made for the Temple: the altar and the tables for the bread offered to God;

²⁰the lampstands and the lamps of fine gold that were to burn in front of the Most Holy Place, according to plan;

²¹the flower decorations, the lamps, and the tongs;

²²the lamp snuffers, the bowls, the dishes for incense, and the pans used for carrying live coals. All these objects were made of pure gold. The outer doors of the Temple and the doors to the Most Holy Place were overlaid with gold.

5¹When King Solomon finished all the work on the Temple, he placed in the Temple storerooms all the things that his father David had dedicated to the LORD -- the silver, gold, and other articles.

²Then King Solomon summoned all the leaders of the tribes and clans of Israel to assemble in Jerusalem, in order to take the LORD's Covenant Box from Zion, David's City, to the Temple.

³They all assembled at the time of the Festival of Shelters.

⁴When all the leaders had gathered, then the Levites lifted the Covenant Box

⁵and carried it to the Temple. The priests and the Levites also moved the Tent of the LORD's presence and all its equipment to the Temple.

⁶King Solomon and all the people of Israel assembled in front of the Covenant Box and sacrificed a large number of sheep and cattle -- too many to count.

⁷Then the priests carried the Covenant Box of the LORD into the Temple and put it in the Most Holy Place, beneath the winged creatures.

⁸Their outstretched wings covered the Box and the poles it was carried by.

⁹The ends of the poles could be seen by anyone standing directly in front of the Most Holy Place, but from nowhere else. (The poles are still there today.)

¹⁰There was nothing inside the Covenant Box except the two stone tablets which Moses had placed there at Mount Sinai, when the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel as they were coming from Egypt.

¹¹ All the priests present, regardless of the group to which they belonged, had consecrated themselves. And all the Levite musicians -- Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, and the members of their clans -- were wearing linen clothing. The Levites stood near the east side of the altar with cymbals and harps, and with them were 120 priests playing trumpets. The singers were accompanied in perfect harmony by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, as they praised the LORD singing: Praise the LORD, because he is good, And his love is eternal. As the priests were leaving the Temple, it was suddenly filled with a cloud shining with the dazzling light of the LORD's presence, and they could not continue the service of worship.

¹² (5: 11)

¹³ (5: 11)

¹⁴ (5: 11)

6¹ Then King Solomon prayed, LORD, you have chosen to live in clouds and darkness.

² Now I have built a majestic temple for you, a place for you to live in forever.

³All the people of Israel were standing there. The king turned to face them and asked God's blessing on them.

⁴He said, Praise the LORD God of Israel! He has kept the promise he made to my father David when he said to him,

⁵From the time I brought my people out of Egypt until now, I did not choose any city in the land of Israel as the place to build a temple where I would be worshiped, and I did not choose anyone to lead my people Israel.

⁶But now I have chosen Jerusalem as the place where I will be worshiped, and you, David, to rule my people.

⁷And Solomon continued, My father David planned to build a temple for the worship of the LORD God of Israel,

⁸but the LORD said to him, You were right in wanting to build a temple for me,

⁹but you will never build it. It is your son, your own son, who will build my temple.

¹⁰Now the LORD has kept his promise: I have succeeded my father as king of Israel, and I have built a temple for the worship of the LORD God of Israel.

¹¹ I have placed in the Temple the Covenant Box, which contains the stone tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with the people of Israel.

¹² Then in the presence of the people Solomon went and stood in front of the altar and raised his arms in prayer.

¹³ (Solomon had made a bronze platform and put it in the middle of the courtyard. It was eight feet square and five feet high. He mounted this platform, knelt down where everyone could see him, and raised his hands toward heaven.)

¹⁴ He prayed, LORD God of Israel, in all heaven and earth there is no god like you. You keep your covenant with your people and show them your love when they live in wholehearted obedience to you.

¹⁵ You have kept the promise you made to my father David; today every word has been fulfilled.

¹⁶ Now, LORD God of Israel, keep the other promise you made to my father when you told him that there would always be one of his descendants ruling

as king of Israel, provided that they carefully obeyed your Law just as he did.

¹⁷ So now, LORD God of Israel, let everything come true that you promised to your servant David.

¹⁸ But can you, O God, really live on earth among men and women? Not even all of heaven is large enough to hold you, so how can this Temple that I have built be large enough?

¹⁹ LORD my God, I am your servant. Listen to my prayer and grant the requests I make to you.

²⁰ Watch over this Temple day and night. You have promised that this is where you will be worshiped, so hear me when I face this Temple and pray.

²¹ Hear my prayers and the prayers of your people Israel when they face this place and pray. In your home in heaven hear us and forgive us.

²² When people are accused of wronging others and are brought to your altar in this Temple to take an oath that they are innocent,

²³ O LORD, listen in heaven and judge your servants. Punish the guilty ones as they deserve and acquit the innocent.

²⁴When your people Israel are defeated by their enemies because they have sinned against you and then when they turn to you and come to this Temple, humbly praying to you for forgiveness,

²⁵listen to them in heaven. Forgive the sins of your people and bring them back to the land which you gave to them and to their ancestors.

²⁶When you hold back the rain because your people have sinned against you and then when they repent and face this Temple, humbly praying to you,

²⁷O LORD, listen to them in heaven and forgive the sins of your servants, the people of Israel, and teach them to do what is right. Then, O LORD, send rain on this land of yours, which you gave to your people as a permanent possession.

²⁸When there is famine in the land or an epidemic or the crops are destroyed by scorching winds or swarms of locusts, or when your people are attacked by their enemies, or when there is disease or sickness among them,

²⁹listen to their prayers. If any of your people Israel, out of heartfelt sorrow,

stretch out their hands in prayer toward this Temple,

³⁰hear their prayer. Listen to them in your home in heaven and forgive them. You alone know the thoughts of the human heart. Deal with each of us as we deserve,

³¹so that your people may honor you and obey you all the time they live in the land which you gave to our ancestors.

³²When foreigners who live in a distant land hear how great and powerful you are and how you are always ready to act, and then they come to pray at this Temple,

³³listen to their prayers. In heaven, where you live, hear them and do what they ask you to do, so that all the peoples of the world may know you and obey you, as your people Israel do. Then they will know that this Temple I have built is where you are to be worshiped.

³⁴When you command your people to go into battle against their enemies and they pray to you, wherever they are, facing this city which you have chosen and this Temple which I have built for you,

³⁵listen to their prayers. Hear them in heaven and give them victory.

³⁶When your people sin against you -- and there is no one who does not sin -- and in your anger you let their enemies defeat them and take them as prisoners to some other land, even if that land is far away,

³⁷listen to your people's prayers. If there in that land they repent and pray to you, confessing how sinful and wicked they have been, hear their prayers, O LORD.

³⁸If in that land they truly and sincerely repent and pray to you as they face toward this land which you gave to our ancestors, this city which you have chosen, and this Temple which I have built for you,

³⁹then listen to their prayers. In your home in heaven hear them and be merciful to them and forgive all the sins of your people.

⁴⁰Now, O my God, look on us and listen to the prayers offered in this place.

⁴¹Rise up now, LORD God, and with the Covenant Box, the symbol of your power, enter the Temple and stay here forever.

Bless your priests in all they do, and may all your people be happy because of your goodness to them.

⁴²LORD God, do not reject the king you have chosen. Remember the love you had for your servant David.

7¹ When King Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and burned up the sacrifices that had been offered, and the dazzling light of the LORD's presence filled the Temple.

² Because the Temple was full of the dazzling light, the priests could not enter it.

³ When the people of Israel saw the fire fall from heaven and the light fill the Temple, they fell face downward on the pavement, worshiping God and praising him for his goodness and his eternal love.

⁴ Then Solomon and all the people offered sacrifices to the LORD.

⁵ He sacrificed 22,000 head of cattle and 120,000 sheep as fellowship offerings. And so he and all the people dedicated the Temple.

⁶ The priests stood in the places that were assigned to them, and facing them

stood the Levites, praising the LORD with the musical instruments that King David had provided and singing the hymn, His Love Is Eternal! as they had been commissioned by David. The priests blew trumpets while all the people stood.

⁷Solomon consecrated the central part of the courtyard, the area in front of the Temple, and then offered there the sacrifices burned whole, the grain offerings, and the fat from the fellowship offerings. He did this because the bronze altar which he had made was too small for all these offerings.

⁸Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the Festival of Shelters for seven days. There was a huge crowd of people from as far away as Hamath Pass in the north and the Egyptian border in the south.

⁹They had spent seven days for the dedication of the altar and then seven more days for the festival. On the last day they had a closing celebration,

¹⁰and on the following day, the twenty-third day of the seventh month, Solomon sent the people home. They were happy about all the blessings that

the LORD had given to his people Israel, to David, and to Solomon.

¹¹ After King Solomon had finished the Temple and the palace, successfully completing all his plans for them,

¹² the LORD appeared to him at night. He said to him, I have heard your prayer, and I accept this Temple as the place where sacrifices are to be offered to me.

¹³ Whenever I hold back the rain or send locusts to eat up the crops or send an epidemic on my people,

¹⁴ if they pray to me and repent and turn away from the evil they have been doing, then I will hear them in heaven, forgive their sins, and make their land prosperous again.

¹⁵ I will watch over this Temple and be ready to hear all the prayers that are offered here,

¹⁶ because I have chosen it and consecrated it as the place where I will be worshiped forever. I will watch over it and protect it for all time.

¹⁷ If you serve me faithfully as your father David did, obeying my laws and doing everything I have commanded you,

¹⁸I will keep the promise I made to your father David when I told him that Israel would always be ruled by his descendants.

¹⁹But if you and your people ever disobey the laws and commands I have given you and worship other gods,

²⁰then I will remove you from the land that I gave you, and I will abandon this Temple that I have consecrated as the place where I am to be worshiped. People everywhere will ridicule it and treat it with contempt.

²¹The Temple is now greatly honored, but then everyone who passes by it will be amazed and will ask, Why did the LORD do this to this land and this Temple?

²²People will answer, It is because they abandoned the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of Egypt. They gave their allegiance to other gods and worshiped them. That is why the LORD has brought this disaster on them.

8¹It took Solomon twenty years to build the Temple and his palace.

² He also rebuilt the cities that King Hiram had given him, and sent Israelites to settle in them.

³ He captured the territory of Hamath and Zobah

⁴ and fortified the city of Palmyra in the desert. He rebuilt all the cities in Hamath that were centers for storing supplies.

⁵ Solomon also rebuilt the following cities: Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon (fortified cities with gates that could be barred),

⁶ the city of Baalath, all the cities where he stored supplies, and the cities where his horses and chariots were stationed. He carried out all his plans for building in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and throughout the territory that he ruled over.

⁷ Solomon employed at forced labor all the descendants of the people of Canaan whom the Israelites had not killed when they took possession of the land. These included Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, whose descendants continue to be slaves down to the present time.

⁸ (8: 7)

⁹ Israelites were not used at forced labor, but served as soldiers, officers, chariot commanders, and cavalry troops.

¹⁰ There were 250 officials in charge of the forced labor working on the various building projects.

¹¹ Solomon moved his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt, from David's City to a house he built for her. He said, She must not live in the palace of King David of Israel, because any place where the Covenant Box has been is holy.

¹² Solomon offered sacrifices to the LORD on the altar which he had built in front of the Temple.

¹³ He offered burnt offerings according to the requirements of the Law of Moses for each holy day: Sabbaths, New Moon Festivals, and the three annual festivals -- the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Harvest Festival, and the Festival of Shelters.

¹⁴ Following the rules laid down by his father David, he organized the daily work of the priests and of the Levites who assisted the priests in singing hymns and in doing their work. He also

organized the Temple guards in sections for performing their daily duties at each gate, in accordance with the commands of David, the man of God.

¹⁵The instructions which David had given the priests and the Levites concerning the storehouses and other matters were carried out in detail.

¹⁶By this time all of Solomon's projects had been completed. From the laying of the foundation of the LORD's Temple to its completion, all the work had been successful.

¹⁷Then Solomon went to Eziongeber and Elath, ports on the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, in the land of Edom.

¹⁸King Hiram sent him ships under the command of his own officers and with experienced sailors. They sailed with Solomon's officers to the land of Ophir and brought back to Solomon about sixteen tons of gold.

9¹The queen of Sheba heard of King Solomon's fame, and she traveled to Jerusalem to test him with difficult questions. She brought with her a large group of attendants, as well as camels loaded with spices, jewels, and a large

amount of gold. When she and Solomon met, she asked him all the questions that she could think of.

²He answered them all; there was nothing too difficult for him to explain.

³The queen of Sheba heard Solomon's wisdom and saw the palace he had built.

⁴She saw the food that was served at his table, the living quarters for his officials, the organization of his palace staff and the uniforms they wore, the clothing of the servants who waited on him at feasts, and the sacrifices he offered in the Temple. It left her breathless and amazed.

⁵She said to the king, What I heard in my own country about you and your wisdom is true!

⁶I did not believe what they told me until I came and saw for myself. I had not heard of even half your wisdom. You are even wiser than people say.

⁷How fortunate are those who serve you, who are always in your presence and are privileged to hear your wise sayings!

⁸Praise the LORD your God! He has shown how pleased he is with you by

making you king, to rule in his name. Because he loves his people Israel and wants to preserve them forever, he has made you their king so that you can maintain law and justice.

⁹She presented to King Solomon the gifts she had brought: almost five tons of gold and a very large amount of spices and jewels. There have never been any other spices as fine as those that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

¹⁰(The sailors of King Hiram and of King Solomon who brought gold from Ophir also brought juniper wood and jewels.

¹¹Solomon used the wood to make stairs for the Temple and for his palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. Nothing like that had ever been seen before in the land of Judah.)

¹²King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she asked for. This was in addition to what he gave her in exchange for the gifts she brought to him. Then she and her attendants returned to the land of Sheba.

¹³Every year King Solomon received over twenty-five tons of gold,

¹⁴in addition to the taxes paid by the traders and merchants. The kings of Arabia and the governors of the Israelite districts also brought him silver and gold.

¹⁵Solomon made two hundred large shields, each of which was covered with about fifteen pounds of beaten gold,

¹⁶and three hundred smaller shields, each covered with about eight pounds of beaten gold. He had them all placed in the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁷The king also had a large throne made. Part of it was covered with ivory and the rest of it was covered with pure gold.

¹⁸Six steps led up to the throne, and there was a footstool attached to it, covered with gold. There were arms on each side of the throne, and the figure of a lion stood at each side.

¹⁹Twelve figures of lions were on the steps, one at either end of each step. No throne like this had ever existed in any other kingdom.

²⁰All of King Solomon's drinking cups were made of gold, and all the utensils in the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon were

of pure gold. Silver was not considered valuable in Solomon's day.

²¹ He had a fleet of ocean-going ships sailing with King Hiram's fleet. Every three years his fleet would return, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.

²² King Solomon was richer and wiser than any other king in the world.

²³ They all consulted him, to hear the wisdom that God had given him.

²⁴ Each of them brought Solomon gifts -- articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules. This continued year after year.

²⁵ King Solomon also had four thousand stalls for his chariots and horses, and had twelve thousand cavalry horses. Some of them he kept in Jerusalem and the rest he stationed in various other cities.

²⁶ He was supreme ruler of all the kings in the territory from the Euphrates River to Philistia and the Egyptian border.

²⁷ During his reign silver was as common in Jerusalem as stone, and cedar was as plentiful as ordinary sycamore in the foothills of Judah.

²⁸Solomon imported horses from Musri and from every other country.

²⁹The rest of the history of Solomon from beginning to end is recorded in The History of Nathan the Prophet, in The Prophecy of Ahijah of Shiloh, and in The Visions of Iddo the Prophet, which also deal with the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel.

³⁰Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years.

³¹He died and was buried in David's City, and his son Rehoboam succeeded him as king.

10¹Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all the people of northern Israel had gathered to make him king.

²When Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had gone to Egypt to escape from King Solomon, heard this news, he returned home.

³The people of the northern tribes sent for him, and they all went together to Rehoboam and said to him,

⁴Your father placed heavy burdens on us. If you make these burdens lighter and make life easier for us, we will be your loyal subjects.

⁵Rehoboam replied, Give me three days to consider the matter. Then come back. So the people left.

⁶King Rehoboam consulted the older men who had served as his father Solomon's advisers. What answer do you advise me to give these people? he asked.

⁷They replied, If you are kind to these people and try to please them by giving a considerate answer, they will always serve you loyally.

⁸But he ignored the advice of the older men and went instead to the young men who had grown up with him and who were now his advisers.

⁹What do you advise me to do? he asked. What shall I say to the people who are asking me to make their burdens lighter?

¹⁰They replied, This is what you should tell them: My little finger is thicker than my father's waist.

¹¹Tell them, My father placed heavy burdens on you; I will make them even heavier. He beat you with whips; I'll flog you with bullwhips!

¹²Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to King Rehoboam, as he had instructed them.

¹³The king ignored the advice of the older men and spoke harshly to the people,

¹⁴as the younger men had advised. He said, My father placed heavy burdens on you; I will make them even heavier. He beat you with whips; I'll flog you with bullwhips!

¹⁵It was the will of the LORD God to bring about what he had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh. This is why the king did not pay any attention to the people.

¹⁶When the people saw that the king would not listen to them, they shouted, Down with David and his family! What have they ever done for us? People of Israel, let's go home! Let Rehoboam look out for himself! So the people of Israel rebelled,

¹⁷leaving Rehoboam as king only of the people who lived in the territory of Judah.

¹⁸Then King Rehoboam sent Adoniram, who was in charge of the forced labor, to go to the Israelites, but they stoned him to death. At this, Rehoboam hurriedly got in his chariot and escaped to Jerusalem.

¹⁹Ever since that time the people of the northern kingdom of Israel have been in rebellion against the dynasty of David.

11 ¹When King Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he called together 180,000 of the best soldiers from the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. He intended to go to war and restore his control over the northern tribes of Israel.

²But the LORD told the prophet Shemaiah

³to give this message to King Rehoboam and to all the people of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin:

⁴Do not attack your own relatives. Go home, all of you. What has happened is my will. They obeyed the LORD's command and did not go to fight Jeroboam.

⁵Rehoboam remained in Jerusalem and had fortifications built for the following cities of Judah and Benjamin:

⁶Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,

⁷ Bethzur, Soco, Adullam,

⁸ Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,

⁹ Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,

¹⁰ Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron.

¹¹ He had them strongly fortified and appointed a commander for each of them, and in each one he placed supplies of food, olive oil, and wine,

¹² and also shields and spears. In this way he kept Judah and Benjamin under his control.

¹³ From all the territory of Israel priests and Levites came south to Judah.

¹⁴ The Levites abandoned their pastures and other land and moved to Judah and Jerusalem, because King Jeroboam of Israel and his successors would not let them serve as priests of the LORD.

¹⁵ Jeroboam appointed priests of his own to serve at the pagan places of worship and to worship demons and the idols he made in the form of bull-calves.

¹⁶ From all the tribes of Israel people who sincerely wanted to worship the LORD, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem, so that they could offer sacrifices to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

¹⁷This strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and for three years they supported Rehoboam son of Solomon and lived as they had under the rule of King David and King Solomon.

¹⁸Rehoboam married Mahalath, whose father was Jerimoth son of David and whose mother was Abihail, the daughter of Eliab and granddaughter of Jesse.

¹⁹They had three sons, Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham.

²⁰Later he married Maacah, the daughter of Absalom, and they had four sons: Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.

²¹In all, Rehoboam had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and he fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. Of all his wives and concubines he loved Maacah best,

²²and he favored her son Abijah over all his other children, choosing him as the one to succeed him as king.

²³Rehoboam wisely assigned responsibilities to his sons and stationed them throughout Judah and Benjamin in the fortified cities. He provided generously for them and also secured many wives for them.

12¹ As soon as Rehoboam had established his authority as king, he and all his people abandoned the Law of the LORD.

² In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign their disloyalty to the LORD was punished. King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem

³ with an army of twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand cavalry, and more soldiers than could be counted, including Libyan, Sukkite, and Ethiopian troops.

⁴ He captured the fortified cities of Judah and advanced as far as Jerusalem.

⁵ Shemaiah the prophet went to King Rehoboam and the Judean leaders who had gathered in Jerusalem to escape Shishak. He said to them, This is the LORD's message to you: You have abandoned me, so now I have abandoned you to Shishak.

⁶ The king and the leaders admitted that they had sinned, and they said, What the LORD is doing is just.

⁷ When the LORD saw this, he spoke again to Shemaiah and said to him, Because they admit their sin, I will not

destroy them. But when Shishak attacks, they will barely survive. Jerusalem will not feel the full force of my anger,

⁸but Shishak will conquer them, and they will learn the difference between serving me and serving earthly rulers.

⁹King Shishak came to Jerusalem and took the treasures from the Temple and from the palace. He took everything, including the gold shields that King Solomon had made.

¹⁰To replace them, Rehoboam made bronze shields and entrusted them to the officers responsible for guarding the palace gates.

¹¹Every time the king went to the Temple, the guards carried the shields and then returned them to the guardroom.

¹²Because he submitted to the LORD, the LORD's anger did not completely destroy him, and things went well for Judah.

¹³Rehoboam ruled in Jerusalem and increased his power as king. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he ruled for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had

chosen from all the territory of Israel as the place where he was to be worshiped. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, from the land of Ammon.

¹⁴He did what was evil, because he did not try to find the LORD's will.

¹⁵Rehoboam's acts from beginning to end and his family records are found in The History of Shemaiah the Prophet and The History of Iddo the Prophet. Rehoboam and Jeroboam were constantly at war with each other.

¹⁶Rehoboam died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City and his son Abijah succeeded him as king.

13¹In the eighteenth year of the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel, Abijah became king of Judah,

²and he ruled three years in Jerusalem. His mother was Micaiah daughter of Uriel, from the city of Gibeah. War broke out between Abijah and Jeroboam.

³Abijah raised an army of 400,000 soldiers, and Jeroboam opposed him with an army of 800,000.

⁴The armies met in the hill country of Ephraim. King Abijah went up Mount

Zemaraim and called out to Jeroboam and the Israelites: Listen to me! he said.

⁵ Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, made an unbreakable covenant with David, giving him and his descendants kingship over Israel forever?

⁶ Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against Solomon, his king.

⁷ Later he gathered together a group of worthless scoundrels, and they forced their will on Rehoboam son of Solomon, who was too young and inexperienced to resist them.

⁸ Now you propose to fight against the royal authority that the LORD gave to David's descendants. You have a huge army and have with you the gold bull-calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods.

⁹ You drove out the LORD's priests, the descendants of Aaron, and you drove out the Levites. In their place you appointed priests in the same way that other nations do. Anybody who comes along with a bull or seven sheep can get himself consecrated as a priest of those so-called gods of yours.

¹⁰But we still serve the LORD our God and have not abandoned him. Priests descended from Aaron perform their duties, and Levites assist them.

¹¹Every morning and every evening they offer him incense and animal sacrifices burned whole. They present the offerings of bread on a table that is ritually clean, and every evening they light the lamps on the gold lampstand. We do what the LORD has commanded, but you have abandoned him.

¹²God himself is our leader and his priests are here with trumpets, ready to blow them and call us to battle against you. People of Israel, don't fight against the LORD, the God of your ancestors! You can't win!

¹³Meanwhile Jeroboam had sent some of his troops to ambush the Judean army from the rear, while the rest faced them from the front.

¹⁴The Judeans looked around and saw that they were surrounded. They cried to the LORD for help, and the priests blew the trumpets.

¹⁵The Judeans gave a loud shout, and led by Abijah, they attacked; God

defeated Jeroboam and the Israelite army.

¹⁶The Israelites fled from the Judeans, and God let the Judeans overpower them.

¹⁷Abijah and his army dealt the Israelites a crushing defeat -- half a million of Israel's best soldiers were killed.

¹⁸And so the people of Judah were victorious over Israel, because they relied on the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

¹⁹Abijah pursued Jeroboam's army and occupied some of his cities: Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron, and the villages near each of these cities.

²⁰Jeroboam never regained his power during Abijah's reign. Finally the LORD struck him down, and he died.

²¹Abijah, however, grew more powerful. He had fourteen wives and fathered twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.

²²The rest of the history of Abijah, what he said and what he did, is written in The History of Iddo the Prophet.

14¹ King Abijah died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City.

His son Asa succeeded him as king, and under Asa the land enjoyed peace for ten years.

²Asa pleased the LORD, his God, by doing what was right and good.

³He removed the foreign altars and the pagan places of worship, broke down the sacred stone columns, and cut down the symbols of the goddess Asherah.

⁴He commanded the people of Judah to do the will of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his teachings and commands.

⁵Because he abolished the pagan places of worship and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, the kingdom was at peace under his rule.

⁶He built fortifications for the cities of Judah during this time, and for several years there was no war, because the LORD gave him peace.

⁷He told the people of Judah, Let us fortify the cities by building walls and towers, and gates that can be shut and barred. We have control of the land because we have done the will of the LORD our God. He has protected us and

given us security on every side. And so they built and prospered.

⁸King Asa had an army of 300,000 men from Judah, armed with shields and spears, and 280,000 men from Benjamin, armed with shields and bows. All of them were brave, well-trained men.

⁹An Ethiopian named Zerah invaded Judah with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots and advanced as far as Mareshah.

¹⁰Asa went out to fight him, and both sides took up their positions at Zephathah Valley near Mareshah.

¹¹Asa prayed to the LORD his God, O LORD, you can help a weak army as easily as a powerful one. Help us now, O LORD our God, because we are relying on you, and in your name we have come out to fight against this huge army. LORD, you are our God; no one can hope to defeat you.

¹²The LORD defeated the Ethiopian army when Asa and the Judean army attacked them. They fled,

¹³and Asa and his troops pursued them as far as Gerar. So many of the

Ethiopians were killed that the army was unable to rally and fight. They were overpowered by the LORD and his army, and the army took large amounts of loot.

¹⁴Then they were able to destroy the cities in the area around Gerar, because the people there were terrified of the LORD. The army plundered all those cities and captured large amounts of loot.

¹⁵They also attacked the camps of some shepherds, capturing large numbers of sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

15¹The spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded,

²and he went to meet King Asa. He called out, Listen to me, King Asa, and all you people of Judah and Benjamin! The LORD is with you as long as you are with him. If you look for him, he will let you find him, but if you turn away, he will abandon you.

³For a long time Israel lived without the true God, without priests to teach them, and without a law.

⁴ But when trouble came, they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel. They searched for him and found him.

⁵ In those days no one could come and go in safety, because there was trouble and disorder in every land.

⁶ One nation oppressed another nation, and one city oppressed another city, because God was bringing trouble and distress on them.

⁷ But you must be strong and not be discouraged. The work that you do will be rewarded.

⁸ When Asa heard the prophecy that Azariah son of Oded had spoken, he was encouraged. He did away with all the idols in the land of Judah and Benjamin and all the idols in the cities he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. He also repaired the altar of the LORD that stood in the Temple courtyard.

⁹ Many people had come over to Asa's side from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, and were living in his kingdom, because they had seen that the LORD was with him. Asa summoned all of them and the people of Judah and Benjamin.

¹⁰They assembled in Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year that Asa was king.

¹¹On that day they offered sacrifices to the LORD from the loot they had brought back: seven hundred head of cattle and seven thousand sheep.

¹²They made a covenant in which they agreed to worship the LORD, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and soul.

¹³Anyone, young or old, male or female, who did not worship him was to be put to death.

¹⁴In a loud voice they took an oath in the LORD's name that they would keep the covenant, and then they shouted and blew trumpets.

¹⁵All the people of Judah were happy because they had made this covenant with all their heart. They took delight in worshiping the LORD, and he accepted them and gave them peace on every side.

¹⁶King Asa removed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made an obscene idol of the fertility goddess

Asherah. Asa cut down the idol, chopped it up, and burned the pieces in Kidron Valley.

¹⁷Even though Asa did not destroy all the pagan places of worship in the land, he remained faithful to the LORD all his life.

¹⁸He placed in the Temple all the objects his father Abijah had dedicated to God, as well as the gold and silver objects that he himself dedicated.

¹⁹There was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of his reign.

16¹In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of King Asa of Judah, King Baasha of Israel invaded Judah and started to fortify Ramah in order to cut off all traffic in and out of Judah.

²So Asa took silver and gold from the treasuries of the Temple and the palace and sent it to Damascus, to King Benhadad of Syria, with this message:

³Let us be allies, as our fathers were. This silver and gold is a present for you. Now break your alliance with King Baasha of Israel so that he will have to pull his troops out of my territory.

⁴ Benhadad agreed to Asa's proposal and sent his commanding officers and their armies to attack the cities of Israel. They captured Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacah, and all the cities of Naphtali where supplies were stored.

⁵ When King Baasha heard what was happening, he stopped fortifying Ramah and abandoned the work.

⁶ Then King Asa gathered men from throughout Judah and had them carry off the stones and timbers that Baasha had been using at Ramah, and they used them to fortify the cities of Geba and Mizpah.

⁷ At that time the prophet Hanani went to King Asa and said, Because you relied on the king of Syria instead of relying on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Israel has escaped from you.

⁸ Didn't the Ethiopians and the Libyans have large armies with many chariots and cavalry troops? But because you relied on the LORD, he gave you victory over them.

⁹ The LORD keeps close watch over the whole world, to give strength to those whose hearts are loyal to him. You have

acted foolishly, and so from now on you will always be at war.

¹⁰This made Asa so angry with the prophet that he had him put in chains. It was at this same time that Asa began treating some of the people cruelly.

¹¹All the events of Asa's reign from beginning to end are recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

¹²In the thirty-ninth year that Asa was king, he was crippled by a severe foot disease; but even then he did not turn to the LORD for help, but to doctors.

¹³Two years later he died

¹⁴and was buried in the rock tomb which he had carved out for himself in David's City. They used spices and perfumed oils to prepare his body for burial, and they built a huge bonfire to mourn his death.

17 ¹Jehoshaphat succeeded his father Asa as king and strengthened his position against Israel.

²He stationed troops in the fortified cities of Judah, in the Judean countryside, and in the cities which Asa had captured in the territory of Ephraim.

³The LORD blessed Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father's early life and did not worship Baal.

⁴He served his father's God, obeyed God's commands, and did not act the way the kings of Israel did.

⁵The LORD gave Jehoshaphat firm control over the kingdom of Judah, and all the people brought him gifts, so that he became wealthy and highly honored.

⁶He took pride in serving the LORD and destroyed all the pagan places of worship and the symbols of the goddess Asherah in Judah.

⁷In the third year of his reign he sent out the following officials to teach in the cities of Judah: Benhail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah.

⁸They were accompanied by nine Levites and two priests. The Levites were Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah; and the priests were Elishama and Jehoram.

⁹They took the book of the Law of the LORD and went through all the towns of Judah, teaching it to the people.

¹⁰The LORD made all the surrounding kingdoms afraid to go to war against King Jehoshaphat.

¹¹Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat a large amount of silver and other gifts, and some Arabs brought him 7,700 sheep and 7,700 goats.

¹²So Jehoshaphat continued to grow more and more powerful. Throughout Judah he built fortifications and cities,

¹³where supplies were stored in huge amounts. In Jerusalem he stationed outstanding officers,

¹⁴according to their clans. Adnah was the commander of the troops from the clans of Judah, and he had 300,000 soldiers under him.

¹⁵Second in rank was Jehohanan, with 280,000 soldiers,

¹⁶and third was Amasiah son of Zichri, with 200,000. (Amasiah had volunteered to serve the LORD.)

¹⁷The commander of the troops from the clans of Benjamin was Eliada, an outstanding soldier, in command of 200,000 men armed with shields and bows.

¹⁸His second in command was Jehozabad with 180,000 men, well-equipped for battle.

¹⁹These soldiers served the king in Jerusalem, and in addition he stationed others in the other fortified cities of Judah.

18¹ When King Jehoshaphat of Judah became rich and famous, he arranged a marriage between a member of his family and the family of King Ahab of Israel.

²A number of years later Jehoshaphat went to the city of Samaria to visit Ahab. To honor Jehoshaphat and those with him, Ahab had a large number of sheep and cattle slaughtered for a feast. He tried to persuade Jehoshaphat to join him in attacking the city of Ramoth in Gilead.

³He asked, Will you go with me to attack Ramoth? Jehoshaphat replied, I am ready when you are, and so is my army. We will join you.

⁴Then he added, But first let's consult the LORD.

⁵So Ahab called in the prophets, about four hundred of them, and asked them,

Should I go and attack Ramoth, or not? Attack it, they answered. God will give you victory.

⁶But Jehoshaphat asked, Isn't there another prophet through whom we can consult the LORD?

⁷Ahab answered, There is one more, Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him because he never prophesies anything good for me; it's always something bad. You shouldn't say that! Jehoshaphat replied.

⁸So King Ahab called in a court official and told him to go and get Micaiah at once.

⁹The two kings, dressed in their royal robes, were sitting on their thrones at the threshing place just outside the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying in front of them.

¹⁰One of them, Zedekiah son of Chenaanah, made iron horns and said to Ahab, This is what the LORD says, With these you will fight the Syrians and totally defeat them.

¹¹All the other prophets said the same thing. March against Ramoth and you

will win, they said. The LORD will give you victory.

¹²Meanwhile, the official who had gone to get Micaiah said to him, All the other prophets have prophesied success for the king, and you had better do the same.

¹³But Micaiah answered, By the living LORD I will say what my God tells me to!

¹⁴When he appeared before King Ahab, the king asked him, Micaiah, should King Jehoshaphat and I go and attack Ramoth, or not? Attack! Micaiah answered. Of course you'll win. The LORD will give you victory.

¹⁵But Ahab replied, When you speak to me in the name of the LORD, tell the truth! How many times do I have to tell you that?

¹⁶Micaiah answered, I can see the army of Israel scattered over the hills like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, These men have no leader; let them go home in peace.

¹⁷Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, I told you that he never prophesies anything good for me; it's always something bad!

¹⁸ Micaiah went on: Now listen to what the LORD says! I saw the LORD sitting on his throne in heaven, with all his angels standing beside him.

¹⁹ The LORD asked, Who will deceive Ahab so that he will go and get killed at Ramoth? Some of the angels said one thing, and others said something else,

²⁰ until a spirit stepped forward, approached the LORD, and said, I will deceive him. How? the LORD asked.

²¹ The spirit replied, I will go and make all of Ahab's prophets tell lies. The LORD said, Go and deceive him. You will succeed.

²² And Micaiah concluded: This is what has happened. The LORD has made these prophets of yours lie to you. But he himself has decreed that you will meet with disaster!

²³ Then the prophet Zedekiah went up to Micaiah, slapped his face, and asked, Since when did the LORD's spirit leave me and speak to you?

²⁴ You will find out when you go into some back room to hide, Micaiah replied.

²⁵ Then King Ahab ordered one of his officers, Arrest Micaiah and take him to

Amon, the governor of the city, and to Prince Joash.

²⁶Tell them to throw him in prison and to put him on bread and water until I return safely.

²⁷If you return safely, Micaiah exclaimed, then the LORD has not spoken through me! And he added, Listen, everyone, to what I have said!

²⁸Then King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to attack the city of Ramoth in Gilead.

²⁹Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, As we go into battle, I will disguise myself, but you wear your royal garments. So the king of Israel went into battle in disguise.

³⁰The king of Syria had ordered his chariot commanders to attack no one else except the king of Israel.

³¹So when they saw King Jehoshaphat, they all thought that he was the king of Israel, and they turned to attack him. But Jehoshaphat gave a shout, and the LORD God rescued him and turned the attack away from him.

³²The chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, so they stopped pursuing him.

³³By chance, however, a Syrian soldier shot an arrow which struck King Ahab between the joints of his armor. I'm wounded! he cried out to his chariot driver. Turn around and pull out of the battle!

³⁴While the battle raged on, King Ahab remained propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians. At sunset he died.

19¹King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned safely to his palace in Jerusalem.

²A prophet, Jehu son of Hanani, went to meet the king and said to him, Do you think it is right to help those who are wicked and to take the side of those who hate the LORD? What you have done has brought the LORD's anger on you.

³But even so, there is some good in you. You have removed all the symbols of the goddess Asherah which people worshiped, and you have tried to follow God's will.

⁴Even though King Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, he traveled regularly among the people, from Beersheba in the south to the edge of the hill country of Ephraim in the north, in order to call the people

back to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

⁵He appointed judges in each of the fortified cities of Judah

⁶and instructed them: Be careful in pronouncing judgment; you are not acting on human authority, but on the authority of the LORD, and he is with you when you pass sentence.

⁷Honor the LORD and act carefully, because the LORD our God does not tolerate fraud or partiality or the taking of bribes.

⁸In Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed Levites, priests, and some of the leading citizens as judges in cases involving a violation of the Law of the LORD or legal disputes between inhabitants of the city.

⁹He gave them the following instructions: You must perform your duties in reverence for the LORD, faithfully obeying him in everything you do.

¹⁰Whenever your fellow citizens from any of the cities bring before you a case of homicide or any other violation of a law or commandment, you must instruct them carefully how to conduct

themselves during the trial, so that they do not become guilty of sinning against the LORD. Unless you do, you and your fellow citizens will feel the force of the LORD's anger. But if you do your duty, you will not be guilty.

¹¹Amariah the High Priest will have final authority in all religious cases, and Zebadiah son of Ishmael, governor of Judah, will have final authority in all civil cases. The Levites have the responsibility of seeing that the decisions of the courts are carried out. Be courageous and carry out these instructions, and may the LORD be on the side of the right!

20¹Some time later the armies of Moab and Ammon, together with their allies, the Meunites, invaded Judah.

²Some messengers came and announced to King Jehoshaphat: A large army from Edom has come from the other side of the Dead Sea to attack you. They have already captured Hazazon Tamar. (This is another name for Engedi.)

³Jehoshaphat was frightened and prayed to the LORD for guidance. Then he gave orders for a fast to be observed throughout the country.

⁴From every city of Judah people hurried to Jerusalem to ask the LORD for guidance,

⁵and they and the people of Jerusalem gathered in the new courtyard of the Temple. King Jehoshaphat went and stood before them

⁶and prayed aloud, O LORD God of our ancestors, you rule in heaven over all the nations of the world. You are powerful and mighty, and no one can oppose you.

⁷You are our God. When your people Israel moved into this land, you drove out the people who were living here and gave the land to the descendants of Abraham, your friend, to be theirs forever.

⁸They have lived here and have built a temple to honor you, knowing

⁹that if any disaster struck them to punish them -- a war, an epidemic, or a famine -- then they could come and stand in front of this Temple where you are worshiped. They could pray to you in their trouble, and you would hear them and rescue them.

¹⁰Now the people of Ammon, Moab, and Edom have attacked us. When our

ancestors came out of Egypt, you did not allow them to enter those lands, so our ancestors went around them and did not destroy them.

¹¹ This is how they repay us -- they come to drive us out of the land that you gave us.

¹² You are our God! Punish them, for we are helpless in the face of this large army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but we look to you for help.

¹³ All the men of Judah, with their wives and children, were standing there at the Temple.

¹⁴ The spirit of the LORD came upon a Levite who was present in the crowd. His name was Jahaziel son of Zechariah; he was a member of the clan of Asaph and was descended from Asaph through Mattaniah, Jeiel, and Benaiah.

¹⁵ Jahaziel said, Your Majesty and all you people of Judah and Jerusalem, the LORD says that you must not be discouraged or be afraid to face this large army. The battle depends on God, not on you.

¹⁶Attack them tomorrow as they come up the pass at Ziz. You will meet them at the end of the valley that leads to the wild country near Jeruel.

¹⁷You will not have to fight this battle. Just take up your positions and wait; you will see the LORD give you victory. People of Judah and Jerusalem, do not hesitate or be afraid. Go out to battle, and the LORD will be with you!

¹⁸Then King Jehoshaphat bowed low, with his face touching the ground, and all the people bowed with him and worshiped the LORD.

¹⁹The members of the Levite clans of Kohath and Korah stood up and with a loud shout praised the LORD, the God of Israel.

²⁰Early the next morning the people went out to the wild country near Tekoa. As they were starting out, Jehoshaphat addressed them with these words: People of Judah and Jerusalem! Put your trust in the LORD your God, and you will stand your ground. Believe what his prophets tell you, and you will succeed.

²¹After consulting with the people, the king ordered some musicians to put on

the robes they wore on sacred occasions and to march ahead of the army, singing: Praise the LORD! His love is eternal!

²²When they began to sing, the LORD threw the invading armies into a panic.

²³The Ammonites and the Moabites attacked the Edomite army and completely destroyed it, and then they turned on each other in savage fighting.

²⁴When the Judean army reached a tower that was in the desert, they looked toward the enemy and saw that they were all lying on the ground dead. Not one had escaped.

²⁵Jehoshaphat and his troops moved in to take the loot, and they found many cattle, supplies, clothing, and other valuable objects. They spent three days gathering the loot, but there was so much that they could not take everything.

²⁶On the fourth day they assembled in Beracah Valley and praised the LORD for all he had done. That is why the valley is called Beracah.

²⁷Jehoshaphat led his troops back to Jerusalem in triumph, because the LORD had defeated their enemies.

²⁸When they reached the city, they marched to the Temple to the music of harps and trumpets.

²⁹Every nation that heard how the LORD had defeated Israel's enemies was terrified,

³⁰so Jehoshaphat ruled in peace, and God gave him security on every side.

³¹Jehoshaphat had become king of Judah at the age of thirty-five and had ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-five years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

³²Like his father Asa before him, he did what was right in the sight of the LORD;

³³but the pagan places of worship were not destroyed. The people still did not turn wholeheartedly to the worship of the God of their ancestors.

³⁴Everything else that Jehoshaphat did, from the beginning of his reign to its end, is recorded in The History of Jehu Son of Hanani, which is a part of The History of the Kings of Israel.

³⁵At one time King Jehoshaphat of Judah made an alliance with King Ahaziah of Israel, who did many wicked things.

³⁶At the port of Eziongeber they built ocean-going ships.

³⁷But Eliezer son of Dodavahu, from the town of Mareshah, warned Jehoshaphat, Because you have made an alliance with Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy what you have built. And the ships were wrecked and never sailed.

21 ¹Jehoshaphat died and was buried in the royal tombs in David's City and his son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

²Jehoram son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah had six brothers: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael, and Shephatiah.

³Their father gave them large amounts of gold, silver, and other valuable possessions, and placed each one in charge of one of the fortified cities of Judah. But because Jehoram was the oldest, Jehoshaphat made him his successor.

⁴When Jehoram was in firm control of the kingdom, he had all his brothers killed, and also some Israelite officials.

⁵Jehoram became king at the age of thirty-two, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eight years.

⁶He followed the wicked example of King Ahab and the other kings of Israel, because he had married one of Ahab's daughters. He sinned against the LORD,

⁷but the LORD was not willing to destroy the dynasty of David, because he had made a covenant with David and promised that his descendants would always continue to rule.

⁸During Jehoram's reign Edom revolted against Judah and became an independent kingdom.

⁹So Jehoram and his officers set out with chariots and invaded Edom. There the Edomite army surrounded them, but during the night they managed to break out and escape.

¹⁰Edom has been independent of Judah ever since. During this same period the city of Libnah also revolted, because Jehoram had abandoned the LORD, the God of his ancestors.

¹¹He even built pagan places of worship in the Judean highlands and led the

people of Judah and Jerusalem to sin against the LORD.

¹²The prophet Elijah sent Jehoram a letter, which read as follows: The LORD, the God of your ancestor David, condemns you, because you did not follow the example of your father, King Jehoshaphat, or that of your grandfather, King Asa.

¹³Instead, you have followed the example of the kings of Israel and have led the people of Judah and Jerusalem into being unfaithful to God, just as Ahab and his successors led Israel into unfaithfulness. You even murdered your brothers, who were better men than you are.

¹⁴As a result, the LORD will severely punish your people, your children, and your wives, and will destroy your possessions.

¹⁵You yourself will suffer a painful intestinal disease that will grow worse day by day.

¹⁶Some Philistines and Arabs lived near where some Ethiopians had settled along the coast. The LORD caused them to go to war against Jehoram.

¹⁷ They invaded Judah, looted the royal palace, and carried off as prisoners all the king's wives and sons except Ahaziah, his youngest son.

¹⁸ Then after all this, the LORD brought on the king a painful disease of the intestines.

¹⁹ For almost two years it grew steadily worse until finally the king died in agony. His subjects did not light a bonfire in mourning for him as had been done for his ancestors.

²⁰ Jehoram had become king at the age of thirty-two and had ruled in Jerusalem for eight years. Nobody was sorry when he died. They buried him in David's City, but not in the royal tombs.

22 ¹ Some Arabs had led a raid and killed all of King Jehoram's sons except Ahaziah, the youngest. So now the people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah king as his father's successor.

² Ahaziah became king at the age of twenty-two, and he ruled in Jerusalem for one year. Ahaziah also followed the example of King Ahab's family, since his mother Athaliah -- the daughter of King Ahab and granddaughter of King Omri of

Israel -- gave him advice that led him into evil.

³ (22: 2)

⁴ He sinned against the LORD, because after his father's death other members of King Ahab's family became his advisers, and they led to his downfall.

⁵ Following their advice, he joined King Joram of Israel in a war against King Hazael of Syria. The armies clashed at Ramoth in Gilead, and Joram was wounded in battle.

⁶ He returned to the city of Jezreel to recover from his wounds, and Ahaziah went there to visit him.

⁷ God used this visit to Joram to bring about Ahaziah's downfall. While Ahaziah was there, he and Joram were confronted by a man named Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had chosen to destroy the dynasty of Ahab.

⁸ As Jehu was carrying out God's sentence on the dynasty, he came across a group made up of Judean leaders and of Ahaziah's nephews that had accompanied Ahaziah on his visit. Jehu killed them all.

⁹A search was made for Ahaziah, and he was found hiding in Samaria. They took him to Jehu and put him to death. But they did bury his body out of respect for his grandfather King Jehoshaphat, who had done all he could to serve the LORD. No member of Ahaziah's family was left who could rule the kingdom.

¹⁰As soon as King Ahaziah's mother Athaliah learned of her son's murder, she gave orders for all the members of the royal family of Judah to be killed.

¹¹Ahaziah had a half sister, Jehosheba, who was married to a priest named Jehoiada. She secretly rescued one of Ahaziah's sons, Joash, took him away from the other princes who were about to be murdered and hid him and a nurse in a bedroom at the Temple. By keeping him hidden, she saved him from death at the hands of Athaliah.

¹²For six years he remained there in hiding, while Athaliah ruled as queen.

23¹ After waiting six years Jehoiada the priest decided that it was time to take action. He made a pact with five army officers: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son

of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri.

²They traveled to all the cities of Judah and brought back with them to Jerusalem the Levites and all the heads of the clans.

³They all gathered in the Temple, and there they made a covenant with Joash, the king's son. Jehoiada said to them, Here is the son of the late king. He is now to be king, as the LORD promised that King David's descendants would be.

⁴This is what we will do. When the priests and Levites come on duty on the Sabbath, one third of them will guard the Temple gates,

⁵another third will guard the royal palace, and the rest will be stationed at the Foundation Gate. All the people will assemble in the Temple courtyard.

⁶No one is to enter the Temple buildings except the priests and the Levites who are on duty. They may enter, because they are consecrated, but the rest of the people must obey the LORD's instructions and stay outside.

⁷The Levites are to stand guard around the king, with their swords drawn, and

are to stay with the king wherever he goes. Anyone who tries to enter the Temple is to be killed.

⁸The Levites and the people of Judah carried out Jehoiada's instructions. The men were not dismissed when they went off duty on the Sabbath, so the commanders had available both those coming on duty and those going off.

⁹Jehoiada gave the officers the spears and shields that had belonged to King David and had been kept in the Temple.

¹⁰He stationed the men with drawn swords all around the front of the Temple, to protect the king.

¹¹Then Jehoiada led Joash out, placed the crown on his head, and gave him a copy of the laws governing kingship. And so he was made king. Jehoiada the priest and his sons anointed Joash, and everyone shouted, Long live the king!

¹²Athaliah heard the people cheering for the king, so she hurried to the Temple, where the crowd had gathered.

¹³There she saw the new king at the Temple entrance, standing by the column reserved for kings and surrounded by the army officers and the trumpeters.

All the people were shouting joyfully and blowing trumpets, and the Temple musicians with their instruments were leading the celebration. She tore her clothes in distress and shouted, Treason! Treason!

¹⁴ Jehoiada did not want Athaliah killed in the Temple area, so he called out the army officers and said, Take her out between the rows of guards, and kill anyone who tries to rescue her.

¹⁵ They seized her, took her to the palace, and there at the Horse Gate they killed her.

¹⁶ The priest Jehoiada had King Joash and the people join him in making a covenant that they would be the LORD's people.

¹⁷ Then they all went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols there and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, in front of the altars.

¹⁸ Jehoiada put the priests and Levites in charge of the work of the Temple. They were to carry out the duties assigned to them by King David and to burn the sacrifices offered to the LORD in accordance with the Law of Moses.

They were also in charge of the music and the celebrations.

¹⁹Jehoiada also put guards on duty at the Temple gates to keep out anyone who was ritually unclean.

²⁰The army officers, the leading citizens, the officials, and all the rest of the people joined Jehoiada in a procession that brought the king from the Temple to the palace. They entered by the main gate, and the king took his place on the throne.

²¹All the people were filled with happiness, and the city was quiet, now that Athaliah had been killed.

24¹ Joash became king of Judah at the age of seven, and he ruled in Jerusalem for forty years. His mother was Zibiah from the city of Beersheba.

²He did what was pleasing to the LORD as long as Jehoiada the priest was alive.

³Jehoiada chose two wives for King Joash, and they bore him sons and daughters.

⁴After he had been king for a while, Joash decided to have the Temple repaired.

⁵ He ordered the priests and the Levites to go to the cities of Judah and collect from all the people enough money to make the annual repairs on the Temple. He told them to act promptly, but the Levites delayed,

⁶ so he called in Jehoiada, their leader, and demanded, Why haven't you seen to it that the Levites collect from Judah and Jerusalem the tax which Moses, the servant of the LORD, required the people to pay for support of the Tent of the LORD's presence?

⁷ (The followers of Athaliah, that corrupt woman, had damaged the Temple and had used many of the sacred objects in the worship of Baal.)

⁸ The king ordered the Levites to make a box for contributions and to place it at the Temple gate.

⁹ They sent word throughout Jerusalem and Judah for everyone to bring to the LORD the tax which Moses, God's servant, had first collected in the wilderness.

¹⁰ This pleased the people and their leaders, and they brought their tax money and filled the box with it.

¹¹ Every day the Levites would take the box to the royal official who was in charge of it. Whenever it was full, the royal secretary and the High Priest's representative would take the money out and return the box to its place. And so they collected a large sum of money.

¹² The king and Jehoiada would give the money to those who were in charge of repairing the Temple, and they hired stonemasons, carpenters, and metalworkers to make the repairs.

¹³ All of them worked hard, and they restored the Temple to its original condition, as solid as ever.

¹⁴ When the repairs were finished, the remaining gold and silver was given to the king and Jehoiada, who used it to have bowls and other utensils made for the Temple. As long as Jehoiada was alive, sacrifices were offered regularly at the Temple.

¹⁵ After reaching the very old age of a hundred and thirty, he died.

¹⁶ They buried him in the royal tombs in David's City in recognition of the service he had done for the people of Israel, for God, and for the Temple.

¹⁷ But once Jehoiada was dead, the leaders of Judah persuaded King Joash to listen to them instead.

¹⁸ And so the people stopped worshiping in the Temple of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and began to worship idols and the images of the goddess Asherah. Their guilt for these sins brought the LORD's anger on Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁹ The LORD sent prophets to warn them to return to him, but the people refused to listen.

²⁰ Then the spirit of God took control of Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood where the people could see him and called out, The LORD God asks why you have disobeyed his commands and are bringing disaster on yourselves! You abandoned him, so he has abandoned you!

²¹ King Joash joined in a conspiracy against Zechariah, and on the king's orders the people stoned Zechariah in the Temple courtyard.

²² The king forgot about the loyal service that Zechariah's father Jehoiada had given him, and he had Zechariah

killed. As Zechariah was dying, he called out, May the LORD see what you are doing and punish you!

²³When autumn came that year, the Syrian army attacked Judah and Jerusalem, killed all the leaders, and took large amounts of loot back to Damascus.

²⁴The Syrian army was small, but the LORD let them defeat a much larger Judean army because the people had abandoned him, the LORD God of their ancestors. In this way King Joash was punished.

²⁵He was severely wounded, and when the enemy withdrew, two of his officials plotted against him and killed him in his bed to avenge the murder of the son of Jehoiada the priest. He was buried in David's City, but not in the royal tombs.

²⁶(Those who plotted against him were Zabad, the son of an Ammonite woman named Shimeath, and Jehozabad, the son of a Moabite woman named Shimrith.)

²⁷The Commentary on the Book of Kings contains the stories of the sons of Joash, the prophecies spoken against

him, and the record of how he rebuilt the Temple. His son Amaziah succeeded him as king.

25¹ Amaziah became king at the age of twenty-five, and he ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years. His mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem.

² He did what was pleasing to the LORD, but did it reluctantly.

³ As soon as he was firmly in power, he executed the officials who had murdered his father.

⁴ He did not, however, execute their children, but followed what the LORD had commanded in the Law of Moses: Parents are not to be put to death for crimes committed by their children, and children are not to be put to death for crimes committed by their parents; people are to be put to death only for crimes they themselves have committed.

⁵ King Amaziah organized all the men of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin into army units, according to the clans they belonged to, and placed officers in command of units of a thousand and units of a hundred. This included all men twenty years of age or older, 300,000

in all. They were picked troops, ready for battle, skilled in using spears and shields.

⁶In addition, he hired 100,000 soldiers from Israel at a cost of about four tons of silver.

⁷But a prophet went to the king and said to him, Don't take these Israelite soldiers with you. The LORD is not with these people from the Northern Kingdom.

⁸You may think that they will make you stronger in battle, but it is God who has the power to give victory or defeat, and he will let your enemies defeat you.

⁹Amaziah asked the prophet, But what about all that silver I have already paid for them? The prophet replied, The LORD can give you back more than that!

¹⁰So Amaziah sent the hired troops away and told them to go home. At this they went home, bitterly angry with the people of Judah.

¹¹Amaziah summoned up his courage and led his army to Salt Valley. There they fought and killed ten thousand Edomite soldiers

¹²and captured another ten thousand. They took the prisoners to the top of the cliff at the city of Sela and threw them off, so that they were killed on the rocks below.

¹³Meanwhile the Israelite soldiers that Amaziah had not allowed to go into battle with him attacked the Judean cities between Samaria and Beth Horon, killed three thousand men, and captured quantities of loot.

¹⁴When Amaziah returned from defeating the Edomites, he brought their idols back with him, set them up, worshiped them, and burned incense to them.

¹⁵This made the LORD angry, so he sent a prophet to Amaziah. The prophet demanded, Why have you worshiped foreign gods that could not even save their own people from your power?

¹⁶Since when, Amaziah interrupted, have we made you adviser to the king? Stop talking, or I'll have you killed! The prophet stopped, but not before saying, Now I know that God has decided to destroy you because you have done all this and have ignored my advice.

¹⁷ King Amaziah of Judah and his advisers plotted against Israel. He then sent a message to King Jehoash of Israel, who was the son of Jehoahaz and grandson of Jehu, challenging him to fight.

¹⁸ Jehoash sent this answer to Amaziah: Once a thorn bush in the Lebanon Mountains sent a message to a cedar: Give your daughter in marriage to my son. A wild animal passed by and trampled the bush down.

¹⁹ Now Amaziah, you boast that you have defeated the Edomites, but I advise you to stay at home. Why stir up trouble that will only bring disaster on you and your people?

²⁰ But Amaziah refused to listen. It was God's will for Amaziah to be defeated, because he had worshiped the Edomite idols.

²¹ So King Jehoash of Israel went into battle against King Amaziah of Judah. They met at Beth Shemesh in Judah,

²² the Judean army was defeated, and the soldiers fled to their homes.

²³ Jehoash captured Amaziah and took him to Jerusalem. There he tore down

the city wall from Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, a distance of two hundred yards.

²⁴He took back to Samaria as loot all the gold and silver in the Temple, the Temple equipment guarded by the descendants of Obed Edom, and the palace treasures. He also took hostages with him.

²⁵King Amaziah of Judah outlived King Jehoash of Israel by fifteen years.

²⁶All the other things that Amaziah did from the beginning to the end of his reign are recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

²⁷Ever since the time when he rebelled against the LORD, there had been a plot against him in Jerusalem. Finally he fled to the city of Lachish, but his enemies followed him there and killed him.

²⁸His body was carried to Jerusalem on a horse, and he was buried in the royal tombs in David's City.

26¹All the people of Judah chose Amaziah's sixteen-year-old son Uzziah to succeed his father as king.

² (It was after the death of Amaziah that Uzziah recaptured Elath and rebuilt the city.)

³ Uzziah became king at the age of sixteen, and he ruled in Jerusalem for fifty-two years. His mother was Jecoliah from Jerusalem.

⁴ Following the example of his father, he did what was pleasing to the LORD.

⁵ As long as Zechariah, his religious adviser, was living, he served the LORD faithfully, and God blessed him.

⁶ Uzziah went to war against the Philistines. He tore down the walls of the cities of Gath, Jamnia, and Ashdod, and built fortified cities near Ashdod and in the rest of Philistia.

⁷ God helped him defeat the Philistines, the Arabs living at Gurbaal, and the Meunites.

⁸ The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah, and he became so powerful that his fame spread even to Egypt.

⁹ Uzziah strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem by building towers at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and where the wall turned.

¹⁰He also built fortified towers in the open country and dug many cisterns, because he had large herds of livestock in the western foothills and plains. Because he loved farming, he encouraged the people to plant vineyards in the hill country and to farm the fertile land.

¹¹He had a large army ready for battle. Its records were kept by his secretaries Jeiel and Maaseiah under the supervision of Hananiah, a member of the king's staff.

¹²The army was commanded by 2,600 officers.

¹³Under them were 307,500 soldiers able to fight effectively for the king against his enemies.

¹⁴Uzziah supplied the army with shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows and arrows, and stones for slinging.

¹⁵In Jerusalem his inventors made equipment for shooting arrows and for throwing large stones from the towers and corners of the city wall. His fame spread everywhere, and he became very powerful because of the help he received from God.

¹⁶But when King Uzziah became strong, he grew arrogant, and that led to his downfall. He defied the LORD his God by going into the Temple to burn incense on the altar of incense.

¹⁷Azariah the priest, accompanied by eighty strong and courageous priests, followed the king

¹⁸to resist him. They said, Uzziah! You have no right to burn incense to the LORD. Only the priests who are descended from Aaron have been consecrated to do this. Leave this holy place. You have offended the LORD God, and you no longer have his blessing.

¹⁹Uzziah was standing there in the Temple beside the incense altar and was holding an incense burner. He became angry with the priests, and immediately a dreaded skin disease broke out on his forehead.

²⁰Azariah and the other priests stared at the king's forehead in horror and then forced him to leave the Temple. He hurried to get out, because the LORD had punished him.

²¹For the rest of his life King Uzziah was ritually unclean because of his disease.

Unable to enter the Temple again, he lived in his own house, relieved of all duties, while his son Jotham governed the country.

²²The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz recorded all the other things that King Uzziah did during his reign.

²³Uzziah died and was buried in the royal burial ground, but because of his disease he was not buried in the royal tombs. His son Jotham succeeded him as king.

27¹ Jotham became king at the age of twenty-five, and he ruled in Jerusalem for sixteen years. His mother was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok.

²He did what was pleasing to the LORD, just as his father had done; but unlike his father he did not sin by burning incense in the Temple. The people, however, went on sinning.

³It was Jotham who built the North Gate of the Temple and did extensive work on the city wall in the area of Jerusalem called Ophel.

⁴In the mountains of Judah he built cities, and in the forests he built forts and towers.

⁵ He fought against the king of Ammon and his army and defeated them. Then he forced the Ammonites to pay him the following tribute each year for three years: four tons of silver, fifty thousand bushels of wheat, and fifty thousand bushels of barley.

⁶ Jotham grew powerful because he faithfully obeyed the LORD his God.

⁷ The other events of Jotham's reign, his wars, and his policies, are all recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

⁸ Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he ruled in Jerusalem for sixteen years.

⁹ He died and was buried in David's City and his son Ahaz succeeded him as king.

28¹ Ahaz became king at the age of twenty, and he ruled in Jerusalem for sixteen years. He did not follow the good example of his ancestor King David; instead, he did what was not pleasing to the LORD

² and followed the example of the kings of Israel. He had metal images of Baal made,

³ burned incense in Hinnom Valley, and even sacrificed his own sons as burnt offerings to idols, imitating the disgusting practice of the people whom the LORD had driven out of the land as the Israelites advanced.

⁴ At the pagan places of worship, on the hills, and under every shady tree Ahaz offered sacrifices and burned incense.

⁵ Because King Ahaz sinned, the LORD his God let the king of Syria defeat him and take a large number of Judeans back to Damascus as prisoners. The LORD also let the king of Israel, Pekah son of Remaliah, defeat Ahaz and kill 120,000 of the bravest Judean soldiers in one day. The LORD, the God of their ancestors, permitted this to happen, because the people of Judah had abandoned him.

⁶ (28: 5)

⁷ An Israelite soldier named Zichri killed King Ahaz son Maaseiah, the palace administrator Azrikam, and Elkanah, who was second in command to the king.

⁸ Even though the Judeans were their own relatives, the Israelite army captured 200,000 women and children as prisoners and took them back to

Samaria, along with large amounts of loot.

⁹A man named Oded, a prophet of the LORD, lived in the city of Samaria. He met the returning Israelite army with its Judean prisoners as it was about to enter the city, and he said, The LORD God of your ancestors was angry with Judah and let you defeat them, but now he has heard of the vicious way you slaughtered them.

¹⁰And now you intend to make the men and women of Jerusalem and Judah your slaves. Don't you know that you also have committed sins against the LORD your God?

¹¹Listen to me! These prisoners are your brothers and sisters. Let them go, or the LORD will punish you in his anger.

¹²Four of the leading men of the Northern Kingdom, Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai also opposed the actions of the army.

¹³They said, Don't bring those prisoners here! We have already sinned against the LORD and made him angry enough

to punish us. Now you want to do something that will increase our guilt.

¹⁴So then the army handed the prisoners and the loot over to the people and their leaders,

¹⁵and the four men were appointed to provide the prisoners with clothing from the captured loot. They gave them clothes and sandals to wear, gave them enough to eat and drink, and put olive oil on their wounds. Those who were too weak to walk were put on donkeys, and all the prisoners were taken back to Judean territory at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then the Israelites returned home to Samaria.

¹⁶The Edomites began to raid Judah again and captured many prisoners, so King Ahaz asked Tiglath Pileser, the emperor of Assyria, to send help.

¹⁷(28:16)

¹⁸At this same time the Philistines were raiding the towns in the western foothills and in southern Judah. They captured the cities of Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, and Gederoth, and the cities of Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo with their villages, and settled there permanently.

¹⁹Because King Ahaz of Judah had violated the rights of his people and had defied the LORD, the LORD brought troubles on Judah.

²⁰The Assyrian emperor, instead of helping Ahaz, opposed him and caused him trouble.

²¹So Ahaz took the gold from the Temple, the palace, and the homes of the leaders of the people, and gave it to the emperor, but even this did not help.

²²When his troubles were at their worst, that man Ahaz sinned against the LORD more than ever.

²³He offered sacrifices to the gods of the Syrians, who had defeated him. He said, The Syrian gods helped the kings of Syria, so if I sacrifice to them, they may help me too. This brought disaster on him and on his nation.

²⁴In addition, he took all the Temple equipment and broke it in pieces. He closed the Temple and set up altars in every part of Jerusalem.

²⁵In every city and town in Judah he built pagan places of worship, where incense was to be burned to foreign gods. In this way he brought on himself

the anger of the LORD, the God of his ancestors.

²⁶All the other events of his reign, from beginning to end, are recorded in The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

²⁷King Ahaz died and was buried in Jerusalem, but not in the royal tombs. His son Hezekiah succeeded him as king.

29¹ Hezekiah became king of Judah at the age of twenty-five, and he ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years. His mother was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.

²Following the example of his ancestor King David, he did what was pleasing to the LORD.

³In the first month of the year after Hezekiah became king, he reopened the gates of the Temple and had them repaired.

⁴He assembled a group of priests and Levites in the east courtyard of the Temple

⁵and spoke to them there. He said, You Levites are to consecrate yourselves and purify the Temple of the LORD, the God of your ancestors. Remove from the Temple everything that defiles it.

⁶Our ancestors were unfaithful to the LORD our God and did what was displeasing to him. They abandoned him and turned their backs on the place where he dwells.

⁷They closed the doors of the Temple, let the lamps go out, and failed to burn incense or offer burnt offerings in the Temple of the God of Israel.

⁸Because of this the LORD has been angry with Judah and Jerusalem, and what he has done to them has shocked and frightened everyone. You know this very well.

⁹Our fathers were killed in battle, and our wives and children have been taken away as prisoners.

¹⁰I have now decided to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, so that he will no longer be angry with us.

¹¹My sons, do not lose any time. You are the ones that the LORD has chosen to burn incense to him and to lead the people in worshiping him.

¹²The following Levites were there: From the clan of Kohath, Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah From

the clan of Merari, Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel From the clan of Gershon, Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah From the clan of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeuel From the clan of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah From the clan of Heman, Jehuel and Shimei From the clan of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel

¹³ (29: 12)

¹⁴ (29: 12)

¹⁵ These men assembled their fellow Levites, and they all made themselves ritually clean. Then, as the king had commanded them to do, they began to make the Temple ritually clean, according to the Law of the LORD.

¹⁶ The priests went inside the Temple to purify it, and they carried out into the Temple courtyard everything that was ritually unclean. From there the Levites took it all outside the city to Kidron Valley.

¹⁷ The work was begun on the first day of the first month, and by the eighth day they had finished it all, including the entrance room to the Temple. Then they worked for the next eight days, until the

sixteenth of the month, preparing the Temple for worship.

¹⁸The Levites made the following report to King Hezekiah: We have completed the ritual purification of the whole Temple, including the altar for burnt offerings, the table for the sacred bread, and all their equipment.

¹⁹We have also brought back all the equipment which King Ahaz took away during those years he was unfaithful to God, and we have rededicated it. It is all in front of the LORD's altar.

²⁰Without delay King Hezekiah assembled the leading men of the city, and together they went to the Temple.

²¹As an offering to take away the sins of the royal family and of the people of Judah and to purify the Temple, they took seven bulls, seven sheep, seven lambs, and seven goats. The king told the priests, who were descendants of Aaron, to offer the animals as sacrifices on the altar.

²²The priests killed the bulls first, then the sheep, and then the lambs, and sprinkled the blood of each sacrifice on the altar.

²³ Finally they took the goats to the king and to the other worshipers, who laid their hands on them.

²⁴ Then the priests killed the goats and poured their blood on the altar as a sacrifice to take away the sin of all the people, for the king had commanded that burnt offerings and sin offerings be made for all Israel.

²⁵ The king followed the instructions that the LORD had given to King David through Gad, the king's prophet, and through the prophet Nathan; he stationed Levites in the Temple, with harps and cymbals,

²⁶ instruments like those that King David had used. The priests also stood there with trumpets.

²⁷ Hezekiah gave the order for the burnt offering to be presented; and as the offering began, the people sang praise to the LORD, and the musicians began to play the trumpets and all the other instruments.

²⁸ Everyone who was there joined in worship, and the singing and the rest of the music continued until all the sacrifices had been burned.

²⁹ Then King Hezekiah and all the people knelt down and worshiped God.

³⁰ The king and the leaders of the nation told the Levites to sing to the LORD the songs of praise that were written by David and by Asaph the prophet. So everyone sang with great joy as they knelt and worshiped God.

³¹ Hezekiah said to the people, Now that you are ritually clean, bring sacrifices as offerings of thanksgiving to the LORD. They obeyed, and some of them also voluntarily brought animals to be sacrificed as burnt offerings.

³² They brought 70 bulls, 100 sheep, and 200 lambs as burnt offerings for the LORD;

³³ they also brought 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep as sacrifices for the people to eat.

³⁴ Since there were not enough priests to kill all these animals, the Levites helped them until the work was finished. By then more priests had made themselves ritually clean. (The Levites were more faithful in keeping ritually clean than the priests were.)

³⁵In addition to offering the sacrifices that were burned whole, the priests were responsible for burning the fat that was offered from the sacrifices which the people ate, and for pouring out the wine that was presented with the burnt offerings. And so worship in the Temple was begun again.

³⁶King Hezekiah and the people were happy, because God had helped them to do all this so quickly.

30¹The people had not been able to celebrate the Passover Festival at the proper time in the first month, because not enough priests were ritually clean and not many people had assembled in Jerusalem. So King Hezekiah, his officials, and the people of Jerusalem agreed to celebrate it in the second month, and the king sent word to all the people of Israel and Judah. He took special care to send letters to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover in honor of the LORD, the God of Israel.

² (30: 1)

³ (30: 1)

⁴The king and the people were pleased with their plan,

⁵so they invited all the Israelites, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, to come together in Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover according to the Law, in larger numbers than ever before.

⁶Messengers went out at the command of the king and his officials through all Judah and Israel with the following invitation: People of Israel, you have survived the Assyrian conquest of the land. Now return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he will return to you.

⁷Do not be like your ancestors and your Israelite relatives who were unfaithful to the LORD their God. As you can see, he punished them severely.

⁸Do not be stubborn as they were, but obey the LORD. Come to the Temple in Jerusalem, which the LORD your God has made holy forever, and worship him so that he will no longer be angry with you.

⁹If you return to the LORD, then those who have taken your relatives away as prisoners will take pity on them and let

them come back home. The LORD your God is kind and merciful, and if you return to him, he will accept you.

¹⁰The messengers went to every city in the territory of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far north as the tribe of Zebulun, but people laughed at them and made fun of them.

¹¹Still, there were some from the tribes of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun who were willing to come to Jerusalem.

¹²God was also at work in Judah and united the people in their determination to obey his will by following the commands of the king and his officials.

¹³A great number of people gathered in Jerusalem in the second month to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

¹⁴They took all the altars that had been used in Jerusalem for offering sacrifices and burning incense and threw them into Kidron Valley.

¹⁵And on the fourteenth day of the month they killed the lambs for the Passover sacrifice. The priests and Levites who were not ritually clean became so ashamed that they dedicated

themselves to the LORD, and now they could sacrifice burnt offerings in the Temple.

¹⁶They took their places in the Temple according to the instructions in the Law of Moses, the man of God. The Levites gave the blood of the sacrifices to the priests, who sprinkled it on the altar.

¹⁷Because many of the people were not ritually clean, they could not kill the Passover lambs, so the Levites did it for them and dedicated the lambs to the LORD.

¹⁸In addition, many of those who had come from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not performed the ritual of purification, and so they were observing Passover improperly. King Hezekiah offered this prayer for them:

¹⁹O LORD, the God of our ancestors, in your goodness forgive those who are worshiping you with all their heart, even though they are not ritually clean.

²⁰The LORD answered Hezekiah's prayer; he forgave the people and did not harm them.

²¹ For seven days the people who had gathered in Jerusalem celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread with great joy, and day after day the Levites and the priests praised the LORD with all their strength.

²² Hezekiah praised the Levites for their skill in conducting the worship of the LORD. After the seven days during which they offered sacrifices in praise of the LORD, the God of their ancestors,

²³ they all decided to celebrate for another seven days. So they celebrated with joy.

²⁴ King Hezekiah contributed 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep for the people to kill and eat, and the officials gave them another 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep. A large number of priests went through the ritual of purification.

²⁵ So everyone was happy -- the people of Judah, the priests, the Levites, the people who had come from the north, and the foreigners who had settled permanently in Israel and Judah.

²⁶ The city of Jerusalem was filled with joy, because nothing like this

had happened since the days of King Solomon, the son of David.

²⁷The priests and the Levites asked the LORD's blessing on the people. In his home in heaven God heard their prayers and accepted them.

31 ¹After the festival ended, all the people of Israel went to every city in Judah and broke the stone pillars, cut down the symbols of the goddess Asherah, and destroyed the altars and the pagan places of worship. They did the same thing throughout the rest of Judah, and the territories of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh; then they all returned home.

²King Hezekiah reestablished the organization of the priests and Levites, under which they each had specific duties. These included offering the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, taking part in the Temple worship, and giving praise and thanks in the various parts of the Temple.

³From his own flocks and herds he provided animals for the burnt offerings each morning and evening, and for those offered on the Sabbath, at the New Moon

Festival, and at the other festivals which are required by the Law of the LORD.

⁴In addition, the king told the people of Jerusalem to bring the offerings to which the priests and the Levites were entitled, so that they could give all their time to the requirements of the Law of the LORD.

⁵As soon as the order was given, the people of Israel brought gifts of their finest grain, wine, olive oil, honey, and other farm produce, and they also brought the tithes of everything they had.

⁶All the people who lived in the cities of Judah brought tithes of their cattle and sheep, and they also brought large quantities of gifts which they dedicated to the LORD their God.

⁷The gifts started arriving in the third month and continued to pile up for the next four months.

⁸When King Hezekiah and his officials saw how much had been given, they praised the LORD and praised his people Israel.

⁹The king spoke to the priests and the Levites about these gifts,

¹⁰and Azariah the High Priest, a descendant of Zadok, said to him, Since the people started bringing their gifts to the Temple, there has been enough to eat and a large surplus besides. We have all this because the LORD has blessed his people.

¹¹On the king's orders they prepared storerooms in the Temple area

¹²and put all the gifts and tithes in them for safekeeping. They placed a Levite named Conaniah in charge and made his brother Shimei his assistant.

¹³Ten Levites were assigned to work under them: Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah. All this was done under the authority of King Hezekiah and Azariah the High Priest.

¹⁴Kore son of Imnah, a Levite who was chief guard at the East Gate of the Temple, was in charge of receiving the gifts offered to the LORD and of distributing them.

¹⁵In the other cities where priests lived, he was faithfully assisted in this by other Levites: Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah.

They distributed the food equally to their fellow Levites according to what their duties were,

¹⁶and not by clans. They gave a share to all males thirty years of age or older who had daily responsibilities in the Temple in accordance with their positions.

¹⁷The priests were assigned their duties by clans, and the Levites twenty years of age or older were assigned theirs by work groups.

¹⁸They were all registered together with their wives, children, and other dependents, because they were required to be ready to perform their sacred duties at any time.

¹⁹Among the priests who lived in the cities assigned to Aaron's descendants or in the pasture lands belonging to these cities, there were responsible men who distributed the food to all the males in the priestly families and to everyone who was on the rolls of the Levite clans.

²⁰Throughout all Judah, King Hezekiah did what was right and what was pleasing to the LORD his God.

²¹ He was successful, because everything he did for the Temple or in observance of the Law, he did in a spirit of complete loyalty and devotion to his God.

32 ¹ After these events, in which King Hezekiah served the LORD faithfully, Sennacherib, the emperor of Assyria, invaded Judah. He besieged the fortified cities and gave orders for his army to break their way through the walls.

² When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib intended to attack Jerusalem also,

³ he and his officials decided to cut off the supply of water outside the city in order to keep the Assyrians from having any water when they got near Jerusalem. The officials led a large number of people out and stopped up all the springs, so that no more water flowed out of them.

⁴ (32: 3)

⁵ The king strengthened the city's defenses by repairing the wall, building towers on it, and building an outer wall. In addition, he repaired the defenses built on the land that was filled in on the east side of the old part of Jerusalem. He

also had a large number of spears and shields made.

⁶He placed all the men in the city under the command of army officers and had them assemble in the open square at the city gate. He said to them,

⁷Be determined and confident, and don't be afraid of the Assyrian emperor or of the army he is leading. We have more power on our side than he has on his.

⁸He has human power, but we have the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles. The people were encouraged by these words of their king.

⁹Some time later, while Sennacherib and his army were still at Lachish, he sent the following message to Hezekiah and the people of Judah who were with him in Jerusalem:

¹⁰I, Sennacherib, Emperor of Assyria, ask what gives you people the confidence to remain in Jerusalem under siege.

¹¹Hezekiah tells you that the LORD your God will save you from our power, but Hezekiah is deceiving you and will let you die of hunger and thirst.

¹²He is the one who destroyed the LORD's shrines and altars and then told the people of Judah and Jerusalem to worship and burn incense at one altar only.

¹³Don't you know what my ancestors and I have done to the people of other nations? Did the gods of any other nation save their people from the emperor of Assyria?

¹⁴When did any of the gods of all those countries ever save their country from us? Then what makes you think that your god can save you?

¹⁵Now don't let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like that. Don't believe him! No god of any nation has ever been able to save his people from any Assyrian emperor. So certainly this god of yours can't save you!

¹⁶The Assyrian officials said even worse things about the LORD God and Hezekiah, the LORD's servant.

¹⁷The letter that the emperor wrote defied the LORD, the God of Israel. It said, The gods of the nations have not saved their people from my power, and

neither will Hezekiah's god save his people from me.

¹⁸The officials shouted this in Hebrew in order to frighten and discourage the people of Jerusalem who were on the city wall, so that it would be easier to capture the city.

¹⁹They talked about the God of Jerusalem in the same way that they talked about the gods of the other peoples, idols made by human hands.

²⁰Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed to God and cried out to him for help.

²¹The LORD sent an angel that killed the soldiers and officers of the Assyrian army. So the emperor went back to Assyria disgraced. One day when he was in the temple of his god, some of his sons killed him with their swords.

²²In this way the LORD rescued King Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the power of Sennacherib, the emperor of Assyria, and also from their other enemies. He let the people live in peace with all the neighboring countries.

²³Many people came to Jerusalem, bringing offerings to the LORD and gifts

to Hezekiah, so that from then on all the nations held Hezekiah in honor.

²⁴About this time King Hezekiah became sick and almost died. He prayed, and the LORD gave him a sign that he would recover.

²⁵But Hezekiah was too proud to show gratitude for what the LORD had done for him, and Judah and Jerusalem suffered for it.

²⁶Finally, however, Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem humbled themselves, and so the LORD did not punish the people until after Hezekiah's death.

²⁷King Hezekiah became very wealthy, and everyone held him in honor. He had storerooms built for his gold, silver, precious stones, spices, shields, and other valuable objects.

²⁸In addition, he had storehouses built for his grain, wine, and olive oil; barns for his cattle; and pens for his sheep.

²⁹Besides all this, God gave him sheep and cattle and so much other wealth that he built many cities.

³⁰It was King Hezekiah who blocked the outlet for Gihon Spring and channeled

the water to flow through a tunnel to a point inside the walls of Jerusalem. Hezekiah succeeded in everything he did,

³¹ and even when the Babylonian ambassadors came to inquire about the unusual event that had happened in the land, God let Hezekiah go his own way only in order to test his character.

³² Everything else that King Hezekiah did and his devotion to the LORD are recorded in The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah Son of Amoz and in The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

³³ Hezekiah died and was buried in the upper section of the royal tombs. All the people of Judah and Jerusalem paid him great honor at his death. His son Manasseh succeeded him as king.

33¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for fifty-five years.

² Following the disgusting practices of the nations whom the LORD had driven out of the land as his people advanced, Manasseh sinned against the LORD.

³ He rebuilt the pagan places of worship that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He built altars for the worship of Baal, made images of the goddess Asherah, and worshiped the stars.

⁴ He built pagan altars in the Temple, the place that the LORD had said was where he should be worshiped forever.

⁵ In the two courtyards of the Temple he built altars for the worship of the stars.

⁶ He sacrificed his sons in Hinnom Valley as burnt offerings. He practiced divination and magic and consulted fortunetellers and mediums. He sinned greatly against the LORD and stirred up his anger.

⁷ He placed an image in the Temple, the place about which God had said to David and his son Solomon: Here in Jerusalem, in this Temple, is the place that I have chosen out of all the territory of the twelve tribes of Israel as the place where I am to be worshiped.

⁸ And if the people of Israel will obey all my commands and keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them, then I will not allow them to be driven out of the land that I gave to their ancestors.

⁹Manasseh led the people of Judah to commit even greater sins than those committed by the nations whom the LORD had driven out of the land as his people advanced.

¹⁰Although the LORD warned Manasseh and his people, they refused to listen.

¹¹So the LORD let the commanders of the Assyrian army invade Judah. They captured Manasseh, stuck hooks in him, put him in chains, and took him to Babylon.

¹²In his suffering he became humble, turned to the LORD his God, and begged him for help.

¹³God accepted Manasseh's prayer and answered it by letting him go back to Jerusalem and rule again. This convinced Manasseh that the LORD was God.

¹⁴After this, Manasseh increased the height of the outer wall on the east side of David's City, from a point in the valley near Gihon Spring north to the Fish Gate and the area of the city called Ophel. He also stationed an army officer in command of a unit of troops in each of the fortified cities of Judah.

¹⁵He removed from the Temple the foreign gods and the image that he had placed there, and the pagan altars that were on the hill where the Temple stood and in other places in Jerusalem; he took all these things outside the city and threw them away.

¹⁶He also repaired the altar where the LORD was worshiped, and he sacrificed fellowship offerings and thanksgiving offerings on it. He commanded all the people of Judah to worship the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁷Although the people continued to offer sacrifices at other places of worship, they offered them only to the LORD.

¹⁸Everything else that Manasseh did, the prayer he made to his God, and the messages of the prophets who spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are all recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹⁹The king's prayer and God's answer to it, and an account of the sins he committed before he repented -- the evil he did, the pagan places of worship and the symbols of the goddess Asherah that

he made and the idols that he worshiped -- are all recorded in The History of the Prophets.

²⁰Manasseh died and was buried at the palace, and his son Amon succeeded him as king.

²¹Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for two years.

²²Like his father Manasseh, he sinned against the LORD, and he worshiped the idols that his father had worshiped.

²³But unlike his father, he did not become humble and turn to the LORD; he was even more sinful than his father had been.

²⁴Amon's officials plotted against him and assassinated him in the palace.

²⁵The people of Judah killed Amon's assassins and made his son Josiah king.

34¹ Josiah was eight years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for thirty-one years.

²He did what was pleasing to the LORD; he followed the example of his ancestor King David, strictly obeying all the laws of God.

³In the eighth year that Josiah was king, while he was still very young, he began to worship the God of his ancestor King David. Four years later he began to destroy the pagan places of worship, the symbols of the goddess Asherah, and all the other idols.

⁴Under his direction the altars where Baal was worshiped were smashed, and the incense altars near them were torn down. They ground to dust the images of Asherah and all the other idols and then scattered the dust on the graves of the people who had sacrificed to them.

⁵He burned the bones of the pagan priests on the altars where they had worshiped. By doing all this, he made Judah and Jerusalem ritually clean again.

⁶He did the same thing in the cities and the devastated areas of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far north as Naphtali.

⁷Throughout the territory of the Northern Kingdom he smashed the altars and the symbols of Asherah, ground the idols to dust, and broke into bits all the incense altars. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

⁸In the eighteenth year of his reign, after he had purified the land and the Temple by ending pagan worship, King Josiah sent three men to repair the Temple of the LORD God: Shaphan son of Azaliah, Maaseiah, the governor of Jerusalem, and Joah son of Joahaz, a high official.

⁹The money that the Levite guards had collected in the Temple was turned over to Hilkiah the High Priest. (It had been collected from the people of Ephraim and Manasseh and the rest of the Northern Kingdom, and from the people of Judah, Benjamin, and Jerusalem.)

¹⁰This money was then handed over to the three men in charge of the Temple repairs, and they gave it to

¹¹the carpenters and the builders to buy the stones and the timber used to repair the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to decay.

¹²The men who did the work were thoroughly honest. They were supervised by four Levites: Jahath and Obadiah of the clan of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam of the clan of Kohath. (The Levites were all skillful musicians.)

¹³Other Levites were in charge of transporting materials and supervising the workers on various jobs, and others kept records or served as guards.

¹⁴While the money was being taken out of the storeroom, Hilkiah found the book of the Law of the LORD, the Law that God had given to Moses.

¹⁵He said to Shaphan, I have found the book of the Law here in the Temple. He gave Shaphan the book,

¹⁶and Shaphan took it to the king. He reported, We have done everything that you commanded.

¹⁷We have taken the money that was kept in the Temple and handed it over to the workers and their supervisors.

¹⁸Then he added, I have here a book that Hilkiah gave me. And he read it aloud to the king.

¹⁹When the king heard the book being read, he tore his clothes in dismay

²⁰and gave the following order to Hilkiah, to Ahikam son of Shaphan, to Abdon son of Micaiah, to Shaphan, the court secretary, and to Asaiah, the king's attendant:

²¹ Go and consult the LORD for me and for the people who still remain in Israel and Judah. Find out about the teachings of this book. The LORD is angry with us because our ancestors have not obeyed the word of the LORD and have not done what this book says must be done.

²² At the king's command, Hilkiah and the others went to consult a woman named Huldah, a prophet who lived in the newer part of Jerusalem. (Her husband Shallum, the son of Tikvah and grandson of Harhas, was in charge of the Temple robes.) They described to her what had happened,

²³ and she told them to go back to the king and give him

²⁴ the following message from the LORD: I am going to punish Jerusalem and all its people with the curses written in the book that was read to the king.

²⁵ They have rejected me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and so have stirred up my anger by all they have done. My anger is aroused against Jerusalem, and it will not die down.

²⁶As for the king himself, this is what I, the LORD God of Israel, say: You listened to what is written in the book,

²⁷and you repented and humbled yourself before me, tearing your clothes and weeping, when you heard how I threatened to punish Jerusalem and its people. I have heard your prayer,

²⁸and the punishment which I am going to bring on Jerusalem will not come until after your death. I will let you die in peace. The men returned to King Josiah with this message.

²⁹King Josiah summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem,

³⁰and together they went to the Temple, accompanied by the priests and the Levites and all the rest of the people, rich and poor alike. Before them all the king read aloud the whole book of the covenant, which had been found in the Temple.

³¹He stood by the royal column and made a covenant with the LORD to obey him, to keep his laws and commands with all his heart and soul, and to put into practice the demands attached to the covenant, as written in the book.

³²He made the people of Benjamin and everyone else present in Jerusalem promise to keep the covenant. And so the people of Jerusalem obeyed the requirements of the covenant they had made with the God of their ancestors.

³³King Josiah destroyed all the disgusting idols that were in the territory belonging to the people of Israel, and as long as he lived, he required the people to serve the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

35¹King Josiah celebrated the Passover at Jerusalem in honor of the LORD; on the fourteenth day of the first month they killed the animals for the festival.

²He assigned to the priests the duties they were to perform in the Temple and encouraged them to do them well.

³He also gave these instructions to the Levites, the teachers of Israel, who were dedicated to the LORD: Put the sacred Covenant Box in the Temple that King Solomon, the son of David, built. You are no longer to carry it from place to place, but you are to serve the LORD your God and his people Israel.

⁴Take your places in the Temple by clans, according to the responsibilities assigned to you by King David and his son King Solomon,

⁵and arrange yourselves so that some of you will be available to help each family of the people of Israel.

⁶You are to kill the Passover lambs and goats. Now make yourselves ritually clean and prepare the sacrifices in order that your fellow Israelites may follow the instructions which the LORD gave through Moses.

⁷For the use of the people at the Passover, King Josiah contributed from his own herds and flocks 30,000 sheep, lambs, and young goats, and 3,000 bulls.

⁸His officials also made contributions for the people, the priests, and the Levites to use. And the officials in charge of the Temple -- Hilkiah, the High Priest, Zechariah, and Jehiel -- gave the priests 2,600 lambs and young goats and 300 bulls for sacrifices during the festival.

⁹The leaders of the Levites -- Conaniah, Shemaiah and his brother Nethanel, Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad --

contributed 5,000 lambs and young goats and 500 bulls for the Levites to offer as sacrifices.

¹⁰When everything was arranged for the Passover, the priests and the Levites took their posts, as commanded by the king.

¹¹After the lambs and goats had been killed, the Levites skinned them, and the priests sprinkled the blood on the altar.

¹²Then they divided among the people, by family groups, the animals for burnt offerings, so that they could offer them according to the instructions in the Law of Moses.

¹³The Levites roasted the Passover sacrifices over the fire, according to the regulations, and boiled the sacred offerings in pots, kettles, and pans, and quickly distributed the meat to the people.

¹⁴After this was done, the Levites provided meat for themselves and for the priests descended from Aaron, for the priests were kept busy until night, burning the animals that were burned whole and the fat of the sacrifices.

¹⁵The following musicians of the Levite clan of Asaph were in the places assigned to them by King David's instructions: Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, the king's prophet. The guards at the Temple gates did not need to leave their posts, because the other Levites prepared the Passover for them.

¹⁶So, as King Josiah had commanded, everything was done that day for the worship of the LORD, the keeping of the Passover Festival, and the offering of burnt offerings on the altar.

¹⁷For seven days all the people of Israel who were present celebrated the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

¹⁸Since the days of the prophet Samuel, the Passover had never been celebrated like this. None of the former kings had ever celebrated a Passover like this one celebrated by King Josiah, the priests, the Levites, and the people of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem

¹⁹in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

²⁰After King Josiah had done all this for the Temple, King Neco of Egypt led

an army to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates River. Josiah tried to stop him,

²¹ but Neco sent Josiah this message: This war I am fighting does not concern you, King of Judah. I have not come to fight you, but to fight my enemies, and God has told me to hurry. God is on my side, so don't oppose me, or he will destroy you.

²² But Josiah was determined to fight. He refused to listen to what God was saying through King Neco, so he disguised himself and went into battle on the plain of Megiddo.

²³ During the battle King Josiah was struck by Egyptian arrows. He ordered his servants, Take me away; I'm badly hurt!

²⁴ They lifted him out of his chariot, placed him in a second chariot which he had there, and took him to Jerusalem. There he died and was buried in the royal tombs. All the people of Judah and Jerusalem mourned his death.

²⁵ The prophet Jeremiah composed a lament for King Josiah. It has become a custom in Israel for the singers, both men and women, to use this song when

they mourn for him. The song is found in the collection of laments.

²⁶Everything that Josiah did -- his devotion to the LORD, his obedience to the Law,

²⁷and his history from beginning to end -- is all recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

36¹The people of Judah chose Josiah's son Joahaz and anointed him king in Jerusalem.

²Joahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for three months.

³King Neco of Egypt took him prisoner and made Judah pay 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold as tribute.

⁴Neco made Joahaz brother Eliakim king of Judah and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Joahaz was taken to Egypt by Neco.

⁵Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. He sinned against the LORD his God.

⁶King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia invaded Judah, captured Jehoiakim, and took him to Babylonia in chains.

⁷ Nebuchadnezzar carried off some of the treasures of the Temple and put them in his palace in Babylon.

⁸ Everything that Jehoiakim did, including his disgusting practices and the evil he committed, is recorded in The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah. His son Jehoiachin succeeded him as king.

⁹ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for three months and ten days. He too sinned against the LORD.

¹⁰ When spring came, King Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylonia as a prisoner and carried off the treasures of the Temple. Then Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah king of Judah and Jerusalem.

¹¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years.

¹² He sinned against the LORD and did not listen humbly to the prophet Jeremiah, who spoke the word of the LORD.

¹³Zedekiah rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had forced him to swear in God's name that he would be loyal. He stubbornly refused to repent and return to the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁴In addition, the leaders of Judah, the priests, and the people followed the sinful example of the nations around them in worshiping idols, and so they defiled the Temple, which the LORD himself had made holy.

¹⁵The LORD, the God of their ancestors, had continued to send prophets to warn his people, because he wanted to spare them and the Temple.

¹⁶But they made fun of God's messengers, ignoring his words and laughing at his prophets, until at last the LORD's anger against his people was so great that there was no escape.

¹⁷So the LORD brought the king of Babylonia to attack them. The king killed the young men of Judah even in the Temple. He had no mercy on anyone, young or old, man or woman, sick or healthy. God handed them all over to him.

¹⁸The king of Babylonia looted the Temple, the Temple treasury, and the wealth of the king and his officials, and took everything back to Babylon.

¹⁹He burned down the Temple and the city, with all its palaces and its wealth, and broke down the city wall.

²⁰He took all the survivors to Babylonia, where they served him and his descendants as slaves until the rise of the Persian Empire.

²¹And so what the LORD had foretold through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: The land will lie desolate for seventy years, to make up for the Sabbath rest that has not been observed.

²²In the first year that Cyrus of Persia was emperor, the LORD made what he had said through the prophet Jeremiah come true. He prompted Cyrus to issue the following command and send it out in writing to be read aloud everywhere in his empire:

²³This is the command of Cyrus, Emperor of Persia. The LORD, the God of Heaven, has made me ruler over the whole world and has given me the responsibility of building a temple for

him in Jerusalem in Judah. Now, all of you who are God's people, go there, and may the LORD your God be with you.

Ezra

1 ¹In the first year that Cyrus of Persia was emperor, the LORD made what he had said through the prophet Jeremiah come true. He prompted Cyrus to issue the following command and send it out in writing to be read aloud everywhere in his empire:

²This is the command of Cyrus, Emperor of Persia. The LORD, the God of Heaven, has made me ruler over the whole world and has given me the responsibility of building a temple for him in Jerusalem in Judah.

³May God be with all of you who are his people. You are to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is worshiped in Jerusalem.

⁴If any of his people in exile need help to return, their neighbors are to give them this help. They are to provide them with silver and gold, supplies and pack animals, as well as offerings to present in the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

⁵Then the heads of the clans of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the priests and Levites, and everyone else whose heart God had moved got ready to go and rebuild the LORD's Temple in Jerusalem.

⁶All their neighbors helped them by giving them many things: silver utensils, gold, supplies, pack animals, other valuables, and offerings for the Temple.

⁷Emperor Cyrus gave them back the bowls and cups that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem and had put in the temple of his gods.

⁸He handed them over to Mithredath, chief of the royal treasury, who made an inventory of them for Sheshbazzar, the governor of Judah,

⁹as follows: gold bowls for offerings & 30; silver bowls for offerings & 1,000; other bowls & 29; small gold bowls & 30; small silver bowls & 410; other utensils & 1,000

¹⁰(1: 9)

¹¹In all there were 5,400 gold and silver bowls and other articles which Sheshbazzar took with him when he and

the other exiles went from Babylon to Jerusalem.

2¹ Many of the exiles left the province of Babylon and returned to Jerusalem and Judah, all to their own hometowns. Their families had been living in exile in Babylonia ever since King Nebuchadnezzar had taken them there as prisoners.

² Their leaders were Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah. This is the list of the clans of Israel, with the number of those from each clan who returned from exile:

³ Parosh - 2,172; Shephatiah - 372; Arah - 775; Pahath Moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab) - 2,812; Elam - 1,254; Zattu - 945; Zaccai - 760; Bani - 642; Bebai - 623; Azgad - 1,222; Adonikam - 666; Bigvai - 2,056; Adin - 454; Ater (also called Hezekiah) - 98; Bezai - 323; Jorah - 112; Hashum - 223; Gibbar - 95

⁴ (2: 3)

⁵ (2: 3)

⁶ (2: 3)

⁷ (2: 3)

⁸ (2: 3)

⁹ (2: 3)

¹⁰ (2: 3)

¹¹ (2: 3)

¹² (2: 3)

¹³ (2: 3)

¹⁴ (2: 3)

¹⁵ (2: 3)

¹⁶ (2: 3)

¹⁷ (2: 3)

¹⁸ (2: 3)

¹⁹ (2: 3)

²⁰ (2: 3)

²¹ People whose ancestors had lived in the following towns also returned: Bethlehem - 123; Netophah - 56; Anathoth - 128; Azmaveth - 42; Kiriath Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth - 743; Ramah and Geba - 621; Michmash - 122; Bethel and Ai - 223; Nebo - 52; Magbish - 156; The other Elam - 1,254; Harim - 320; Lod, Hadid, and Ono - 725; Jericho - 345; Senaah - 3,630

²² (2: 21)

²³ (2: 21)

²⁴ (2: 21)

²⁵ (2: 21)

26 (2: 21)

27 (2: 21)

28 (2: 21)

29 (2: 21)

30 (2: 21)

31 (2: 21)

32 (2: 21)

33 (2: 21)

34 (2: 21)

35 (2: 21)

36 This is the list of the priestly clans that returned from exile: Jedaiah (descendants of Jeshua) - 973; Immer - 1,052; Pashhur - 1,247; Harim - 1,017

37 (2: 36)

38 (2: 36)

39 (2: 36)

40 Clans of Levites who returned from exile: Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodaviah) - 74; Temple musicians (descendants of Asaph) - 128; Temple guards (descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai) - 139

41 (2: 40)

42 (2: 40)

43 Clans of Temple workers who returned from exile: Ziha, Hasupha,

Tabbaoth,; Keros, Siaha, Padon,;
 Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub,; Hagab,
 Shamlai, Hanan,; Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah,;
 Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam,; Uzza, Paseah,
 Besai,; Asnah, Meunim, Nephisim,;
 Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,; Bazluth,
 Mehida, Harsha,; Barkos, Sisera,
 Temah,; Neziah, and Hatipha

⁴⁴ (2: 43)

⁴⁵ (2: 43)

⁴⁶ (2: 43)

⁴⁷ (2: 43)

⁴⁸ (2: 43)

⁴⁹ (2: 43)

⁵⁰ (2: 43)

⁵¹ (2: 43)

⁵² (2: 43)

⁵³ (2: 43)

⁵⁴ (2: 43)

⁵⁵ Clans of Solomon's servants

who returned from exile: Sotai,
 Hassophereth, Peruda,; Jaalah, Darkon,
 Giddel,; Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth
 Hazzebaim, and Ami

⁵⁶ (2: 55)

⁵⁷ (2: 55)

⁵⁸ The total number of descendants of
 the Temple workers and of Solomon's

servants who returned from exile was 392.

⁵⁹There were 652 belonging to the clans of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda who returned from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer; but they could not prove that they were descendants of Israelites.

⁶⁰(2: 59)

⁶¹The following priestly clans could find no record to prove their ancestry: Habaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai. (The ancestor of the priestly clan of Barzillai had married a woman from the clan of Barzillai of Gilead and had taken the name of his father-in-law's clan.) Since they were unable to prove who their ancestors were, they were not accepted as priests.

⁶²(2: 61)

⁶³The Jewish governor told them that they could not eat the food offered to God until there was a priest who could use the Urim and Thummim.

⁶⁴Total number of exiles who returned - 42,360; Their male and female servants - 7,337; Male and female musicians -

200; Horses - 736; Mules - 245; Camels - 435; Donkeys - 6,720

⁶⁵ (2: 64)

⁶⁶ (2: 64)

⁶⁷ (2: 64)

⁶⁸ When the exiles arrived at the LORD's Temple in Jerusalem, some of the leaders of the clans gave freewill offerings to help rebuild the Temple on its old site.

⁶⁹ They gave as much as they could for this work, and the total came to 1,030 pounds of gold, 5,740 pounds of silver, and 100 robes for priests.

⁷⁰ The priests, the Levites, and some of the people settled in or near Jerusalem; the musicians, the Temple guards, and the Temple workers settled in nearby towns; and the rest of the Israelites settled in the towns where their ancestors had lived.

3¹ By the seventh month the people of Israel were all settled in their towns.

Then they all assembled in Jerusalem,

² and Joshua son of Jehozadak, his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, together with his relatives, rebuilt the altar of the God of Israel, so that they could burn sacrifices on it

according to the instructions written in the Law of Moses, the man of God.

³Even though the returning exiles were afraid of the people who were living in the land, they rebuilt the altar where it had stood before. Then they began once again to burn on it the regular morning and evening sacrifices.

⁴They celebrated the Festival of Shelters according to the regulations; each day they offered the sacrifices required for that day;

⁵and in addition they offered the regular sacrifices to be burned whole and those to be offered at the New Moon Festival and at all the other regular assemblies at which the LORD is worshiped, as well as all the offerings that were given to the LORD voluntarily.

⁶Although the people had not yet started to rebuild the Temple, they began on the first day of the seventh month to burn sacrifices to the LORD.

⁷The people gave money to pay the stonemasons and the carpenters and gave food, drink, and olive oil to be sent to the cities of Tyre and Sidon in exchange for cedar trees from Lebanon,

which were to be brought by sea to Joppa. All this was done with the permission of Emperor Cyrus of Persia.

⁸So in the second month of the year after they came back to the site of the Temple in Jerusalem, they began work. Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the rest of their people, the priests, and the Levites, in fact all the exiles who had come back to Jerusalem, joined in the work. All the Levites twenty years of age or older were put in charge of the work of rebuilding the Temple.

⁹The Levite Jeshua and his sons and relatives, and Kadmiel and his sons (the clan of Hodaviah) joined together in taking charge of the rebuilding of the Temple. (They were helped by the Levites of the clan of Henadad.)

¹⁰When the builders started to lay the foundation of the Temple, the priests in their robes took their places with trumpets in their hands, and the Levites of the clan of Asaph stood there with cymbals. They praised the LORD according to the instructions handed down from the time of King David.

¹¹ They sang the LORD's praises, repeating the refrain: The LORD is good, and his love for Israel is eternal. Everyone shouted with all their might, praising the LORD, because the work on the foundation of the Temple had been started.

¹² Many of the older priests, Levites, and heads of clans had seen the first Temple, and as they watched the foundation of this Temple being laid, they cried and wailed. But the others who were there shouted for joy.

¹³ No one could distinguish between the joyful shouts and the crying, because the noise they made was so loud that it could be heard for miles.

4¹ The enemies of the people of Judah and Benjamin heard that those who had returned from exile were rebuilding the Temple of the LORD, the God of Israel.

² So they went to see Zerubbabel and the heads of the clans and said, Let us join you in building the Temple. We worship the same God you worship, and we have been offering sacrifices to

him ever since Emperor Esarhaddon of Assyria sent us here to live.

³Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the heads of the clans told them, We don't need your help to build a temple for the LORD our God. We will build it ourselves, just as Emperor Cyrus of Persia commanded us.

⁴Then the people who had been living in the land tried to discourage and frighten the Jews and keep them from building.

⁵They also bribed Persian government officials to work against them. They kept on doing this throughout the reign of Emperor Cyrus and into the reign of Emperor Darius.

⁶At the beginning of the reign of Emperor Xerxes, the enemies of the people living in Judah and Jerusalem brought written charges against them.

⁷Again in the reign of Emperor Artaxerxes of Persia, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and their associates wrote a letter to the emperor. The letter was written in Aramaic and was to be translated when read.

⁸Also Rehum, the governor, and Shimshai, the secretary of the province,

wrote the following letter to Emperor Artaxerxes about Jerusalem: /INP

⁹From Rehum, the governor, from Shimshai, secretary of the province, from their associates, the judges, and from all the other officials, who are originally from Erech, Babylon, and Susa in the land of Elam,

¹⁰together with the other peoples whom the great and powerful Ashurbanipal moved from their homes and settled in the city of Samaria and elsewhere in West-of-Euphrates Province.

¹¹This is the text of the letter: /INPTo Emperor Artaxerxes from his servants who live in West-of-Euphrates.

¹²We want Your Majesty to know that the Jews who came here from your other territories have settled in Jerusalem and are rebuilding that evil and rebellious city. They have begun to rebuild the walls and will soon finish them.

¹³Your Majesty, if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the people will stop paying taxes, and your royal revenues will decrease.

¹⁴ Now, because we are under obligation to Your Majesty, we do not want to see this happen, and so we suggest

¹⁵ that you order a search to be made in the records your ancestors kept. If you do, you will discover that this city has always been rebellious and that from ancient times it has given trouble to kings and to rulers of provinces. Its people have always been hard to govern. This is why the city was destroyed.

¹⁶ We therefore are convinced that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, Your Majesty will no longer be able to control West-of-Euphrates Province.

¹⁷ The emperor sent this answer: /INPTo Rehum, the governor, to Shimshai, secretary of the province, and to their associates who live in Samaria and in the rest of West-of-Euphrates, greetings.

¹⁸ The letter which you sent has been translated and read to me.

¹⁹ I gave orders for an investigation to be made, and it has indeed been found that from ancient times Jerusalem has revolted against royal authority

and that it has been full of rebels and troublemakers.

²⁰Powerful kings have reigned there and have ruled over the entire province of West-of-Euphrates, collecting taxes and revenue.

²¹Therefore you are to issue orders that those men are to stop rebuilding the city until I give further commands.

²²Do this at once, so that no more harm may be done to my interests.

²³As soon as this letter from Emperor Artaxerxes was read to Rehum, Shimshai, and their associates, they hurried to Jerusalem and forced the Jews to stop rebuilding the city.

²⁴Work on the Temple had been stopped and had remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of Emperor Darius of Persia.

5¹At that time two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo, began to speak in the name of the God of Israel to the Jews who lived in Judah and Jerusalem.

²When Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak heard their messages, they began to rebuild

the Temple in Jerusalem, and the two prophets helped them.

³Almost at once Governor Tattenai of West-of-Euphrates, Shethar Bozenai, and their fellow officials came to Jerusalem and demanded: Who gave you orders to build this Temple and equip it?

⁴They also asked for the names of all the men who were helping build the Temple.

⁵But God was watching over the Jewish leaders, and the Persian officials decided to take no action until they could write to Emperor Darius and receive a reply.

⁶This is the report that they sent to the emperor:

⁷To Emperor Darius, may you rule in peace.

⁸Your Majesty should know that we went to the province of Judah and found that the Temple of the great God is being rebuilt with large stone blocks and with wooden beams set in the wall. The work is being done with great care and is moving ahead steadily.

⁹We then asked the leaders of the people to tell us who had given them

authority to rebuild the Temple and to equip it.

¹⁰We also asked them their names so that we could inform you who the leaders of this work are.

¹¹They answered, We are servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the Temple which was originally built and equipped many years ago by a powerful king of Israel.

¹²But because our ancestors made the God of Heaven angry, he let them be conquered by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, a king of the Chaldean dynasty. The Temple was destroyed, and the people were taken into exile in Babylonia.

¹³Then in the first year of the reign of King Cyrus as emperor of Babylonia, Cyrus issued orders for the Temple to be rebuilt.

¹⁴He restored the gold and silver Temple utensils which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple in Babylon. Emperor Cyrus turned these utensils over to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom he appointed governor of Judah.

¹⁵The emperor told him to take them and return them to the Temple in Jerusalem, and to rebuild the Temple where it had stood before.

¹⁶So Sheshbazzar came and laid its foundation; construction has continued from then until the present, but it is still not finished.

¹⁷Now, if it please Your Majesty, have a search made in the royal records in Babylon to find whether or not Emperor Cyrus gave orders for this Temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt, and then inform us what your will is in this matter.

6¹ So Emperor Darius issued orders for a search to be made in the royal records that were kept in Babylon.

²But it was in the city of Ecbatana in the province of Media that a scroll was found, containing the following record:
/INP

³In the first year of his reign Emperor Cyrus commanded that the Temple in Jerusalem be rebuilt as a place where sacrifices are made and offerings are burned. The Temple is to be ninety feet high and ninety feet wide.

⁴The walls are to be built with one layer of wood on top of each three layers of stone. All expenses are to be paid by the royal treasury.

⁵Also the gold and silver utensils which King Nebuchadnezzar brought to Babylon from the Temple in Jerusalem are to be returned to their proper place in the Jerusalem Temple.

⁶Then Emperor Darius sent the following reply: /INPTo Tattenai, governor of West-of-Euphrates, Shethar Bozenai, and your fellow officials in West-of-Euphrates. /INPStay away from the Temple

⁷and do not interfere with its construction. Let the governor of Judah and the Jewish leaders rebuild the Temple of God where it stood before.

⁸I hereby command you to help them rebuild it. Their expenses are to be paid promptly out of the royal funds received from taxes in West-of-Euphrates, so that the work is not interrupted.

⁹Day by day, without fail, you are to give the priests in Jerusalem whatever they tell you they need: young bulls, sheep, or lambs to be burned as offerings

to the God of Heaven, or wheat, salt, wine, or olive oil.

¹⁰This is to be done so that they can offer sacrifices that are acceptable to the God of Heaven and pray for his blessing on me and my sons.

¹¹I further command that if any disobey this order, a wooden beam is to be torn out of their houses, sharpened on one end, and then driven through their bodies. And their houses are to be made a rubbish heap.

¹²May the God who chose Jerusalem as the place where he is to be worshiped overthrow any king or nation that defies this command and tries to destroy the Temple there. I, Darius, have commanded. My command is to be fully obeyed.

¹³Then Governor Tattenai, Shethar Bozenai, and their fellow officials did exactly as the emperor had commanded.

¹⁴The Jewish leaders made good progress with the building of the Temple, encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. They completed the Temple as they had been commanded by the

God of Israel and by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, emperors of Persia.

¹⁵They finished the Temple on the third day of the month Adar in the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Darius.

¹⁶Then the people of Israel -- the priests, the Levites, and all the others who had returned from exile -- joyfully dedicated the Temple.

¹⁷For the dedication they offered 100 bulls, 200 sheep, and 400 lambs as sacrifices, and 12 goats as offerings for sin, one for each tribe of Israel.

¹⁸They also organized the priests and the Levites for the Temple services in Jerusalem, according to the instructions contained in the book of Moses.

¹⁹The people who had returned from exile celebrated Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month of the following year.

²⁰All the priests and the Levites had purified themselves and were ritually clean. The Levites killed the animals for the Passover sacrifices for all the people who had returned, for the priests, and for themselves.

²¹ The sacrifices were eaten by all the Israelites who had returned from exile and by all those who had given up the pagan ways of the other people who were living in the land and who had come to worship the LORD God of Israel.

²² For seven days they joyfully celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread. They were full of joy because the LORD had made the emperor of Assyria favorable to them, so that he supported them in their work of rebuilding the Temple of the God of Israel.

7 ¹ Many years later, when Artaxerxes was emperor of Persia, there was a man named Ezra. He traced his ancestors back to Aaron, the High Priest, as follows: Ezra was the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah,

² son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub,

³ son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Meraioth,

⁴ son of Zerahiah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki,

⁵ son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron.

⁶Ezra was a scholar with a thorough knowledge of the Law which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given to Moses. Because Ezra had the blessing of the LORD his God, the emperor gave him everything he asked for. In the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, Ezra set out from Babylonia for Jerusalem with a group of Israelites which included priests, Levites, Temple musicians, Temple guards, and workers.

⁷ (7: 6)

⁸They left Babylonia on the first day of the first month, and with God's help they arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month.

⁹ (7: 8)

¹⁰Ezra had devoted his life to studying the Law of the LORD, to practicing it, and to teaching all its laws and regulations to the people of Israel.

¹¹Emperor Artaxerxes gave the following document to Ezra, the priest and scholar, who had a thorough knowledge of the laws and commands which the LORD had given to Israel:

¹²From Emperor Artaxerxes to the priest Ezra, scholar in the Law of the God of Heaven.

¹³I command that throughout my empire all the Israelite people, priests, and Levites that so desire be permitted to go with you to Jerusalem.

¹⁴I, together with my seven counselors, send you to investigate the conditions in Jerusalem and Judah in order to see how well the Law of your God, which has been entrusted to you, is being obeyed.

¹⁵You are to take with you the gold and silver offerings which I and my counselors desire to give to the God of Israel, whose Temple is in Jerusalem.

¹⁶You are also to take all the silver and gold which you collect throughout the province of Babylon and the offerings which the Israelite people and their priests give for the Temple of their God in Jerusalem.

¹⁷You are to spend this money carefully and buy bulls, rams, lambs, grain, and wine and offer them on the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem.

¹⁸You may use the silver and gold that is left over for whatever you and your

people desire, in accordance with the will of your God.

¹⁹You are to present to God in Jerusalem all the utensils that have been given to you for use in the Temple services.

²⁰And anything else which you need for the Temple, you may get from the royal treasury.

²¹I command all the treasury officials in West-of-Euphrates Province to provide promptly for Ezra, the priest and scholar in the Law of the God of Heaven, everything he asks you for,

²²up to a limit of 7,500 pounds of silver, 500 bushels of wheat, 550 gallons of wine, 550 gallons of olive oil, and as much salt as needed.

²³You must be careful to provide everything which the God of Heaven requires for his Temple, and so make sure that he is never angry with me or with those who reign after me.

²⁴You are forbidden to collect any taxes from the priests, Levites, musicians, guards, workers, or anyone else connected with this Temple.

²⁵You, Ezra, using the wisdom which your God has given you, are to appoint administrators and judges to govern all the people in West-of-Euphrates who live by the Law of your God. You must teach that Law to anyone who does not know it.

²⁶If any disobey the laws of your God or the laws of the empire, they are to be punished promptly: by death or by exile or by confiscation of their property or by imprisonment.

²⁷Ezra said, Praise the LORD, the God of our ancestors! He has made the emperor willing to honor in this way the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem.

²⁸By God's grace I have won the favor of the emperor, of his counselors, and of all his powerful officials; the LORD my God has given me courage, and I have been able to persuade many of the heads of the clans of Israel to return with me.

8¹This is the list of the heads of the clans who had been in exile in Babylonia and who returned with Ezra to Jerusalem when Artaxerxes was emperor:

²Gershom, of the clan of Phinehas;
Daniel, of the clan of Ithamar; Hattush
son of Shecaniah, of the clan of David;
Zechariah, of the clan of Parosh, with
150 men of his clan (there were records
of their family lines); Eliehoenai son of
Zerahiah, of the clan of Pahath Moab,
with 200 men; Shecaniah son of Jahaziel,
of the clan of Zattu, with 300 men; Ebed
son of Jonathan, of the clan of Adin, with
50 men; Jeshaiiah son of Athaliah, of the
clan of Elam, with 70 men; Zebadiah son
of Michael, of the clan of Shephatiah,
with 80 men; Obadiah son of Jehiel,
of the clan of Joab, with 218 men;
Shelomith son of Josiphiah, of the clan
of Bani, with 160 men; Zechariah son of
Bebai, of the clan of Bebai, with 28 men;
Johanah son of Hakatan, of the clan of
Azgad, with 110 men; Eliphelet, Jeuel,
and Shemaiah, of the clan of Adonikam,
with 60 men (they returned at a later
date); Uthai and Zaccur, of the clan of
Bigvai, with 70 men

³(8: 2)

⁴(8: 2)

⁵(8: 2)

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⁹ (8: 2)

¹⁰ (8: 2)

¹¹ (8: 2)

¹² (8: 2)

¹³ (8: 2)

¹⁴ (8: 2)

¹⁵ I assembled the entire group by the canal that runs to the town of Ahava, and we camped there three days. I found that there were priests in the group, but no Levites.

¹⁶ I sent for nine of the leaders: Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, and for two teachers, Joiarib and Elnathan.

¹⁷ I sent them to Iddo, head of the community at Casiphia, to ask him and his associates, the Temple workers, to send us people to serve God in the Temple.

¹⁸ Through God's grace they sent us Sherebiah, an able man, a Levite from the clan of Mahli; and eighteen of his sons and brothers came with him.

¹⁹They also sent Hashabiah and Jeshaiiah of the clan of Merari, with twenty of their relatives.

²⁰In addition there were 220 Temple workers whose ancestors had been designated by King David and his officials to assist the Levites. They were all listed by name.

²¹There by the Ahava Canal I gave orders for us all to fast and humble ourselves before our God and to ask him to lead us on our journey and protect us and our children and all our possessions.

²²I would have been ashamed to ask the emperor for a troop of cavalry to guard us from any enemies during our journey, because I had told him that our God blesses everyone who trusts him, but that he is displeased with and punishes anyone who turns away from him.

²³So we fasted and prayed for God to protect us, and he answered our prayers.

²⁴From among the leading priests I chose Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten others.

²⁵Then I weighed out the silver, the gold, and the utensils which the emperor,

his advisers and officials, and the people of Israel had given to be used in the Temple, and I gave it to the priests.

²⁶This is what I gave them: silver - 25 tons; 100 silver utensils - 150 pounds; gold - 7,500 pounds; 20 gold bowls - 270 ounces; fine bronze bowls, equal in value to gold bowls

²⁷ (8: 26)

²⁸I said to them, You are sacred to the LORD, the God of your ancestors, and so are all the silver and gold utensils brought to him as freewill offerings.

²⁹Guard them carefully until you reach the Temple. There in the priests' rooms weigh them and turn them over to the leaders of the priests and of the Levites, and to the leaders of the people of Israel in Jerusalem.

³⁰So the priests and the Levites took charge of the silver, the gold, and the utensils, to take them to the Temple in Jerusalem.

³¹It was on the twelfth day of the first month that we left the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. Our God was with us and protected us from enemy attacks and from ambush as we traveled.

³²When we reached Jerusalem, we rested three days.

³³Then on the fourth day we went to the Temple, weighed the silver, the gold, and the utensils, and turned them over to Meremoth the priest, son of Uriah. With him were Eleazar son of Phinehas and two Levites, Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui.

³⁴Everything was counted and weighed, and a complete record was made at the same time.

³⁵All those who had returned from exile then brought offerings to be burned as sacrifices to the God of Israel. They offered 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, and 77 lambs; they also offered 12 goats to purify themselves from sin. All these animals were burned as sacrifices to the LORD.

³⁶They also took the document the emperor had given them and gave it to the governors and officials of West-of-Euphrates Province, who then gave their support to the people and the Temple worship.

9¹After all this had been done, some of the leaders of the people of Israel

came and told me that the people, the priests, and the Levites had not kept themselves separate from the people in the neighboring countries of Ammon, Moab, and Egypt or from the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Amorites. They were doing the same disgusting things which these people did.

² Jewish men were marrying foreign women, and so God's holy people had become contaminated. The leaders and officials were the chief offenders.

³ When I heard this, I tore my clothes in despair, tore my hair and my beard, and sat down crushed with grief.

⁴ I sat there grieving until the time for the evening sacrifice to be offered, and people began to gather around me -- all those who were frightened because of what the God of Israel had said about the sins of those who had returned from exile.

⁵ When the time came for the evening sacrifice, I got up from where I had been grieving, and still wearing my torn clothes, I knelt in prayer and stretched out my hands to the LORD my God.

⁶I said, O God, I am too ashamed to raise my head in your presence. Our sins pile up higher than our heads; they reach as high as the heavens.

⁷From the days of our ancestors until now, we, your people, have sinned greatly. Because of our sins we, our kings, and our priests have fallen into the hands of foreign kings, and we have been slaughtered, robbed, and carried away as prisoners. We have been totally disgraced, as we still are today.

⁸Now for a short time, O LORD our God, you have been gracious to us and have let some of us escape from slavery and live in safety in this holy place. You have let us escape from slavery and have given us new life.

⁹We were slaves, but you did not leave us in slavery. You made the emperors of Persia favor us and permit us to go on living and to rebuild your Temple, which was in ruins, and to find safety here in Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁰But now, O God, what can we say after all that has happened? We have again disobeyed the commands

¹¹ that you gave us through your servants, the prophets. They told us that the land we were going to occupy was an impure land because the people who lived in it filled it from one end to the other with disgusting, filthy actions.

¹² They told us that we were never to intermarry with those people and never to help them prosper or succeed if we wanted to enjoy the land and pass it on to our descendants forever.

¹³ Even after everything that has happened to us in punishment for our sins and wrongs, we know that you, our God, have punished us less than we deserve and have allowed us to survive.

¹⁴ Then how can we ignore your commandments again and intermarry with these wicked people? If we do, you will be so angry that you will destroy us completely and let no one survive.

¹⁵ LORD God of Israel, you are just, but you have let us survive. We confess our guilt to you; we have no right to come into your presence.

10¹ While Ezra was bowing in prayer in front of the Temple, weeping and confessing these sins, a large

group of Israelites -- men, women, and children -- gathered around him, weeping bitterly.

²Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, of the clan of Elam, said to Ezra, We have broken faith with God by marrying foreign women, but even so there is still hope for Israel.

³Now we must make a solemn promise to our God that we will send these women and their children away. We will do what you and the others who honor God's commands advise us to do. We will do what God's Law demands.

⁴It is your responsibility to act. We are behind you, so go ahead and get it done.

⁵So Ezra began by making the leaders of the priests, of the Levites, and of the rest of the people take an oath that they would do what Shecaniah had proposed.

⁶Then he went from in front of the Temple into the living quarters of Jehohanan son of Eliashib, and spent the night there grieving over the unfaithfulness of the exiles. He did not eat or drink anything.

⁷A message was sent throughout Jerusalem and Judah that all those who

had returned from exile were to meet in Jerusalem

⁸by order of the leaders of the people. If any failed to come within three days, all their property would be confiscated, and they would lose their right to be members of the community.

⁹Within the three days, on the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the men living in the territory of Judah and Benjamin came to Jerusalem and assembled in the Temple square. It was raining hard, and because of the weather and the importance of the meeting everyone was trembling.

¹⁰Ezra the priest stood up and spoke to them. He said, You have been faithless and have brought guilt on Israel by marrying foreign women.

¹¹Now then, confess your sins to the LORD, the God of your ancestors, and do what pleases him. Separate yourselves from the foreigners living in our land and get rid of your foreign wives.

¹²The people shouted in answer, We will do whatever you say.

¹³But they added, The crowd is too big, and it's raining hard. We can't stand here

in the open like this. This isn't something that can be done in one or two days, because so many of us are involved in this sin.

¹⁴Let our officials stay in Jerusalem and take charge of the matter. Then let anyone who has a foreign wife come at a set time, together with the leaders and the judges of his city. In this way God's anger over this situation will be turned away.

¹⁵No one was opposed to the plan except Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah, who had the support of Meshullam and of Shabbethai, a Levite.

¹⁶The returned exiles accepted the plan, so Ezra the priest appointed men from among the heads of the clans and recorded their names. On the first day of the tenth month they began their investigation,

¹⁷and within the next three months they investigated all the cases of men with foreign wives.

¹⁸This is the list of the men who had foreign wives: Priests, listed by clans: Clan of Joshua and his brothers, sons of

Jehozadak: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah.

¹⁹They promised to divorce their wives, and they offered a ram as a sacrifice for their sins.

²⁰Clan of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah

²¹Clan of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah

²²Clan of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasa

²³Levites: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (also called Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer

²⁴Musicians: Eliashib Temple guards: Shallum, Telem, and Uri

²⁵Others: Clan of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchijah, and Benaiah

²⁶Clan of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah

²⁷Clan of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza

²⁸Clan of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai

²⁹Clan of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth

³⁰Clan of Pahath Moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh

³¹Clan of Harim: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah

³²(10: 31)

³³Clan of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei

³⁴Clan of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluhi, Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu

³⁵(10: 34)

³⁶(10: 34)

³⁷(10: 34)

³⁸Clan of Binnui: Shimei, Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph

³⁹(10: 38)

⁴⁰(10: 38)

⁴¹(10: 38)

⁴²(10: 38)

⁴³Clan of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah

⁴⁴ All these men had foreign wives.
They divorced them and sent them and
their children away.

Nehemiah

1 ¹This is the account of what Nehemiah son of Hacaliah accomplished. In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year that Artaxerxes was emperor of Persia, I, Nehemiah, was in Susa, the capital city.

²Hanani, one of my brothers, arrived from Judah with another group, and I asked them about Jerusalem and about the other Jews who had returned from exile in Babylonia.

³They told me that those who had survived and were back in the homeland were in great difficulty and that the foreigners who lived nearby looked down on them. They also told me that the walls of Jerusalem were still broken down and that the gates had not been restored since the time they were burned.

⁴When I heard all this, I sat down and wept. For several days I mourned and did not eat. I prayed to God,

⁵LORD God of Heaven! You are great, and we stand in fear of you. You faithfully

keep your covenant with those who love you and do what you command.

⁶Look at me, LORD, and hear my prayer, as I pray day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess that we, the people of Israel, have sinned. My ancestors and I have sinned.

⁷We have acted wickedly against you and have not done what you commanded. We have not kept the laws which you gave us through Moses, your servant.

⁸Remember now what you told Moses: If you people of Israel are unfaithful to me, I will scatter you among the other nations.

⁹But then if you turn back to me and do what I have commanded you, I will bring you back to the place where I have chosen to be worshiped, even though you are scattered to the ends of the earth.

¹⁰Lord, these are your servants, your own people. You rescued them by your great power and strength.

¹¹Listen now to my prayer and to the prayers of all your other servants who want to honor you. Give me success

today and make the emperor merciful to me. In those days I was the emperor's wine steward.

2¹ One day four months later, when Emperor Artaxerxes was dining, I took the wine to him. He had never seen me look sad before,

²so he asked, Why are you looking so sad? You aren't sick, so it must be that you're unhappy. I was startled

³and answered, May Your Majesty live forever! How can I keep from looking sad when the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire?

⁴The emperor asked, What is it that you want? I prayed to the God of Heaven,

⁵and then I said to the emperor, If Your Majesty is pleased with me and is willing to grant my request, let me go to the land of Judah, to the city where my ancestors are buried, so that I can rebuild the city.

⁶The emperor, with the empress sitting at his side, approved my request. He asked me how long I would be gone and when I would return, and I told him.

⁷ Then I asked him to grant me the favor of giving me letters to the governors of West-of-Euphrates Province, instructing them to let me travel to Judah.

⁸ I asked also for a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal forests, instructing him to supply me with timber for the gates of the fort that guards the Temple, for the city walls, and for the house I was to live in. The emperor gave me all I asked for, because God was with me.

⁹ The emperor sent some army officers and a troop of cavalry with me, and I made the journey to West-of-Euphrates. There I gave the emperor's letters to the governors.

¹⁰ But Sanballat, from the town of Beth Horon, and Tobiah, an official in the province of Ammon, heard that someone had come to work for the good of the people of Israel, and they were highly indignant.

¹¹ I went on to Jerusalem, and for three days

¹² I did not tell anyone what God had inspired me to do for Jerusalem. Then in the middle of the night I got up and went out, taking a few of my companions with

me. The only animal we took was the donkey that I rode on.

¹³It was still night as I left the city through the Valley Gate on the west and went south past Dragon's Fountain to the Rubbish Gate. As I went, I inspected the broken walls of the city and the gates that had been destroyed by fire.

¹⁴Then on the east side of the city I went north to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool. The donkey I was riding could not find any path through the rubble,

¹⁵so I went down into Kidron Valley and rode along, looking at the wall. Then I returned the way I had come and went back into the city through the Valley Gate.

¹⁶None of the local officials knew where I had gone or what I had been doing. So far I had not said anything to any of the other Jews -- the priests, the leaders, the officials, or anyone else who would be taking part in the work.

¹⁷But now I said to them, See what trouble we are in because Jerusalem is in ruins and its gates are destroyed! Let's

rebuild the city walls and put an end to our disgrace.

¹⁸And I told them how God had been with me and helped me, and what the emperor had said to me. They responded, Let's start rebuilding! And they got ready to start the work.

¹⁹When Sanballat, Tobiah, and an Arab named Geshem heard what we were planning to do, they laughed at us and said, What do you think you're doing? Are you going to rebel against the emperor?

²⁰I answered, The God of Heaven will give us success. We are his servants, and we are going to start building. But you have no right to any property in Jerusalem, and you have no share in its traditions.

3¹ This is how the city wall was rebuilt. The High Priest Eliashib and his fellow priests rebuilt the Sheep Gate, dedicated it, and put the gates in place. They dedicated the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel.

²The men of Jericho built the next section. Zaccur son of Imri built the next section.

³The clan of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They put the beams and the gates in place, and put in the bolts and bars for locking the gate.

⁴Meremoth, the son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz, built the next section. Meshullam, the son of Berechiah and grandson of Meshezabel, built the next section. Zadok son of Baana built the next section.

⁵The men of Tekoa built the next section, but the leading men of the town refused to do the manual labor assigned them by the supervisors.

⁶Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah rebuilt Jeshanah Gate. They put the beams and the gates in place, and put in the bolts and bars for locking the gate.

⁷Melatiah from Gibeon, Jadon from Meronoth, and the men of Gibeon and Mizpah built the next section, as far as the residence of the governor of West-of-Euphrates.

⁸Uzziel son of Harhaiah, a goldsmith, built the next section. Hananiah, a maker of perfumes, built the next section, as far as Broad Wall.

⁹Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of half of the Jerusalem District, built the next section.

¹⁰Jedaiah son of Harumaph built the next section, which was near his own house. Hattush son of Hashabneiah built the next section.

¹¹Malchijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath Moab built both the next section and the Tower of the Ovens.

¹²Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of the other half of the Jerusalem District, built the next section. (His daughters helped with the work.)

¹³Hanun and the inhabitants of the city of Zanoah rebuilt the Valley Gate. They put the gates in place, put in the bolts and the bars for locking the gate, and repaired the wall for fifteen hundred feet, as far as the Rubbish Gate.

¹⁴Malchijah son of Rechab, ruler of the Beth Haccherem District, rebuilt the Rubbish Gate. He put the gates in place,

and put in the bolts and the bars for locking the gate.

¹⁵ Shallum son of Colhozeh, ruler of the Mizpah District, rebuilt the Fountain Gate. He covered the gateway, put the gates in place, and put in the bolts and the bars. At the Pool of Shelah he built the wall next to the royal garden, as far as the stairs leading down from David's City.

¹⁶ Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of half of the Bethzur District, built the next section, as far as David's tomb, the pool, and the barracks.

¹⁷ The following Levites rebuilt the next several sections of the wall: Rehum son of Bani built the next section; Hashabiah, ruler of half of the Keilah District, built the next section on behalf of his district;

¹⁸ Bavvai son of Henadad, ruler of the other half of the Keilah District, built the next section;

¹⁹ Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, built the next section in front of the armory, as far as the place where the wall turns;

²⁰Baruch son of Zabbai built the next section, as far as the entrance to the house of the High Priest Eliashib;

²¹Meremoth, the son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz, built the next section, up to the far end of Eliashib's house.

²²The following priests rebuilt the next several sections of the wall: Priests from the area around Jerusalem built the next section;

²³Benjamin and Hasshub built the next section, which was in front of their houses; Azariah, the son of Maaseiah and grandson of Ananiah, built the next section, which was in front of his house;

²⁴Binnui son of Henadad built the next section, from Azariah's house to the corner of the wall;

²⁵Palal son of Uzai built the next section, beginning at the corner of the wall and the tower of the upper palace near the court of the guard; Pedaiah son of Parosh built the next section, to a point on the east near the Water Gate and the tower guarding the Temple. (This was near that part of the city called Ophel, where the Temple workers lived.)

²⁶ (3: 25)

²⁷ The men of Tekoa built the next section, their second one, from a point opposite the large tower guarding the Temple as far as the wall near Ophel.

²⁸ A group of priests built the next section, going north from the Horse Gate, each one building in front of his own house.

²⁹ Zadok son of Immer built the next section, which was in front of his house. Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, keeper of the East Gate, built the next section.

³⁰ Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, built the next section, their second one. Meshullam son of Berechiah built the next section, which was in front of his house.

³¹ Malchijah, a goldsmith, built the next section, as far as the building used by the Temple workers and the merchants, which was by the Miphkad Gate to the Temple, near the room on top of the northeast corner of the wall.

³² The goldsmiths and the merchants built the last section, from the room at the corner as far as the Sheep Gate.

4¹ When Sanballat heard that we Jews had begun rebuilding the wall, he became furious and began to ridicule us.

² In front of his companions and the Samaritan troops he said, What do these miserable Jews think they're doing? Do they intend to rebuild the city? Do they think that by offering sacrifices they can finish the work in one day? Can they make building stones out of heaps of burnt rubble?

³ Tobiah was standing there beside him, and he added, What kind of wall could they ever build? Even a fox could knock it down!

⁴ I prayed, Hear how they make fun of us, O God! Let their ridicule fall on their own heads. Let them be robbed of everything they have, and let them be taken as prisoners to a foreign land.

⁵ Don't forgive the evil they do and don't forget their sins, for they have insulted us who are building.

⁶ So we went on rebuilding the wall, and soon it was half its full height, because the people were eager to work.

⁷ Sanballat, Tobiah, and the people of Arabia, Ammon, and Ashdod heard that

we were making progress in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem and that the gaps in the wall were being closed, and they became very angry.

⁸So they all plotted together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion,

⁹but we prayed to our God and kept men on guard against them day and night.

¹⁰The people of Judah had a song they sang: We grow weak carrying burdens; There's so much rubble to take away. How can we build the wall today?

¹¹Our enemies thought we would not see them or know what was happening until they were already upon us, killing us and putting an end to our work.

¹²But time after time Jews who were living among our enemies came to warn us of the plans our enemies were making against us.

¹³So I armed the people with swords, spears, and bows, and stationed them by clans behind the wall, wherever it was still unfinished.

¹⁴I saw that the people were worried, so I said to them and to their leaders and

officials, Don't be afraid of our enemies. Remember how great and terrifying the Lord is, and fight for your relatives, your children, your wives, and your homes.

¹⁵Our enemies heard that we had found out what they were plotting, and they realized that God had defeated their plans. Then all of us went back to rebuilding the wall.

¹⁶From then on half of my men worked and half stood guard, wearing coats of armor and armed with spears, shields, and bows. And our leaders gave their full support to the people

¹⁷who were rebuilding the wall. Even those who carried building materials worked with one hand and kept a weapon in the other,

¹⁸and everyone who was building kept a sword strapped to their waist. The man who was to sound the alarm on the bugle stayed with me.

¹⁹I told the people and their officials and leaders, The work is spread out over such a distance that we are widely separated from one another on the wall.

²⁰If you hear the bugle, gather around me. Our God will fight for us.

²¹ So every day, from dawn until the stars came out at night, half of us worked on the wall, while the other half stood guard with spears.

²² During this time I told the men in charge that they and all their helpers had to stay in Jerusalem at night, so that we could guard the city at night as well as work in the daytime.

²³ I didn't take off my clothes even at night, neither did any of my companions nor my servants nor my bodyguards. And we all kept our weapons at hand.

5¹ Some time later many of the people, both men and women, began to complain against the other Jews.

² Some said, We have large families, we need grain to keep us alive.

³ Others said, We have had to mortgage our fields and vineyards and houses to get enough grain to keep us from starving.

⁴ Still others said, We had to borrow money to pay the royal tax on our fields and vineyards.

⁵ We are of the same race as the other Jews. Aren't our children just as good as theirs? But we have to make slaves

of our children. Some of our daughters have already been sold as slaves. We are helpless because our fields and vineyards have been taken away from us.

⁶When I heard their complaints, I grew angry

⁷and decided to act. I denounced the leaders and officials of the people and told them, You are oppressing your own relatives! I called a public assembly to deal with the problem

⁸and said, As far as we have been able, we have been buying back our Jewish relatives who had to sell themselves to foreigners. Now you are forcing your own relatives to sell themselves to you, their own people! The leaders were silent and could find nothing to say.

⁹Then I said, What you are doing is wrong! You ought to obey God and do what's right. Then you would not give our enemies, the Gentiles, any reason to ridicule us.

¹⁰I have let the people borrow money and grain from me, and so have my companions and those who work for

me. Now let's give up all our claims to repayment.

¹¹Cancel all the debts they owe you -- money or grain or wine or olive oil. And give them back their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and houses right now!

¹²The leaders replied, We'll do as you say. We'll give the property back and not try to collect the debts. I called in the priests and made the leaders swear in front of them to keep the promise they had just made.

¹³Then I took off the sash I was wearing around my waist and shook it out. This is how God will shake any of you who don't keep your promise, I said. God will take away your houses and everything you own, and will leave you with nothing. Everyone who was present said, Amen! and praised the LORD. And the leaders kept their promise.

¹⁴During all the twelve years that I was governor of the land of Judah, from the twentieth year that Artaxerxes was emperor until his thirty-second year, neither my relatives nor I ate the food I was entitled to have as governor.

¹⁵Every governor who had been in office before me had been a burden to the people and had demanded forty silver coins a day for food and wine. Even their servants had oppressed the people. But I acted differently, because I honored God.

¹⁶I put all my energy into rebuilding the wall and did not acquire any property. Everyone who worked for me joined in the rebuilding.

¹⁷I regularly fed at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jewish people and their leaders, besides all the people who came to me from the surrounding nations.

¹⁸Every day I served one beef, six of the best sheep, and many chickens, and every ten days I provided a fresh supply of wine. But I knew what heavy burdens the people had to bear, and so I did not claim the allowance that the governor is entitled to.

¹⁹I pray you, O God, remember to my credit everything that I have done for this people.

6¹Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, and the rest of our enemies heard that we had finished building the wall and that

there were no gaps left in it, although we still had not set up the gates in the gateways.

²So Sanballat and Geshem sent me a message, suggesting that I meet with them in one of the villages in the Plain of Ono. This was a trick of theirs to try to harm me.

³I sent messengers to say to them, I am doing important work and can't go down there. I am not going to let the work stop just to go and see you.

⁴They sent me the same message four times, and each time I sent them the same reply.

⁵Then Sanballat sent one of his servants to me with a fifth message, this one in the form of an unsealed letter.

⁶It read: Geshem tells me that a rumor is going around among the neighboring peoples that you and the Jewish people intend to revolt and that this is why you are rebuilding the wall. He also says you plan to make yourself king

⁷and that you have arranged for some prophets to proclaim in Jerusalem that you are the king of Judah. His Majesty is certain to hear about this, so I suggest

that you and I meet to talk the situation over.

⁸I sent a reply to him: Nothing of what you are saying is true. You have made it all up yourself.

⁹They were trying to frighten us into stopping work. I prayed, But now, God, make me strong!

¹⁰About this time I went to visit Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah and grandson of Mehetabel, who was unable to leave his house. He said to me, You and I must go and hide together in the Holy Place of the Temple and lock the doors, because they are coming to kill you. Any night now they will come to kill you.

¹¹I answered, I'm not the kind of person that runs and hides. Do you think I would try to save my life by hiding in the Temple? I won't do it.

¹²When I thought it over, I realized that God had not spoken to Shemaiah, but that Tobiah and Sanballat had bribed him to give me this warning.

¹³They hired him to frighten me into sinning, so that they could ruin my reputation and humiliate me.

¹⁴I prayed, God, remember what Tobiah and Sanballat have done and punish them. Remember that woman Noadiah and all the other prophets who tried to frighten me.

¹⁵After fifty-two days of work the entire wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul.

¹⁶When our enemies in the surrounding nations heard this, they realized that they had lost face, since everyone knew that the work had been done with God's help.

¹⁷During all this time the Jewish leaders had been in correspondence with Tobiah.

¹⁸Many people in Judah were on his side because of his Jewish father-in-law, Shecaniah son of Arah. In addition, his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Berechiah.

¹⁹People would talk in front of me about all the good deeds Tobiah had done and would tell him everything I said. And he kept sending me letters to try to frighten me.

7¹ And now the wall had been rebuilt, the gates had all been put in place, and the Temple guards, the members of

the sacred choir, and the other Levites had been assigned their work.

²I put two men in charge of governing the city of Jerusalem: my brother Hanani and Hananiah, commanding officer of the fortress. Hananiah was a reliable and God-fearing man without equal.

³I told them not to have the gates of Jerusalem opened in the morning until well after sunrise and to have them closed and barred before the guards went off duty at sunset. I also told them to appoint guards from among the people who lived in Jerusalem and to assign some of them to specific posts and others to patrol the area around their own houses.

⁴Jerusalem was a large city, but not many people were living in it, and not many houses had been built yet.

⁵God inspired me to assemble the people and their leaders and officials and to check their family records. I located the records of those who had first returned from captivity, and this is the information I found:

⁶Many of the exiles left the province of Babylon and returned to Jerusalem

and Judah, each to his own hometown. Their families had been living in exile in Babylonia ever since King Nebuchadnezzar had taken them there as prisoners.

⁷Their leaders were Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah.

⁸This is the list of the clans of Israel, with the number of those from each clan who returned from exile: Parosh - 2,172; Shephatiah - 372; Arah - 652; Pahath Moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab) - 2,818; Elam - 1,254; Zattu - 845; Zaccai - 760; Binnui - 648; Bebai - 628; Azgad - 2,322; Adonikam - 667; Bigvai - 2,067; Adin - 655; Ater (also called Hezekiah) - 98; Hashum - 328; Bezai - 324; Hariph - 112; Gibeon - 95

⁹(7: 8)

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26 People whose ancestors had lived in the following towns also returned: Bethlehem and Netophah - 188; Anathoth - 128; Beth Azmaveth - 42; Kiriath Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth - 743; Ramah and Geba - 621; Michmash - 122; Bethel and Ai - 123; The other Nebo - 52; The other Elam - 1,254; Harim - 320; Jericho - 345; Lod, Hadid, and Ono - 721; Senaah - 3,930

27 (7: 26)

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³⁸ (7: 26)

³⁹ This is the list of the priestly clans that returned from exile: Jedaiah (descendants of Jeshua) - 973; Immer - 1,052; Pashhur - 1,247; Harim - 1,017

⁴⁰ (7: 39)

⁴¹ (7: 39)

⁴² (7: 39)

⁴³ Clans of Levites who returned from exile: Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodaviah) - 74; Temple musicians (descendants of Asaph) - 148; Temple guards (descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai) - 138

⁴⁴ (7: 43)

⁴⁵ (7: 43)

⁴⁶ Clans of Temple workers who returned from exile: Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,; Keros, Sia, Padon,; Lebana, Hagaba, Shalmal,; Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,; Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,; Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,; Besai, Meunim, Nephushesim,; Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,; Bazlith, Mehida, Harsha,; Barkos, Sisera, Temah,; Neziah, and Hatipha.

47 (7: 46)

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56 (7: 46)

57 Clans of Solomon's servants who returned from exile: Sotai, Sophereth, Perida,; Jaalah, Darkon, Giddel,; Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth Hazzebaim, and Amon.

58 (7: 57)

59 (7: 57)

60 The total number of descendants of the Temple workers and of Solomon's servants who returned from exile was 392.

61 There were 642 belonging to the clans of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda who returned from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer; but they could not prove that they were descendants of Israelites.

62 (7: 61)

⁶³The following priestly clans could find no record to prove their ancestry: Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai. (The ancestor of the priestly clan of Barzillai had married a woman from the clan of Barzillai of Gilead and taken the name of his father-in-law's clan.) Since they were unable to prove who their ancestors were, they were not accepted as priests.

⁶⁴ (7: 63)

⁶⁵The Jewish governor told them that they could not eat the food offered to God until there was a priest who could use the Urim and Thummim.

⁶⁶Total number of exiles who returned - 42,360. Their male and female servants - 7,337; Male and female musicians - 245; Horses - 736; Mules - 245; Camels - 435; Donkeys - 6,720

⁶⁷ (7: 66)

⁶⁸ (7: 66)

⁶⁹ (7: 66)

⁷⁰Many of the people contributed to help pay the cost of restoring the Temple: The governor ~ ~ 270 ounces of gold ~ ~ & 50 ceremonial bowls ~ ~ & 530 robes for priests; Heads of clans ~ ~ 337 pounds of gold ~ ~ & 3,215 pounds

of silver; The rest of the people ~ ~ 337 pounds of gold ~ ~ & 2,923 pounds of silver ~ ~ & 67 robes for priests

⁷¹ (7: 70)

⁷² (7: 70)

⁷³ The priests, the Levites, the Temple guards, the musicians, many of the ordinary people, the Temple workers -- all the people of Israel -- settled in the towns and cities of Judah.

8¹ By the seventh month the people of Israel were all settled in their towns. On the first day of that month they all assembled in Jerusalem, in the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra, the priest and scholar of the Law which the LORD had given Israel through Moses, to get the book of the Law.

² So Ezra brought it to the place where the people had gathered -- men, women, and the children who were old enough to understand.

³ There in the square by the gate he read the Law to them from dawn until noon, and they all listened attentively.

⁴ Ezra was standing on a wooden platform that had been built for the occasion. The following men stood at his

right: Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and the following stood at his left: Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

⁵As Ezra stood there on the platform high above the people, they all kept their eyes fixed on him. As soon as he opened the book, they all stood up.

⁶Ezra said, Praise the LORD, the great God! All the people raised their arms in the air and answered, Amen! Amen! They knelt in worship, with their faces to the ground.

⁷Then they rose and stood in their places, and the following Levites explained the Law to them: Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah.

⁸They gave an oral translation of God's Law and explained it so that the people could understand it.

⁹When the people heard what the Law required, they were so moved that they began to cry. So Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra, the priest and scholar of the Law, and the Levites who were

explaining the Law told all the people, This day is holy to the LORD your God, so you are not to mourn or cry.

¹⁰Now go home and have a feast. Share your food and wine with those who don't have enough. Today is holy to our Lord, so don't be sad. The joy that the LORD gives you will make you strong.

¹¹The Levites went around calming the people and telling them not to be sad on such a holy day.

¹²So all the people went home and ate and drank joyfully and shared what they had with others, because they understood what had been read to them.

¹³The next day the heads of the clans, together with the priests and the Levites, went to Ezra to study the teachings of the Law.

¹⁴They discovered that the Law, which the LORD gave through Moses, ordered the people of Israel to live in temporary shelters during the Festival of Shelters.

¹⁵So they gave the following instructions and sent them all through Jerusalem and the other cities and towns: Go out to the hills and get branches from pines, olives, myrtles,

palms, and other trees to make shelters according to the instructions written in the Law.

¹⁶So the people got branches and built shelters on the flat roofs of their houses, in their yards, in the Temple courtyard, and in the public squares by the Water Gate and by the Ephraim Gate.

¹⁷All the people who had come back from captivity built shelters and lived in them. This was the first time it had been done since the days of Joshua son of Nun, and everybody was excited and happy.

¹⁸From the first day of the festival to the last they read a part of God's Law every day. They celebrated for seven days, and on the eighth day there was a closing ceremony, as required in the Law.

9¹On the twenty-fourth day of the same month the people of Israel gathered to fast in order to show sorrow for their sins. They had already separated themselves from all foreigners. They wore sackcloth and put dust on their heads as signs of grief. Then they stood

and began to confess the sins that they and their ancestors had committed.

²(9: 1)

³For about three hours the Law of the LORD their God was read to them, and for the next three hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the LORD their God.

⁴There was a platform for the Levites, and on it stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani. They prayed aloud to the LORD their God.

⁵The following Levites gave a call to worship: Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah. They said: Stand up and praise the LORD your God; praise him forever and ever! Let everyone praise his glorious name, although no human praise is great enough.

⁶And then the people of Israel prayed this prayer: You, LORD, you alone are LORD; you made the heavens and the stars of the sky. You made land and sea and everything in them; you gave life to

all. The heavenly powers bow down and worship you.

⁷You, LORD God, chose Abram and led him out of Ur in Babylonia; you changed his name to Abraham.

⁸You found that he was faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him. You promised to give him the land of the Canaanites, the land of the Hittites and the Amorites, the land of the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Girgashites, to be a land where his descendants would live. You kept your promise, because you are faithful.

⁹You saw how our ancestors suffered in Egypt; you heard their call for help at the Red Sea.

¹⁰You worked amazing miracles against the king, against his officials and the people of his land, because you knew how they oppressed your people. You won then the fame you still have today.

¹¹Through the sea you made a path for your people and led them through on dry ground. Those who pursued them drowned in deep water, as a stone sinks in the raging sea.

¹²With a cloud you led them in daytime, and at night you lighted their way with fire.

¹³At Mount Sinai you came down from heaven; you spoke to your people and gave them good laws and sound teachings.

¹⁴You taught them to keep your Sabbaths holy, and through your servant Moses you gave them your laws.

¹⁵When they were hungry, you gave them bread from heaven, and water from a rock when they were thirsty. You told them to take control of the land which you had promised to give them.

¹⁶But our ancestors grew proud and stubborn and refused to obey your commands.

¹⁷They refused to obey; they forgot all you did; they forgot the miracles you had performed. In their pride they chose a leader to take them back to slavery in Egypt. But you are a God who forgives; you are gracious and loving, slow to be angry. Your mercy is great; you did not forsake them.

¹⁸They made an idol in the shape of a bull-calf and said it was the god who

led them from Egypt! How much they insulted you, LORD!

¹⁹But you did not abandon them there in the desert, for your mercy is great. You did not take away the cloud or the fire that showed them the path by day and night.

²⁰In your goodness you told them what they should do; you fed them manna and gave them water to drink.

²¹Through forty years in the desert you provided all that they needed; their clothing never wore out, and their feet were not swollen with pain.

²²You let them conquer nations and kingdoms, lands that bordered their own. They conquered the land of Heshbon, where Sihon ruled, and the land of Bashan, where Og was king.

²³You gave them as many children as there are stars in the sky, and let them conquer and live in the land that you had promised their ancestors to give them.

²⁴They conquered the land of Canaan; you overcame the people living there. You gave your people the power to do as they pleased with the people and kings of Canaan.

²⁵Your people captured fortified cities, fertile land, houses full of wealth, cisterns already dug, olive trees, fruit trees, and vineyards. They ate all they wanted and grew fat; they enjoyed all the good things you gave them.

²⁶But your people rebelled and disobeyed you; they turned their backs on your Law. They killed the prophets who warned them, who told them to turn back to you. They insulted you time after time,

²⁷so you let their enemies conquer and rule them. In their trouble they called to you for help, and you answered them from heaven. In your great mercy you sent them leaders who rescued them from their foes.

²⁸When peace returned, they sinned again, and again you let their enemies conquer them. Yet when they repented and asked you to save them, in heaven you heard, and time after time you rescued them in your great mercy.

²⁹You warned them to obey your teachings, but in pride they rejected your laws, although keeping your Law

is the way to life. Hard-headed and stubborn, they refused to obey.

³⁰Year after year you patiently warned them. You inspired your prophets to speak, but your people were deaf, so you let them be conquered by other nations.

³¹And yet, because your mercy is great, you did not forsake or destroy them. You are a gracious and merciful God!

³²O God, our God, how great you are! How terrifying, how powerful! You faithfully keep your covenant promises. From the time when Assyrian kings oppressed us, even till now, how much we have suffered! Our kings, our leaders, our priests and prophets, our ancestors, and all our people have suffered. Remember how much we have suffered!

³³You have done right to punish us; you have been faithful, even though we have sinned.

³⁴Our ancestors, our kings, leaders, and priests have not kept your Law. They did not listen to your commands and warnings.

³⁵With your blessing, kings ruled your people when they lived in the broad,

fertile land you gave them; but they failed to turn from sin and serve you.

³⁶And now we are slaves in the land that you gave us, this fertile land which gives us food.

³⁷What the land produces goes to the kings that you put over us because we sinned. They do as they please with us and our livestock, and we are in deep distress!

³⁸Because of all that has happened, we, the people of Israel, hereby make a solemn written agreement, and our leaders, our Levites, and our priests put their seals to it.

10¹The first to sign was the governor, Nehemiah son of Hacaliah, and then Zedekiah signed. The following also signed:

²Priests: Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaia.

³(10: 2)

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⁹Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui of the clan of Henadad, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

¹⁰(10: 9)

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¹⁴Leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, Malluch, Harim, and Baanah.

¹⁵(10: 14)

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²⁸ We, the people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the Temple guards, the Temple musicians, the Temple workers, and all others who in obedience to God's Law have separated themselves from the foreigners living in our land, we, together with our wives and all our children old enough to understand,

²⁹ do hereby join with our leaders in an oath, under penalty of a curse if we break it, that we will live according to God's Law, which God gave through his servant Moses; that we will obey all that the LORD, our Lord, commands us; and that we will keep all his laws and requirements.

³⁰ We will not intermarry with the foreigners living in our land.

³¹ If foreigners bring grain or anything else to sell to us on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will not buy from them. Every seventh year we will not farm the land, and we will cancel all debts.

³² Every year we will each contribute one-eighth of an ounce of silver to help pay the expenses of the Temple.

³³ We will provide for the Temple worship the following: the sacred bread, the daily grain offering, the animals to be burned each day as sacrifices, the sacred offerings for Sabbaths, New Moon Festivals, and other festivals, the other sacred offerings, the offerings to take away the sins of Israel, and anything else needed for the Temple.

³⁴ We, the people, priests, and Levites, will draw lots each year to determine which clans are to provide wood to burn the sacrifices offered to the LORD our God, according to the requirements of the Law.

³⁵ We will take to the Temple each year an offering of the first grain we harvest and of the first fruit that ripens on our trees.

³⁶The first son born to each of us we will take to the priests in the Temple and there, as required by the Law, dedicate him to God. We will also dedicate the first calf born to each of our cows, and the first lamb or kid born to each of our sheep or goats.

³⁷We will take to the priests in the Temple the dough made from the first grain harvested each year and our other offerings of wine, olive oil, and all kinds of fruit. We will take to the Levites, who collect tithes in our farming villages, the tithes from the crops that grow on our land.

³⁸Priests who are descended from Aaron are to be with the Levites when tithes are collected, and for use in the Temple the Levites are to take to the Temple storerooms one-tenth of all the tithes they collect.

³⁹The people of Israel and the Levites are to take the contributions of grain, wine, and olive oil to the storerooms where the utensils for the Temple are kept and where the priests who are on duty, the Temple guards, and the members of the Temple choir have their

quarters. We will not neglect the house of our God.

11 ¹The leaders settled in Jerusalem, and the rest of the people drew lots to choose one family out of every ten to go and live in the holy city of Jerusalem, while the rest were to live in the other cities and towns.

²The people praised anyone else who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

³In the other towns and cities the people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the Temple workers, and the descendants of Solomon's servants lived on their own property in their own towns. The following is the list of the leading citizens of the province of Judah who lived in Jerusalem:

⁴Members of the tribe of Judah: Athaiah, the son of Uzziah and grandson of Zechariah. His other ancestors included Amariah, Shephatiah, and Mahalalel, descendants of Judah's son Perez.

⁵Maaseiah, the son of Baruch and grandson of Colhozeh. His other ancestors included Hazaiah, Adaiah,

Joiarib, and Zechariah, descendants of Judah's son Shelah.

⁶Of the descendants of Perez, 468 outstanding soldiers lived in Jerusalem.

⁷Members of the tribe of Benjamin: Sallu, the son of Meshullam and grandson of Joed. His other ancestors included Pedaiah, Kolaiah, Maaseiah, Ithiel, and Jeshaiah.

⁸Gabbai and Sallai, close relatives of Sallu. In all, 928 Benjaminites lived in Jerusalem.

⁹Joel son of Zichri was their leader, and Judah son of Hassenuah was the second ranking official in the city.

¹⁰Priests: Jedaiah son of Joiarib, and Jachin.

¹¹Seraiah, the son of Hilkiah and grandson of Meshullam. His ancestors included Zadok, Meraioth, and Ahitub, who was the High Priest.

¹²In all, 822 members of this clan served in the Temple. Adaiah, the son of Jeroham and grandson of Pelaliah. His ancestors included Amzi, Zechariah, Pashhur, and Malchijah.

¹³In all, 242 members of this clan were heads of families. Amashsai, the son

of Azarel and grandson of Ahzai. His ancestors included Meshillemoth and Immer.

¹⁴There were 128 members of this clan who were outstanding soldiers. Their leader was Zabdiel, a member of a leading family.

¹⁵Levites: Shemaiah, the son of Hasshub and grandson of Azrikam. His ancestors included Hashabiah and Bunni.

¹⁶Shabbethai and Jozabad, prominent Levites in charge of the work outside the Temple.

¹⁷Mattaniah, the son of Mica and grandson of Zabdi, a descendant of Asaph. He led the Temple choir in singing the prayer of thanksgiving. Bakbukiah, who was Mattaniah's assistant. Abda, the son of Shammua and grandson of Galal, a descendant of Jeduthun.

¹⁸In all, 284 Levites lived in the holy city of Jerusalem.

¹⁹Temple guards: Akkub, Talmon, and their relatives, 172 in all.

²⁰The rest of the people of Israel and the remaining priests and Levites lived on their own property in the other cities and towns of Judah.

²¹ The Temple workers lived in the part of Jerusalem called Ophel and worked under the supervision of Ziha and Gishpa.

²² The supervisor of the Levites who lived in Jerusalem was Uzzi, the son of Bani and grandson of Hashabiah. His ancestors included Mattaniah and Mica, and he belonged to the clan of Asaph, the clan that was responsible for the music in the Temple services.

²³ There were royal regulations stating how the clans should take turns in leading the Temple music each day.

²⁴ Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, of the clan of Zerah and the tribe of Judah, represented the people of Israel at the Persian court.

²⁵ Many of the people lived in towns near their farms. Those who were of the tribe of Judah lived in Kiriath Arba, Dibon, and Jekabzeel, and in the villages near these cities.

²⁶ They also lived in the cities of Jeshua, Moladah, Bethpelet,

²⁷ and Hazarshual, and in Beersheba and the villages around it.

²⁸They lived in the city of Ziklag, in Meconah and its villages,
²⁹in Enrimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth,
³⁰in Zanoah, in Adullam, and in the villages near these towns. They lived in Lachish and on the farms nearby, and in Azekah and its villages. That is to say, the people of Judah lived in the territory between Beersheba in the south and Hinnom Valley in the north.

³¹The people of the tribe of Benjamin lived in Geba, Michmash, Ai, Bethel and the nearby villages,

³²Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,

³³Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,

³⁴Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,

³⁵Lod, and Ono, and in Craftsmen's Valley.

³⁶Some groups of Levites that had lived in the territory of Judah were assigned to live with the people of Benjamin.

12¹The following is a list of the priests and Levites who returned from exile with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and with the High Priest Joshua:

²Priests: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, Shecaniah,

Rehum, Meremoth, Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah, Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, and Jedaiah. These men were leaders among all their fellow priests in the days of Joshua.

³ (12: 2)

⁴ (12: 2)

⁵ (12: 2)

⁶ (12: 2)

⁷ (12: 2)

⁸ Levites: The following were in charge of the singing of hymns of thanksgiving: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah.

⁹ The following formed the choir that sang the responses: Bakbukiah, Unno, and their fellow Levites.

¹⁰ Joshua was the father of Joiakim; Joiakim was the father of Eliashib; Eliashib was the father of Joiada;

¹¹ Joiada was the father of Jonathan; and Jonathan was the father of Jaddua.

¹² When Joiakim was High Priest, the following priests were the heads of the priestly clans: Priest ~ ~ Clan; Meraiah ~ ~ Seraiah; Hananiah ~ ~ Jeremiah; Meshullam ~ ~ Ezra; Jehohanan ~ ~

Amariah; Jonathan ~ ~ Malluchi; Joseph
 ~ ~ Shebaniah; Adna ~ ~ Harim;
 Helkai ~ ~ Meraioth; Zechariah ~ ~
 Iddo; Meshullam ~ ~ Ginnethon; Zichri
 ~ ~ Abijah; ... ~ ~ Miniamin; Piltai
 ~ ~ Moadiah; Shammua ~ ~ Bilgah;
 Jehonathan ~ ~ Shemaiah; Mattenai
 ~ ~ Joiarib; Uzzi ~ ~ Jedaiah; Kallai ~ ~
 Sallai; Eber ~ ~ Amok; Hashabiah ~ ~
 Hilkiah; Nethanel ~ ~ Jedaiah

¹³ (12: 12)

¹⁴ (12: 12)

¹⁵ (12: 12)

¹⁶ (12: 12)

¹⁷ (12: 12)

¹⁸ (12: 12)

¹⁹ (12: 12)

²⁰ (12: 12)

²¹ (12: 12)

²² A record was kept of the heads of the Levite families and of the priestly families during the lifetimes of the following High Priests: Eliashib, Joiada, Jonathan, and Jaddua. This record was finished when Darius was emperor of Persia.

²³ The heads of the Levite families, however, were recorded in the official

records only until the time of Jonathan, the grandson of Eliashib.

²⁴Under the direction of Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua, Binnui, and Kadmiel, the Levites were organized into groups. Two groups at a time praised God responsively and gave thanks to him, in accordance with the instructions given by King David, the man of God.

²⁵The following Temple guards were in charge of guarding the storerooms by the gates to the Temple: Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub.

²⁶These people lived during the time of Joiakim, the son of Joshua and grandson of Jehozadak, and the time of Nehemiah the governor, and the time of Ezra, the priest who was a scholar of the Law.

²⁷When the city wall of Jerusalem was dedicated, the Levites were brought in from wherever they were living, so that they could join in celebrating the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals and harps.

²⁸The Levite families of singers gathered from the area where they had

settled around Jerusalem and from the towns around Netophah,

²⁹and from Bethgilgal, Geba, and Azmaveth.

³⁰The priests and the Levites performed ritual purification for themselves, the people, the gates, and the city wall.

³¹I assembled the leaders of Judah on top of the wall and put them in charge of two large groups to march around the city, giving thanks to God. The first group went to the right on top of the wall toward the Rubbish Gate.

³²Hoshaiah marched behind the singers, followed by half the leaders of Judah.

³³The following priests, blowing trumpets, marched next: Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah. Next came Zechariah, the son of Jonathan and grandson of Shemaiah. (His ancestors also included Mattaniah, Micaiah, and Zaccur, of the clan of Asaph.)

³⁴(12: 33)

³⁵(12: 33)

³⁶He was followed by other members of his clan -- Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai,

Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani -- all of whom carried musical instruments of the kind played by King David, the man of God. Ezra the scholar led this group in the procession.

³⁷ At the Fountain Gate they went up the steps that led to David's City, past David's palace, and back to the wall at the Water Gate, on the east side of the city.

³⁸ The other group of those who gave thanks went to the left along the top of the wall, and I followed with half of the people. We marched past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall,

³⁹ and from there we went past Ephraim Gate, Jeshanah Gate, the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep Gate. We ended our march near the gate to the Temple.

⁴⁰ So both the groups that were giving thanks to God reached the Temple area. In addition to the leaders who were with me,

⁴¹ my group included the following priests, blowing trumpets: Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah;

⁴²and they were followed by Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers, led by Jezrahiah, sang at the top of their voices.

⁴³That day many sacrifices were offered, and the people were full of joy because God had made them very happy. The women and the children joined in the celebration, and the noise they all made could be heard for miles.

⁴⁴At that time men were put in charge of the storerooms where contributions for the Temple were kept, including the tithes and the first grain and fruit that ripened each year. These men were responsible for collecting from the farms near the various cities the contributions for the priests and the Levites which the Law required. All the people of Judah were pleased with the priests and the Levites,

⁴⁵because they performed the ceremonies of purification and the other rituals that God had commanded. The Temple musicians and the Temple guards also performed their duties in accordance

with the regulations made by King David and his son Solomon.

⁴⁶From the time of King David and the musician Asaph long ago, the musicians have led songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.

⁴⁷In the time of Zerubbabel and also in the time of Nehemiah, all the people of Israel gave daily gifts for the support of the Temple musicians and the Temple guards. The people gave a sacred offering to the Levites, and the Levites gave the required portion to the priests.

13¹When the Law of Moses was being read aloud to the people, they came to the passage that said that no Ammonite or Moabite was ever to be permitted to join God's people.

²This was because the people of Ammon and Moab did not give food and water to the Israelites on their way out of Egypt. Instead, they paid money to Balaam to curse Israel, but our God turned the curse into a blessing.

³When the people of Israel heard this law read, they excluded all foreigners from the community.

⁴The priest Eliashib, who was in charge of the Temple storerooms, had for a long time been on good terms with Tobiah.

⁵He allowed Tobiah to use a large room that was intended only for storing offerings of grain and incense, the equipment used in the Temple, the offerings for the priests, and the tithes of grain, wine, and olive oil given to the Levites, to the Temple musicians, and to the Temple guards.

⁶While this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, because in the thirty-second year that Artaxerxes was king of Babylon I had gone back to report to him. After some time I received his permission

⁷and returned to Jerusalem. There I was shocked to find that Eliashib had allowed Tobiah to use a room in the Temple.

⁸I was furious and threw out all of Tobiah's belongings.

⁹I gave orders for the rooms to be ritually purified and for the Temple equipment, grain offerings, and incense to be put back.

¹⁰I also learned that the Temple musicians and other Levites had left

Jerusalem and gone back to their farms, because the people had not been giving them enough to live on.

¹¹I reprimanded the officials for letting the Temple be neglected. And I brought the Levites and musicians back to the Temple and put them to work again.

¹²Then all the people of Israel again started bringing to the Temple storerooms their tithes of grain, wine, and olive oil.

¹³I put the following men in charge of the storerooms: Shelemiah, a priest; Zadok, a scholar of the Law; and Pedaiah, a Levite. Hanan, the son of Zaccur and grandson of Mattaniah, was to be their assistant. I knew I could trust these men to be honest in distributing the supplies to the other workers.

¹⁴Remember, my God, all these things that I have done for your Temple and its worship.

¹⁵At that time I saw people in Judah pressing juice from grapes on the Sabbath. Others were loading grain, wine, grapes, figs, and other things on their donkeys and taking them into

Jerusalem; I warned them not to sell anything on the Sabbath.

¹⁶Some people from the city of Tyre were living in Jerusalem, and they brought fish and all kinds of goods into the city to sell to our people on the Sabbath.

¹⁷I reprimanded the Jewish leaders and told them, Look at the evil you're doing! You're making the Sabbath unholy.

¹⁸This is exactly why God punished your ancestors when he brought destruction on this city. And yet you insist on bringing more of God's anger down on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.

¹⁹So I gave orders for the city gates to be shut at the beginning of every Sabbath, as soon as evening began to fall, and not to be opened again until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my men at the gates to make sure that nothing was brought into the city on the Sabbath.

²⁰Once or twice merchants who sold all kinds of goods spent Friday night outside the city walls.

²¹I warned them, It's no use waiting out there for morning to come. If you try

this again, I'll use force on you. From then on they did not come back on the Sabbath.

²²I ordered the Levites to purify themselves and to go and guard the gates to make sure that the Sabbath was kept holy. Remember me, O God, for this also, and spare me because of your great love.

²³At that time I also discovered that many of the Jewish men had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.

²⁴Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or some other language and didn't know how to speak our language.

²⁵I reprimanded the men, called down curses on them, beat them, and pulled out their hair. Then I made them take an oath in God's name that never again would they or their children intermarry with foreigners.

²⁶I told them, It was foreign women that made King Solomon sin. Here was a man who was greater than any of the kings of other nations. God loved him

and made him king over all of Israel, and yet he fell into this sin.

²⁷ Are we then to follow your example and disobey our God by marrying foreign women?

²⁸ Joiada was the son of Eliashib the High Priest, but one of Joiada's sons married the daughter of Sanballat, from the town of Beth Horon, so I made Joiada leave Jerusalem.

²⁹ Remember, God, how those people defiled both the office of priest and the covenant you made with the priests and the Levites.

³⁰ I purified the people from everything foreign; I prepared regulations for the priests and the Levites so that all of them would know their duties;

³¹ I arranged for the wood used for burning the offerings to be brought at the proper times, and for the people to bring their offerings of the first grain and the first fruits that ripened. Remember all this, O God, and give me credit for it.

Esther

1 ¹ From his royal throne in Persia's capital city of Susa, King Xerxes ruled 127 provinces, all the way from India to Ethiopia.

² (1: 1)

³ In the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his officials and administrators. The armies of Persia and Media were present, as well as the governors and noblemen of the provinces.

⁴ For six whole months he made a show of the riches of the imperial court with all its splendor and majesty.

⁵ After that, the king gave a banquet for all the people in the capital city of Susa, rich and poor alike. It lasted a whole week and was held in the gardens of the royal palace.

⁶ The courtyard there was decorated with blue and white cotton curtains, tied by cords of fine purple linen to silver rings on marble columns. Couches made of gold and silver had been placed in

the courtyard, which was paved with white marble, red feldspar, shining mother-of-pearl, and blue turquoise.

⁷ Drinks were served in gold cups, no two of them alike, and the king was generous with the royal wine.

⁸ There were no limits on the drinks; the king had given orders to the palace servants that everyone could have as much as they wanted.

⁹ Meanwhile, inside the royal palace Queen Vashti was giving a banquet for the women.

¹⁰ On the seventh day of his banquet the king was drinking and feeling happy, so he called in the seven eunuchs who were his personal servants, Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carkas.

¹¹ He ordered them to bring in Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown. The queen was a beautiful woman, and the king wanted to show off her beauty to the officials and all his guests.

¹² But when the servants told Queen Vashti of the king's command, she refused to come. This made the king furious.

¹³ Now it was the king's custom to ask for expert opinion on questions of law and order, so he called for his advisers, who would know what should be done.

¹⁴ Those he most often turned to for advice were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan -- seven officials of Persia and Media who held the highest offices in the kingdom.

¹⁵ He said to these men, I, King Xerxes, sent my servants to Queen Vashti with a command, and she refused to obey it! What does the law say that we should do with her?

¹⁶ Then Memucan declared to the king and his officials: Queen Vashti has insulted not only the king but also his officials -- in fact, every man in the empire!

¹⁷ Every woman in the empire will start looking down on her husband as soon as she hears what the queen has done. They'll say, King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to come to him, and she refused.

¹⁸ When the wives of the royal officials of Persia and Media hear about the

queen's behavior, they will be telling their husbands about it before the day is out. Wives everywhere will have no respect for their husbands, and husbands will be angry with their wives.

¹⁹If it please Your Majesty, issue a royal proclamation that Vashti may never again appear before the king. Have it written into the laws of Persia and Media, so that it can never be changed. Then give her place as queen to some better woman.

²⁰When your proclamation is made known all over this huge empire, every woman will treat her husband with proper respect, whether he's rich or poor.

²¹The king and his officials liked this idea, and the king did what Memucan suggested.

²²To each of the royal provinces he sent a message in the language and the system of writing of that province, saying that every husband should be the master of his home and speak with final authority.

2¹ Later, even after the king's anger had cooled down, he kept thinking

about what Vashti had done and about his proclamation against her.

²So some of the king's advisers who were close to him suggested, Why don't you make a search to find some beautiful young virgins?

³You can appoint officials in every province of the empire and have them bring all these beautiful young women to your harem here in Susa, the capital city. Put them in the care of Hegai, the eunuch who is in charge of your women, and let them be given a beauty treatment.

⁴Then take the young woman you like best and make her queen in Vashti's place. The king thought this was good advice, so he followed it.

⁵There in Susa lived a Jew named Mordecai son of Jair; he was from the tribe of Benjamin and was a descendant of Kish and Shimei.

⁶When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took King Jehoiachin of Judah into exile from Jerusalem, along with a group of captives, Mordecai was among them.

⁷ He had a cousin, Esther, whose Hebrew name was Hadassah; she was a beautiful young woman, and had a good figure. At the death of her parents, Mordecai had adopted her and brought her up as his own daughter.

⁸ When the king had issued his new proclamation and many young women were being brought to Susa, Esther was among them. She too was put in the royal palace in the care of Hegai, who had charge of the harem.

⁹ Hegai liked Esther, and she won his favor. He lost no time in beginning her beauty treatment of massage and special diet. He gave her the best place in the harem and assigned seven young women specially chosen from the royal palace to serve her.

¹⁰ Now, on the advice of Mordecai, Esther had kept it secret that she was Jewish.

¹¹ Every day Mordecai would walk back and forth in front of the courtyard of the harem, in order to find out how she was getting along and what was going to happen to her.

¹²The regular beauty treatment for the women lasted a year -- massages with oil of myrrh for six months and with oil of balsam for six more. After that, each woman would be taken in turn to King Xerxes.

¹³When she went from the harem to the palace, she could wear whatever she wanted.

¹⁴She would go there in the evening, and the next morning she would be taken to another harem and put in the care of Shaashgaz, the eunuch in charge of the king's concubines. She would not go to the king again unless he liked her enough to ask for her by name.

¹⁵The time came for Esther to go to the king. Esther -- the daughter of Abihail and the cousin of Mordecai, who had adopted her as his daughter; Esther -- admired by everyone who saw her. When her turn came, she wore just what Hegai, the eunuch in charge of the harem, advised her to wear.

¹⁶So in Xerxes' seventh year as king, in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, Esther was brought to King Xerxes in the royal palace.

¹⁷ The king liked her more than any of the other women, and more than any of the others she won his favor and affection. He placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti.

¹⁸ Then the king gave a great banquet in Esther's honor and invited all his officials and administrators. He proclaimed a holiday for the whole empire and distributed gifts worthy of a king.

¹⁹ Meanwhile Mordecai had been appointed by the king to an administrative position.

²⁰ As for Esther, she had still not let it be known that she was Jewish. Mordecai had told her not to tell anyone, and she obeyed him in this, just as she had obeyed him when she was a little girl under his care.

²¹ During the time that Mordecai held office in the palace, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the palace eunuchs who guarded the entrance to the king's rooms, became hostile to King Xerxes and plotted to assassinate him.

²² Mordecai learned about it and told Queen Esther, who then told the king what Mordecai had found out.

²³ There was an investigation, and it was discovered that the report was true, so both men were hanged on the gallows. The king ordered an account of this to be written down in the official records of the empire.

3¹ Some time later King Xerxes promoted a man named Haman to the position of prime minister. Haman was the son of Hammedatha, a descendant of Agag.

² The king ordered all the officials in his service to show their respect for Haman by kneeling and bowing to him. They all did so, except for Mordecai, who refused to do it.

³ The other officials in the royal service asked him why he was disobeying the king's command;

⁴ day after day they urged him to give in, but he would not listen to them. I am a Jew, he explained, and I cannot bow to Haman. So they told Haman about this, wondering if he would tolerate Mordecai's conduct.

⁵ Haman was furious when he realized that Mordecai was not going to kneel and bow to him,

⁶ and when he learned that Mordecai was a Jew, he decided to do more than punish Mordecai alone. He made plans to kill every Jew in the whole Persian Empire.

⁷ In the twelfth year of King Xerxes' rule, in the first month, the month of Nisan, Haman ordered the lots to be cast (purim, they were called) to find out the right day and month to carry out his plot. The thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, was decided on.

⁸ So Haman told the king, There is a certain race of people scattered all over your empire and found in every province. They observe customs that are not like those of any other people. Moreover, they do not obey the laws of the empire, so it is not in your best interests to tolerate them.

⁹ If it please Your Majesty, issue a decree that they are to be put to death. If you do, I guarantee that I will be able to put 375 tons of silver into the royal

treasury for the administration of the empire.

¹⁰The king took off his ring, which was used to stamp proclamations and make them official, and gave it to the enemy of the Jewish people, Haman son of Hammedatha, the descendant of Agag.

¹¹The king told him, The people and their money are yours; do as you like with them.

¹²So on the thirteenth day of the first month Haman called the king's secretaries and dictated a proclamation to be translated into every language and system of writing used in the empire and to be sent to all the rulers, governors, and officials. It was issued in the name of King Xerxes and stamped with his ring.

¹³Runners took this proclamation to every province of the empire. It contained the instructions that on a single day, the thirteenth day of Adar, all Jews -- young and old, women and children -- were to be killed. They were to be slaughtered without mercy and their belongings were to be taken.

¹⁴The contents of the proclamation were to be made public in every province, so that everyone would be prepared when that day came.

¹⁵At the king's command the decree was made public in the capital city of Susa, and runners carried the news to the provinces. The king and Haman sat down and had a drink while the city of Susa was being thrown into confusion.

4¹When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes in anguish. Then he dressed in sackcloth, covered his head with ashes, and walked through the city, wailing loudly and bitterly,

²until he came to the entrance of the palace. He did not go in because no one wearing sackcloth was allowed inside.

³Throughout all the provinces, wherever the king's proclamation was made known, there was loud mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, wailed, and most of them put on sackcloth and lay in ashes.

⁴When Esther's servant women and eunuchs told her what Mordecai was doing, she was deeply disturbed. She

sent Mordecai some clothes to put on instead of the sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

⁵Then she called Hathach, one of the palace eunuchs appointed as her servant by the king, and told him to go to Mordecai and find out what was happening and why.

⁶Hathach went to Mordecai in the city square at the entrance of the palace.

⁷Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him and just how much money Haman had promised to put into the royal treasury if all the Jews were killed.

⁸He gave Hathach a copy of the proclamation that had been issued in Susa, ordering the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai asked him to take it to Esther, explain the situation to her, and have her go and plead with the king and beg him to have mercy on her people.

⁹Hathach did this,

¹⁰and Esther gave him this message to take back to Mordecai:

¹¹If anyone, man or woman, goes to the inner courtyard and sees the king without being summoned, that person

must die. That is the law; everyone, from the king's advisers to the people in the provinces, knows that. There is only one way to get around this law: if the king holds out his gold scepter to someone, then that person's life is spared. But it has been a month since the king sent for me.

¹²When Mordecai received Esther's message,

¹³he sent her this warning: Don't imagine that you are safer than any other Jew just because you are in the royal palace.

¹⁴If you keep quiet at a time like this, help will come from heaven to the Jews, and they will be saved, but you will die and your father's family will come to an end. Yet who knows -- maybe it was for a time like this that you were made queen!

¹⁵Esther sent Mordecai this reply:

¹⁶Go and get all the Jews in Susa together; hold a fast and pray for me. Don't eat or drink anything for three days and nights. My servant women and I will be doing the same. After that, I will go to the king, even though it is against

the law. If I must die for doing it, I will die.

¹⁷ Mordecai then left and did everything that Esther had told him to do.

5¹ On the third day of her fast Esther put on her royal robes and went and stood in the inner courtyard of the palace, facing the throne room. The king was inside, seated on the royal throne, facing the entrance.

² When the king saw Queen Esther standing outside, she won his favor, and he held out to her the gold scepter. She then came up and touched the tip of it.

³ What is it, Queen Esther? the king asked. Tell me what you want, and you shall have it -- even if it is half my empire.

⁴ Esther replied, If it please Your Majesty, I would like you and Haman to be my guests tonight at a banquet I am preparing for you.

⁵ The king then ordered Haman to come quickly, so that they could be Esther's guests. So the king and Haman went to Esther's banquet.

⁶ Over the wine the king asked her, Tell me what you want, and you shall have

it. I will grant your request, even if you ask for half my empire.

⁷ Esther replied,

⁸ If Your Majesty is kind enough to grant my request, I would like you and Haman to be my guests tomorrow at another banquet that I will prepare for you. At that time I will tell you what I want.

⁹ When Haman left the banquet he was happy and in a good mood. But then he saw Mordecai at the entrance of the palace, and when Mordecai did not rise or show any sign of respect as he passed, Haman was furious with him.

¹⁰ But he controlled himself and went on home. Then he invited his friends to his house and asked his wife Zeresh to join them.

¹¹ He boasted to them about how rich he was, how many sons he had, how the king had promoted him to high office, and how much more important he was than any of the king's other officials.

¹² What is more, Haman went on, Queen Esther gave a banquet for no one but the king and me, and we are invited back tomorrow.

¹³But none of this means a thing to me as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the entrance of the palace.

¹⁴So his wife and all his friends suggested, Why don't you have a gallows built, seventy-five feet tall? Tomorrow morning you can ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it, and then you can go to the banquet happy. Haman thought this was a good idea, so he had the gallows built.

6¹That same night the king could not get to sleep, so he had the official records of the empire brought and read to him.

²The part they read included the account of how Mordecai had uncovered a plot to assassinate the king -- the plot made by Bigthana and Teresh, the two palace eunuchs who had guarded the king's rooms.

³The king asked, How have we honored and rewarded Mordecai for this? His servants answered, Nothing has been done for him.

⁴Are any of my officials in the palace? the king asked. Now Haman had just entered the courtyard; he had come to

ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on the gallows that was now ready.

⁵So the servants answered, Haman is here, waiting to see you. Show him in, said the king.

⁶So Haman came in, and the king said to him, There is someone I wish very much to honor. What should I do for this man? Haman thought to himself, Now who could the king want to honor so much? Me, of course.

⁷So he answered the king, Have royal robes brought for this man -- robes that you yourself wear. Have a royal ornament put on your own horse.

⁸(6: 7)

⁹Then have one of your highest noblemen dress the man in these robes and lead him, mounted on the horse, through the city square. Have the nobleman announce as they go: See how the king rewards someone he wishes to honor!

¹⁰Then the king said to Haman, Hurry and get the robes and the horse, and provide these honors for Mordecai the Jew. Do everything for him that you

have suggested. You will find him sitting at the entrance of the palace.

¹¹ So Haman got the robes and the horse, and he put the robes on Mordecai. Mordecai got on the horse, and Haman led him through the city square, announcing to the people as they went: See how the king rewards a man he wishes to honor!

¹² Mordecai then went back to the palace entrance while Haman hurried home, covering his face in embarrassment.

¹³ He told his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then she and those wise friends of his told him, You are beginning to lose power to Mordecai. He is a Jew, and you cannot overcome him. He will certainly defeat you.

¹⁴ While they were still talking, the palace eunuchs arrived in a hurry to take Haman to Esther's banquet.

7 ¹ And so the king and Haman went to eat with Esther

² for a second time. Over the wine the king asked her again, Now, Queen Esther, what do you want? Tell me and

you shall have it. I'll even give you half the empire.

³Queen Esther answered, If it please Your Majesty to grant my humble request, my wish is that I may live and that my people may live.

⁴My people and I have been sold for slaughter. If it were nothing more serious than being sold into slavery, I would have kept quiet and not bothered you about it; but we are about to be destroyed -- exterminated!

⁵Then King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, Who dares to do such a thing? Where is this man?

⁶Esther answered, Our enemy, our persecutor, is this evil man Haman! Haman faced the king and queen with terror.

⁷The king got up in a fury, left the room, and went outside to the palace gardens. Haman could see that the king was determined to punish him for this, so he stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

⁸He had just thrown himself down on Esther's couch to beg for mercy, when the king came back into the room from

the gardens. Seeing this, the king cried out, Is this man going to rape the queen right here in front of me, in my own palace? The king had no sooner said this than the eunuchs covered Haman's head.

⁹Then one of them, who was named Harbonah, said, Haman even went so far as to build a gallows at his house so that he could hang Mordecai, who saved Your Majesty's life. And it's seventy-five feet tall! Hang Haman on it! the king commanded.

¹⁰So Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had built for Mordecai. Then the king's anger cooled down.

8¹That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther all the property of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Esther told the king that Mordecai was related to her, and from then on Mordecai was allowed to enter the king's presence.

²The king took off his ring with his seal on it (which he had taken back from Haman) and gave it to Mordecai. Esther put Mordecai in charge of Haman's property.

³Then Esther spoke to the king again, throwing herself at his feet and crying. She begged him to do something to stop the evil plot that Haman, the descendant of Agag, had made against the Jews.

⁴The king held out the gold scepter to her, so she stood up and said,

⁵If it please Your Majesty, and if you care about me and if it seems right to you, please issue a proclamation to keep Haman's orders from being carried out -- those orders that the son of Hammedatha the descendant of Agag gave for the destruction of all the Jews in the empire.

⁶How can I endure it if this disaster comes on my people, and my own relatives are killed?

⁷King Xerxes then said to Queen Esther and Mordecai, the Jew, Look, I have hanged Haman for his plot against the Jews, and I have given Esther his property.

⁸But a proclamation issued in the king's name and stamped with the royal seal cannot be revoked. You may, however, write to the Jews whatever you like; and

you may write it in my name and stamp it with the royal seal.

⁹This happened on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan. Mordecai called the king's secretaries and dictated letters to the Jews and to the governors, administrators, and officials of all the 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia. The letters were written to each province in its own language and system of writing and to the Jews in their language and system of writing.

¹⁰Mordecai had the letters written in the name of King Xerxes, and he stamped them with the royal seal. They were delivered by riders mounted on fast horses from the royal stables.

¹¹These letters explained that the king would allow the Jews in every city to organize for self-defense. If armed men of any nationality in any province attacked the Jewish men, their children, or their women, the Jews could fight back and destroy the attackers; they could slaughter them to the last man and take their possessions.

¹²This decree was to take effect throughout the Persian Empire on the day set for the slaughter of the Jews, the thirteenth of Adar, the twelfth month.

¹³It was to be proclaimed as law and made known to everyone in every province, so that the Jews would be ready to take revenge on their enemies when that day came.

¹⁴At the king's command the riders mounted royal horses and rode off at top speed. The decree was also made public in Susa, the capital city.

¹⁵Mordecai left the palace, wearing royal robes of blue and white, a cloak of fine purple linen, and a magnificent gold crown. Then the streets of Susa rang with cheers and joyful shouts.

¹⁶For the Jews there was joy and relief, happiness and a sense of victory.

¹⁷In every city and province, wherever the king's proclamation was read, the Jews held a joyful holiday with feasting and happiness. In fact, many other people became Jews, because they were afraid of them now.

9¹The thirteenth day of Adar came, the day on which the royal

proclamation was to take effect, the day when the enemies of the Jews were hoping to get them in their power. But instead, the Jews triumphed over them.

²In the Jewish quarter of every city in the empire the Jews organized to attack anyone who tried to harm them. People everywhere were afraid of them, and no one could stand against them.

³In fact, all the provincial officials -- governors, administrators, and royal representatives -- helped the Jews because they were all afraid of Mordecai.

⁴It was well-known throughout the empire that Mordecai was now a powerful man in the palace and was growing more powerful.

⁵So the Jews could do what they wanted with their enemies. They attacked them with swords and slaughtered them.

⁶In Susa, the capital city itself, the Jews killed five hundred people.

⁷Among them were the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews: Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha. However, there was no looting.

⁸ (9: 7)

⁹ (9: 7)

¹⁰ (9: 7)

¹¹ That same day the number of people killed in Susa was reported to the king.

¹² He then said to Queen Esther, In Susa alone the Jews have killed five hundred people, including Haman's ten sons. What must they have done out in the provinces! What do you want now? You shall have it. Tell me what else you want, and you shall have it.

¹³ Esther answered, If it please Your Majesty, let the Jews in Susa do again tomorrow what they were allowed to do today. And have the bodies of Haman's ten sons hung from the gallows.

¹⁴ The king ordered this to be done, and the proclamation was issued in Susa. The bodies of Haman's ten sons were publicly displayed.

¹⁵ On the fourteenth day of Adar the Jews of Susa got together again and killed three hundred more people in the city. But again, they did no looting.

¹⁶ The Jews in the provinces also organized and defended themselves. They rid themselves of their enemies by

killing seventy-five thousand people who hated them. But they did no looting.

¹⁷This was on the thirteenth day of Adar. On the next day, the fourteenth, there was no more killing, and they made it a joyful day of feasting.

¹⁸The Jews of Susa, however, made the fifteenth a holiday, since they had slaughtered their enemies on the thirteenth and fourteenth and then stopped on the fifteenth.

¹⁹This is why Jews who live in small towns observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a joyous holiday, a time for feasting and giving gifts of food to one another.

²⁰Mordecai had these events written down and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, throughout the Persian Empire,

²¹telling them to observe the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar as holidays every year.

²²These were the days on which the Jews had rid themselves of their enemies; this was a month that had been turned from a time of grief and despair into a time of joy and happiness.

They were told to observe these days with feasts and parties, giving gifts of food to one another and to the poor.

²³ So the Jews followed Mordecai's instructions, and the celebration became an annual custom.

²⁴ Haman son of Hammedatha -- the descendant of Agag and the enemy of the Jewish people -- had cast lots (purim, they were called) to determine the day for destroying the Jews; he had planned to wipe them out.

²⁵ But Esther went to the king, and the king issued written orders with the result that Haman suffered the fate he had planned for the Jews -- he and his sons were hanged from the gallows.

²⁶ That is why the holidays are called Purim. Because of Mordecai's letter and because of all that had happened to them,

²⁷ the Jews made it a rule for themselves, their descendants, and anyone who might become a Jew, that at the proper time each year these two days would be regularly observed according to Mordecai's instructions.

²⁸It was resolved that every Jewish family of every future generation in every province and every city should remember and observe the days of Purim for all time to come.

²⁹Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai, also wrote a letter, putting her full authority behind the letter about Purim, which Mordecai had written earlier.

³⁰The letter was addressed to all the Jews, and copies were sent to all the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire. It wished the Jews peace and security

³¹and directed them and their descendants to observe the days of Purim at the proper time, just as they had adopted rules for the observance of fasts and times of mourning. This was commanded by both Mordecai and Queen Esther.

³²Esther's command, confirming the rules for Purim, was written down on a scroll.

10¹ King Xerxes imposed forced labor on the people of the coastal regions of his empire as well as on those of the interior.

²All the great and wonderful things he did, as well as the whole story of how he promoted Mordecai to high office, are recorded in the official records of the kings of Persia and Media.

³Mordecai the Jew was second in rank only to King Xerxes himself. He was honored and well-liked by his fellow Jews. He worked for the good of his people and for the security of all their descendants.

Job

1 ¹ There was a man named Job, living in the land of Uz, who worshiped God and was faithful to him. He was a good man, careful not to do anything evil.

² He had seven sons and three daughters,

³ and owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, one thousand head of cattle, and five hundred donkeys. He also had a large number of servants and was the richest man in the East.

⁴ Job's sons used to take turns giving a feast, to which all the others would come, and they always invited their three sisters to join them.

⁵ The morning after each feast, Job would get up early and offer sacrifices for each of his children in order to purify them. He always did this because he thought that one of them might have sinned by insulting God unintentionally.

⁶ When the day came for the heavenly beings to appear before the LORD, Satan was there among them.

⁷The LORD asked him, What have you been doing? Satan answered, I have been walking here and there, roaming around the earth.

⁸Did you notice my servant Job? the LORD asked. There is no one on earth as faithful and good as he is. He worships me and is careful not to do anything evil.

⁹Satan replied, Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it?

¹⁰You have always protected him and his family and everything he owns. You bless everything he does, and you have given him enough cattle to fill the whole country.

¹¹But now suppose you take away everything he has -- he will curse you to your face!

¹²All right, the LORD said to Satan, everything he has is in your power, but you must not hurt Job himself. So Satan left.

¹³One day when Job's children were having a feast at the home of their oldest brother,

¹⁴a messenger came running to Job. We were plowing the fields with the

oxen, he said, and the donkeys were in a nearby pasture.

¹⁵Suddenly the Sabeans attacked and stole them all. They killed every one of your servants except me. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.

¹⁶Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, Lightning struck the sheep and the shepherds and killed them all. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.

¹⁷Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, Three bands of Chaldean raiders attacked us, took away the camels, and killed all your servants except me. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.

¹⁸Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, Your children were having a feast at the home of your oldest son,

¹⁹when a storm swept in from the desert. It blew the house down and killed them all. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.

²⁰Then Job got up and tore his clothes in grief. He shaved his head and threw himself face downward on the ground.

²¹ He said, I was born with nothing, and I will die with nothing. The LORD gave, and now he has taken away. May his name be praised!

²² In spite of everything that had happened, Job did not sin by blaming God.

2¹ When the day came for the heavenly beings to appear before the LORD again, Satan was there among them.

² The LORD asked him, Where have you been? Satan answered, I have been walking here and there, roaming around the earth.

³ Did you notice my servant Job? the LORD asked. There is no one on earth as faithful and good as he is. He worships me and is careful not to do anything evil. You persuaded me to let you attack him for no reason at all, but Job is still as faithful as ever.

⁴ Satan replied, A person will give up everything in order to stay alive.

⁵ But now suppose you hurt his body -- he will curse you to your face!

⁶ So the LORD said to Satan, All right, he is in your power, but you are not to kill him.

⁷ Then Satan left the LORD's presence and made sores break out all over Job's body.

⁸ Job went and sat by the garbage dump and took a piece of broken pottery to scrape his sores.

⁹ His wife said to him, You are still as faithful as ever, aren't you? Why don't you curse God and die?

¹⁰ Job answered, You are talking nonsense! When God sends us something good, we welcome it. How can we complain when he sends us trouble? Even in all this suffering Job said nothing against God.

¹¹ Three of Job's friends were Eliphaz, from the city of Teman, Bildad, from the land of Shuah, and Zophar, from the land of Naamah. When they heard how much Job had been suffering, they decided to go and comfort him.

¹² While they were still a long way off they saw Job, but did not recognize him. When they did, they began to weep and wail, tearing their clothes in grief and throwing dust into the air and on their heads.

¹³Then they sat there on the ground with him for seven days and nights without saying a word, because they saw how much he was suffering.

3¹ Finally Job broke the silence and cursed the day on which he had been born.

²Job O God, put a curse on the day I was born; put a curse on the night when I was conceived!

³ (3: 2)

⁴Turn that day into darkness, God. Never again remember that day; never again let light shine on it.

⁵Make it a day of gloom and thick darkness; cover it with clouds, and blot out the sun.

⁶Blot that night out of the year, and never let it be counted again;

⁷make it a barren, joyless night.

⁸Tell the sorcerers to curse that day, those who know how to control Leviathan.

⁹Keep the morning star from shining; give that night no hope of dawn.

¹⁰Curse that night for letting me be born, for exposing me to trouble and grief.

¹¹ I wish I had died in my mother's womb or died the moment I was born.

¹² Why did my mother hold me on her knees? Why did she feed me at her breast?

¹³ If I had died then, I would be at rest now,

¹⁴ sleeping like the kings and rulers who rebuilt ancient palaces.

¹⁵ Then I would be sleeping like princes who filled their houses with gold and silver,

¹⁶ or sleeping like a stillborn child.

¹⁷ In the grave wicked people stop their evil, and tired workers find rest at last.

¹⁸ Even prisoners enjoy peace, free from shouts and harsh commands.

¹⁹ Everyone is there, the famous and the unknown, and slaves at last are free.

²⁰ Why let people go on living in misery? Why give light to those in grief?

²¹ They wait for death, but it never comes; they prefer a grave to any treasure.

²² They are not happy till they are dead and buried;

²³ God keeps their future hidden and hems them in on every side.

²⁴ Instead of eating, I mourn, and I can never stop groaning.

²⁵ Everything I fear and dread comes true.

²⁶ I have no peace, no rest, and my troubles never end.

4¹ Eliphaz Job, will you be annoyed if I speak? I can't keep quiet any longer.

² (4: 1)

³ You have taught many people and given strength to feeble hands.

⁴ When someone stumbled, weak and tired, your words encouraged him to stand.

⁵ Now it's your turn to be in trouble, and you are too stunned to face it.

⁶ You worshiped God, and your life was blameless; and so you should have confidence and hope.

⁷ Think back now. Name a single case where someone righteous met with disaster.

⁸ I have seen people plow fields of evil and plant wickedness like seed; now they harvest wickedness and evil.

⁹ Like a storm, God destroys them in his anger.

¹⁰The wicked roar and growl like lions, but God silences them and breaks their teeth.

¹¹Like lions with nothing to kill and eat, they die, and all their children are scattered.

¹²Once a message came quietly, so quietly I could hardly hear it.

¹³Like a nightmare it disturbed my sleep.

¹⁴I trembled and shuddered; my whole body shook with fear.

¹⁵A light breeze touched my face, and my skin crawled with fright.

¹⁶I could see something standing there; I stared, but couldn't tell what it was. Then I heard a voice out of the silence:

¹⁷Can anyone be righteous in the sight of God or be pure before his Creator?

¹⁸God does not trust his heavenly servants; he finds fault even with his angels.

¹⁹Do you think he will trust a creature of clay, a thing of dust that can be crushed like a moth?

²⁰We may be alive in the morning, but die unnoticed before evening comes.

²¹ All that we have is taken away; we die, still lacking wisdom.

5¹ Call out, Job. See if anyone answers. Is there any angel to whom you can turn?

² To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do.

³ I have seen fools who looked secure, but I called down a sudden curse on their homes.

⁴ Their children can never find safety; no one stands up to defend them in court.

⁵ Hungry people will eat the fool's crops -- even the grain growing among thorns -- and thirsty people will envy his wealth.

⁶ Evil does not grow in the soil, nor does trouble grow out of the ground.

⁷ No indeed! We bring trouble on ourselves, as surely as sparks fly up from a fire.

⁸ If I were you, I would turn to God and present my case to him.

⁹ We cannot understand the great things he does, and to his miracles there is no end.

¹⁰He sends rain on the land and he waters the fields.

¹¹Yes, it is God who raises the humble and gives joy to all who mourn.

¹²He upsets the plans of cunning people, and traps the wise in their own schemes, so that nothing they do succeeds;

¹³(5: 12)

¹⁴even at noon they grope in darkness.

¹⁵But God saves the poor from death; he saves the needy from oppression.

¹⁶He gives hope to the poor and silences the wicked.

¹⁷Happy is the person whom God corrects! Do not resent it when he rebukes you.

¹⁸God bandages the wounds he makes; his hand hurts you, and his hand heals.

¹⁹Time after time he will save you from harm;

²⁰when famine comes, he will keep you alive, and in war protect you from death.

²¹God will rescue you from slander; he will save you when destruction comes.

²²You will laugh at violence and hunger and not be afraid of wild animals.

²³The fields you plow will be free of rocks; wild animals will never attack you.

²⁴Then you will live at peace in your tent; when you look at your sheep, you will find them safe.

²⁵You will have as many children as there are blades of grass in a pasture.

²⁶Like wheat that ripens till harvest time, you will live to a ripe old age.

²⁷Job, we have learned this by long study. It is true, so now accept it.

6¹ Job If my troubles and griefs were weighed on scales,

²(6: 1)

³they would weigh more than the sands of the sea, so my wild words should not surprise you.

⁴Almighty God has shot me with arrows, and their poison spreads through my body. God has lined up his terrors against me.

⁵A donkey is content when eating grass, and a cow is quiet when eating hay.

⁶But who can eat flat, unsalted food? What taste is there in the white of an egg?

⁷ I have no appetite for food like that, and everything I eat makes me sick.

⁸ Why won't God give me what I ask? Why won't he answer my prayer?

⁹ If only he would go ahead and kill me!

¹⁰ If I knew he would, I would leap for joy, no matter how great my pain. I know that God is holy; I have never opposed what he commands.

¹¹ What strength do I have to keep on living? Why go on living when I have no hope?

¹² Am I made of stone? Is my body bronze?

¹³ I have no strength left to save myself; there is nowhere I can turn for help.

¹⁴ In trouble like this I need loyal friends -- whether I've forsaken God or not.

¹⁵ But you, my friends, you deceive me like streams that go dry when no rain comes.

¹⁶ The streams are choked with snow and ice,

¹⁷ but in the heat they disappear, and the stream beds lie bare and dry.

¹⁸ Caravans get lost looking for water; they wander and die in the desert.

¹⁹Caravans from Sheba and Tema search,

²⁰but their hope dies beside dry streams.

²¹You are like those streams to me, you see my fate and draw back in fear.

²²Have I asked you to give me a gift or to bribe someone on my behalf

²³or to save me from some enemy or tyrant?

²⁴All right, teach me; tell me my faults. I will be quiet and listen to you.

²⁵Honest words are convincing, but you are talking nonsense.

²⁶You think I am talking nothing but wind; then why do you answer my words of despair?

²⁷You would even roll dice for orphan slaves and make yourselves rich off your closest friends!

²⁸Look me in the face. I won't lie.

²⁹You have gone far enough. Stop being unjust. Don't condemn me. I'm in the right.

³⁰But you think I am lying -- you think I can't tell right from wrong.

7¹ Human life is like forced army service, like a life of hard manual labor,

² like a slave longing for cool shade; like a worker waiting to be paid.

³ Month after month I have nothing to live for; night after night brings me grief.

⁴ When I lie down to sleep, the hours drag; I toss all night and long for dawn.

⁵ My body is full of worms; it is covered with scabs; pus runs out of my sores.

⁶ My days pass by without hope, pass faster than a weaver's shuttle.

⁷ Remember, O God, my life is only a breath; my happiness has already ended.

⁸ You see me now, but never again. If you look for me, I'll be gone.

⁹ Like a cloud that fades and is gone, we humans die and never return; we are forgotten by all who knew us.

¹⁰ (7: 9)

¹¹ No! I can't be quiet! I am angry and bitter. I have to speak.

¹² Why do you keep me under guard? Do you think I am a sea monster?

¹³ I lie down and try to rest; I look for relief from my pain.

¹⁴ But you -- you terrify me with dreams; you send me visions and nightmares

¹⁵ until I would rather be strangled than live in this miserable body.

¹⁶ I give up; I am tired of living. Leave me alone. My life makes no sense.

¹⁷ Why are people so important to you? Why pay attention to what they do?

¹⁸ You inspect them every morning and test them every minute.

¹⁹ Won't you look away long enough for me to swallow my spit?

²⁰ Are you harmed by my sin, you jailer? Why use me for your target practice? Am I so great a burden to you?

²¹ Can't you ever forgive my sin? Can't you pardon the wrong I do? Soon I will be in my grave, and I'll be gone when you look for me.

8¹ Bildad Are you finally through with your windy speech?

² (8: 1)

³ God never twists justice; he never fails to do what is right.

⁴ Your children must have sinned against God, and so he punished them as they deserved.

⁵ But turn now and plead with Almighty God;

⁶ if you are so honest and pure, then God will come and help you and restore your household as your reward.

⁷ All the wealth you lost will be nothing compared with what God will give you then.

⁸ Look for a moment at ancient wisdom; consider the truths our ancestors learned.

⁹ Our life is short, we know nothing at all; we pass like shadows across the earth.

¹⁰ But let the ancient wise people teach you; listen to what they had to say:

¹¹ Reeds can't grow where there is no water; they are never found outside a swamp.

¹² If the water dries up, they are the first to wither, while still too small to be cut and used.

¹³ Godless people are like those reeds; their hope is gone, once God is forgotten.

¹⁴ They trust a thread -- a spider's web.

¹⁵ If they lean on a web, will it hold them up? If they grab for a thread, will it help them stand?

¹⁶ Evil people sprout like weeds in the sun, like weeds that spread all through the garden.

¹⁷ Their roots wrap around the stones and hold fast to every rock.

¹⁸ But then pull them up -- no one will ever know they were there.

¹⁹ Yes, that's all the joy evil people have; others now come and take their places.

²⁰ But God will never abandon the faithful or ever give help to evil people.

²¹ He will let you laugh and shout again,

²² but he will bring disgrace on those who hate you, and the homes of the wicked will vanish.

9¹ Job Yes, I've heard all that before. But how can a human being win a case against God?

² (9: 1)

³ How can anyone argue with him? He can ask a thousand questions that no one could ever answer.

⁴ God is so wise and powerful; no one can stand up against him.

⁵ Without warning he moves mountains and in anger he destroys them.

⁶God sends earthquakes and shakes the ground; he rocks the pillars that support the earth.

⁷He can keep the sun from rising, and the stars from shining at night.

⁸No one helped God spread out the heavens or trample the sea monster's back.

⁹God hung the stars in the sky -- the Dipper, Orion, the Pleiades, and the stars of the south.

¹⁰We cannot understand the great things he does, and to his miracles there is no end.

¹¹God passes by, but I cannot see him.

¹²He takes what he wants, and no one can stop him; no one dares ask him, What are you doing?

¹³God's anger is constant. He crushed his enemies who helped Rahab, the sea monster, oppose him.

¹⁴So how can I find words to answer God?

¹⁵Though I am innocent, all I can do is beg for mercy from God my judge.

¹⁶Yet even then, if he lets me speak, I can't believe he would listen to me.

¹⁷ He sends storms to batter and bruise me without any reason at all.

¹⁸ He won't let me catch my breath; he has filled my life with bitterness.

¹⁹ Should I try force? Try force on God? Should I take him to court? Could anyone make him go?

²⁰ I am innocent and faithful, but my words sound guilty, and everything I say seems to condemn me.

²¹ I am innocent, but I no longer care. I am sick of living. Nothing matters; innocent or guilty, God will destroy us.

²² (9: 21)

²³ When an innocent person suddenly dies, God laughs.

²⁴ God gave the world to the wicked. He made all the judges blind. And if God didn't do it, who did?

²⁵ My days race by, not one of them good.

²⁶ My life passes like the swiftest boat, as fast as an eagle swooping down on a rabbit.

²⁷ If I smile and try to forget my pain, all my suffering comes back to haunt me; I know that God does hold me guilty.

²⁸ (9: 27)

²⁹ Since I am held guilty, why should I bother?

³⁰ No soap can wash away my sins.

³¹ God throws me into a pit with filth, and even my clothes are ashamed of me.

³² If God were human, I could answer him; we could go to court to decide our quarrel.

³³ But there is no one to step between us -- no one to judge both God and me.

³⁴ Stop punishing me, God! Keep your terrors away!

³⁵ I am not afraid. I am going to talk because I know my own heart.

10¹ I am tired of living. Listen to my bitter complaint.

² Don't condemn me, God. Tell me! What is the charge against me?

³ Is it right for you to be so cruel? To despise what you yourself have made? And then to smile on the schemes of wicked people?

⁴ Do you see things as we do?

⁵ Is your life as short as ours?

⁶ Then why do you track down all my sins and hunt down every fault I have?

⁷ You know that I am not guilty, that no one can save me from you.

⁸Your hands formed and shaped me, and now those same hands destroy me.

⁹Remember that you made me from clay; are you going to crush me back to dust?

¹⁰You gave my father strength to beget me; you made me grow in my mother's womb.

¹¹You formed my body with bones and sinews and covered the bones with muscles and skin.

¹²You have given me life and constant love, and your care has kept me alive.

¹³But now I know that all that time you were secretly planning to harm me.

¹⁴You were watching to see if I would sin, so that you could refuse to forgive me.

¹⁵As soon as I sin, I'm in trouble with you, but when I do right, I get no credit. I am miserable and covered with shame.

¹⁶If I have any success at all, you hunt me down like a lion; to hurt me you even work miracles.

¹⁷You always have some witness against me; your anger toward me grows and grows; you always plan some new attack.

¹⁸Why, God, did you let me be born? I should have died before anyone saw me.

¹⁹To go from the womb straight to the grave would have been as good as never existing.

²⁰Isn't my life almost over? Leave me alone! Let me enjoy the time I have left.

²¹I am going soon and will never come back -- going to a land that is dark and gloomy,

²²a land of darkness, shadows, and confusion, where the light itself is darkness.

11 ¹Zophar Will no one answer all this nonsense? Does talking so much put you in the right?

²(11:1)

³Job, do you think we can't answer you? That your mocking words will leave us speechless?

⁴You claim that what you say is true; you claim you are pure in the sight of God.

⁵How I wish God would answer you!

⁶He would tell you there are many sides to wisdom; there are things too deep for human knowledge. God is punishing you less than you deserve.

⁷ Can you discover the limits and bounds of the greatness and power of God?

⁸ The sky is no limit for God, but it lies beyond your reach. God knows the world of the dead, but you do not know it.

⁹ God's greatness is broader than the earth, wider than the sea.

¹⁰ If God arrests you and brings you to trial, who is there to stop him?

¹¹ God knows which people are worthless; he sees all their evil deeds.

¹² Stupid people will start being wise when wild donkeys are born tame.

¹³ Put your heart right, Job. Reach out to God.

¹⁴ Put away evil and wrong from your home.

¹⁵ Then face the world again, firm and courageous.

¹⁶ Then all your troubles will fade from your memory, like floods that are past and remembered no more.

¹⁷ Your life will be brighter than sunshine at noon, and life's darkest hours will shine like the dawn.

¹⁸ You will live secure and full of hope; God will protect you and give you rest.

¹⁹You won't be afraid of your enemies; many people will ask you for help.

²⁰But the wicked will look around in despair and find that there is no way to escape. Their one hope is that death will come.

12¹ Job Yes, you are the voice of the people. When you die, wisdom will die with you.

²(12:1)

³But I have as much sense as you have; I am in no way inferior to you; everyone knows all that you have said.

⁴Even my friends laugh at me now; they laugh, although I am righteous and blameless; but there was a time when God answered my prayers.

⁵You have no troubles, and yet you make fun of me; you hit someone who is about to fall.

⁶But thieves and godless people live in peace, though their only god is their own strength.

⁷Even birds and animals have much they could teach you;

⁸ask the creatures of earth and sea for their wisdom.

⁹All of them know that the LORD's hand made them.

¹⁰It is God who directs the lives of his creatures; everyone's life is in his power.

¹¹But just as your tongue enjoys tasting food, your ears enjoy hearing words.

¹²Old people have wisdom, but God has wisdom and power. Old people have insight; God has insight and power to act.

¹³(12: 12)

¹⁴When God tears down, who can rebuild, and who can free those God imprisons?

¹⁵Drought comes when God withholds rain; floods come when he turns water loose.

¹⁶God is strong and always victorious; both deceived and deceiver are in his power.

¹⁷He takes away the wisdom of rulers and makes leaders act like fools.

¹⁸He dethrones kings and makes them prisoners;

¹⁹he humbles priests and men of power.

²⁰He silences those who are trusted, and takes the wisdom of old people away.

²¹ He disgraces those in power and puts an end to the strength of rulers.

²² He sends light to places dark as death.

²³ He makes nations strong and great, but then he defeats and destroys them.

²⁴ He makes their leaders foolish and lets them wander confused and lost;

²⁵ they grope in the dark and stagger like drunkards.

13¹ Everything you say, I have heard before. I understand it all; I know as much as you do. I'm not your inferior.

² (13: 1)

³ But my dispute is with God, not you; I want to argue my case with him.

⁴ You cover up your ignorance with lies; you are like doctors who can't heal anyone.

⁵ Say nothing, and someone may think you are wise!

⁶ Listen while I state my case.

⁷ Why are you lying? Do you think your lies will benefit God?

⁸ Are you trying to defend him? Are you going to argue his case in court?

⁹If God looks at you closely, will he find anything good? Do you think you can fool God the way you fool others?

¹⁰Even though your prejudice is hidden, he will reprimand you,

¹¹and his power will fill you with terror.

¹²Your proverbs are as useless as ashes; your arguments are as weak as clay.

¹³Be quiet and give me a chance to speak, and let the results be what they will.

¹⁴I am ready to risk my life.

¹⁵I've lost all hope, so what if God kills me? I am going to state my case to him.

¹⁶It may even be that my boldness will save me, since no wicked person would dare to face God.

¹⁷Now listen to my words of explanation.

¹⁸I am ready to state my case, because I know I am in the right.

¹⁹Are you coming to accuse me, God? If you do, I am ready to be silent and die.

²⁰Let me ask for two things; agree to them, and I will not try to hide from you:

²¹ stop punishing me, and don't crush me with terror.

²² Speak first, O God, and I will answer. Or let me speak, and you answer me.

²³ What are my sins? What wrongs have I done? What crimes am I charged with?

²⁴ Why do you avoid me? Why do you treat me like an enemy?

²⁵ Are you trying to frighten me? I'm nothing but a leaf; you are attacking a piece of dry straw.

²⁶ You bring bitter charges against me, even for what I did when I was young.

²⁷ You bind chains on my feet; you watch every step I take, and even examine my footprints.

²⁸ As a result, I crumble like rotten wood, like a moth-eaten coat.

14¹ We are all born weak and helpless. All lead the same short, troubled life.

² We grow and wither as quickly as flowers; we disappear like shadows.

³ Will you even look at me, God, or put me on trial and judge me?

⁴ Nothing clean can ever come from anything as unclean as human beings.

⁵The length of our lives is decided beforehand -- the number of months we will live. You have settled it, and it can't be changed.

⁶Look away from us and leave us alone; let us enjoy our hard life -- if we can.

⁷There is hope for a tree that has been cut down; it can come back to life and sprout.

⁸Even though its roots grow old, and its stump dies in the ground,

⁹with water it will sprout like a young plant.

¹⁰But we die, and that is the end of us; we die, and where are we then?

¹¹Like rivers that stop running, and lakes that go dry,

¹²people die, never to rise. They will never wake up while the sky endures; they will never stir from their sleep.

¹³I wish you would hide me in the world of the dead; let me be hidden until your anger is over, and then set a time to remember me.

¹⁴If a man dies, can he come back to life? But I will wait for better times, wait till this time of trouble is ended.

¹⁵Then you will call, and I will answer, and you will be pleased with me, your creature.

¹⁶Then you will watch every step I take, but you will not keep track of my sins.

¹⁷You will forgive them and put them away; you will wipe out all the wrongs I have done.

¹⁸There comes a time when mountains fall and solid cliffs are moved away.

¹⁹Water will wear down rocks, and heavy rain will wash away the soil; so you destroy our hope for life.

²⁰You overpower us and send us away forever; our faces are twisted in death.

²¹Our children win honor, but we never know it, nor are we told when they are disgraced.

²²We feel only the pain of our own bodies and the grief of our own minds.

15¹ Eliphaz Empty words, Job!
Empty words!

²(15:1)

³No one who is wise would talk the way you do or defend himself with such meaningless words.

⁴If you had your way, no one would fear God; no one would pray to him.

⁵Your wickedness is evident by what you say; you are trying to hide behind clever words.

⁶There is no need for me to condemn you; you are condemned by every word you speak.

⁷Do you think you were the first person born? Were you there when God made the mountains?

⁸Did you overhear the plans God made? Does human wisdom belong to you alone?

⁹There is nothing you know that we don't know.

¹⁰We learned our wisdom from gray-haired people -- those born before your father.

¹¹God offers you comfort; why still reject it? We have spoken for him with calm, even words.

¹²But you are excited and glare at us in anger.

¹³You are angry with God and denounce him.

¹⁴Can any human being be really pure? Can anyone be right with God?

¹⁵Why, God does not trust even his angels; even they are not pure in his sight.

¹⁶And we drink evil as if it were water; yes, we are corrupt; we are worthless.

¹⁷Now listen, Job, to what I know.

¹⁸Those who are wise have taught me truths which they learned from their ancestors, and they kept no secrets hidden.

¹⁹Their land was free from foreigners; there was no one to lead them away from God.

²⁰The wicked who oppress others will be in torment as long as they live.

²¹Voices of terror will scream in their ears, and robbers attack when they think they are safe.

²²They have no hope of escaping from darkness, for somewhere a sword is waiting to kill them,

²³and vultures are waiting to eat their corpses. They know their future is dark;

²⁴disaster, like a powerful king, is waiting to attack them.

²⁵That is the fate of those who shake their fists at God and defy the Almighty.

²⁶They are proud and rebellious; they stubbornly hold up their shields and rush to fight against God.

²⁷ (15: 26)

²⁸They are the ones who captured cities and seized houses whose owners had fled, but war will destroy those cities and houses.

²⁹They will not remain rich for long; nothing they own will last. Even their shadows will vanish,

³⁰and they will not escape from darkness. They will be like trees whose branches are burned by fire, whose blossoms are blown away by the wind.

³¹If they are foolish enough to trust in evil, then evil will be their reward.

³²Before their time is up they will wither, wither like a branch and never be green again.

³³They will be like vines that lose their unripe grapes; like olive trees that drop their blossoms.

³⁴There will be no descendants for godless people, and fire will destroy the homes built by bribery.

³⁵ These are the ones who plan trouble and do evil; their hearts are always full of deceit.

16 ¹ Job I have heard words like that before; the comfort you give is only torment.

² (16:1)

³ Are you going to keep on talking forever? Do you always have to have the last word?

⁴ If you were in my place and I in yours, I could say everything you are saying. I could shake my head wisely and drown you with a flood of words.

⁵ I could strengthen you with advice and keep talking to comfort you.

⁶ But nothing I say helps, and being silent does not calm my pain.

⁷ You have worn me out, God; you have let my family be killed.

⁸ You have seized me; you are my enemy. I am skin and bones, and people take that as proof of my guilt.

⁹ In anger God tears me limb from limb; he glares at me with hate.

¹⁰ People sneer at me; they crowd around me and slap my face.

¹¹ God has handed me over to evil people.

¹² I was living in peace, but God took me by the throat and battered me and crushed me. God uses me for target practice

¹³ and shoots arrows at me from every side -- arrows that pierce and wound me; and even then he shows no pity.

¹⁴ He wounds me again and again; he attacks like a soldier gone mad with hate.

¹⁵ I mourn and wear clothes made of sackcloth, and I sit here in the dust defeated.

¹⁶ I have cried until my face is red, and my eyes are swollen and circled with shadows,

¹⁷ but I am not guilty of any violence, and my prayer to God is sincere.

¹⁸ O Earth, don't hide the wrongs done to me! Don't let my call for justice be silenced!

¹⁹ There is someone in heaven to stand up for me and take my side.

²⁰ My friends scorn me; my eyes pour out tears to God.

²¹ I want someone to plead with God for me, as one pleads for a friend.

²² My years are passing now, and I walk the road of no return.

17 ¹ The end of my life is near. I can hardly breathe; there is nothing left for me but the grave.

² I watch how bitterly everyone mocks me.

³ I am being honest, God. Accept my word. There is no one else to support what I say.

⁴ You have closed their minds to reason; don't let them triumph over me now.

⁵ In the old proverb someone betrays his friends for money, and his children suffer for it.

⁶ And now people use this proverb against me; they come and spit in my face.

⁷ My grief has almost made me blind; my arms and legs are as thin as shadows.

⁸ Those who claim to be honest are shocked, and they all condemn me as godless.

⁹ Those who claim to be respectable are more and more convinced they are right.

¹⁰But if all of them came and stood before me, I would not find even one of them wise.

¹¹My days have passed; my plans have failed; my hope is gone.

¹²But my friends say night is daylight; they say that light is near, but I know I remain in darkness.

¹³My only hope is the world of the dead, where I will lie down to sleep in the dark.

¹⁴I will call the grave my father, and the worms that eat me I will call my mother and my sisters.

¹⁵Where is there any hope for me? Who sees any?

¹⁶Hope will not go with me when I go down to the world of the dead.

18¹ Bildad Job, can't people like you ever be quiet? If you stopped to listen, we could talk to you.

²(18:1)

³What makes you think we are as stupid as cattle?

⁴You are only hurting yourself with your anger. Will the earth be deserted because you are angry? Will God move mountains to satisfy you?

⁵The light of the wicked will still be put out; its flame will never burn again.

⁶The lamp in their tents will be darkened.

⁷Their steps were firm, but now they stumble; they fall -- victims of their own advice.

⁸They walk into a net, and their feet are caught;

⁹a trap catches their heels and holds them.

¹⁰On the ground a snare is hidden; a trap has been set in their path.

¹¹All around them terror is waiting; it follows them at every step.

¹²They used to be rich, but now they go hungry; disaster stands and waits at their side.

¹³A deadly disease spreads over their bodies and causes their arms and legs to rot.

¹⁴They are torn from the tents where they lived secure, and are dragged off to face King Death.

¹⁵Now anyone may live in their tents -- after sulfur is sprinkled to disinfect them!

¹⁶Their roots and branches are withered and dry.

¹⁷ Their fame is ended at home and abroad; no one remembers them any more.

¹⁸ They will be driven out of the land of the living, driven from light into darkness.

¹⁹ They have no descendants, no survivors.

²⁰ From east to west, all who hear of their fate shudder and tremble with fear.

²¹ That is the fate of evil people, the fate of those who care nothing for God.

19 ¹ Job Why do you keep tormenting me with words?

² (19:1)

³ Time after time you insult me and show no shame for the way you abuse me.

⁴ Even if I have done wrong, how does that hurt you?

⁵ You think you are better than I am, and regard my troubles as proof of my guilt.

⁶ Can't you see it is God who has done this? He has set a trap to catch me.

⁷ I protest his violence, but no one is listening; no one hears my cry for justice.

⁸God has blocked the way, and I can't get through; he has hidden my path in darkness.

⁹He has taken away all my wealth and destroyed my reputation.

¹⁰He batters me from every side. He uproots my hope and leaves me to wither and die.

¹¹God is angry and rages against me; he treats me like his worst enemy.

¹²He sends his army to attack me; they dig trenches and lay siege to my tent.

¹³God has made my own family forsake me; I am a stranger to those who knew me;

¹⁴my relatives and friends are gone.

¹⁵Those who were guests in my house have forgotten me; my servant women treat me like a stranger and a foreigner.

¹⁶When I call a servant, he doesn't answer -- even when I beg him to help me.

¹⁷My wife can't stand the smell of my breath, and my own brothers won't come near me.

¹⁸Children despise me and laugh when they see me.

¹⁹ My closest friends look at me with disgust; those I loved most have turned against me.

²⁰ My skin hangs loose on my bones; I have barely escaped with my life.

²¹ You are my friends! Take pity on me! The hand of God has struck me down.

²² Why must you persecute me the way God does? Haven't you tormented me enough?

²³ How I wish that someone would remember my words and record them in a book!

²⁴ Or with a chisel carve my words in stone and write them so that they would last forever.

²⁵ But I know there is someone in heaven who will come at last to my defense.

²⁶ Even after my skin is eaten by disease, while still in this body I will see God.

²⁷ I will see him with my own eyes, and he will not be a stranger. My courage failed because you said,

²⁸ How can we torment him? You looked for some excuse to attack me.

²⁹ But now, be afraid of the sword -- the sword that brings God's wrath on sin, so that you will know there is one who judges.

20¹ Zophar Job, you upset me. Now I'm impatient to answer.

² (20: 1)

³ What you have said is an insult, but I know how to reply to you.

⁴ Surely you know that from ancient times, when we humans were first placed on earth,

⁵ no wicked people have been happy for long.

⁶ They may grow great, towering to the sky, so great that their heads reach the clouds,

⁷ but they will be blown away like dust. Those who used to know them will wonder where they have gone.

⁸ They will vanish like a dream, like a vision at night, and never be seen again.

⁹ The wicked will disappear from the place where they used to live;

¹⁰ and their children will make good what they stole from the poor.

¹¹ Their bodies used to be young and vigorous, but soon they will turn to dust.

¹² Evil tastes so good to them that they keep some in their mouths to enjoy its flavor.

¹³ (20: 12)

¹⁴ But in their stomachs the food turns bitter, as bitter as any poison could be.

¹⁵ The wicked vomit up the wealth they stole; God takes it back, even out of their stomachs.

¹⁶ What the evil people swallow is like poison; it kills them like the bite of a deadly snake.

¹⁷ They will not live to see rivers of olive oil or streams that flow with milk and honey.

¹⁸ They will have to give up all they have worked for; they will have no chance to enjoy their wealth,

¹⁹ because they oppressed and neglected the poor and seized houses someone else had built.

²⁰ Their greed is never satisfied.

²¹ When they eat, there is nothing left over, but now their prosperity comes to an end.

²² At the height of their success all the weight of misery will crush them.

²³ Let them eat all they want! God will punish them in fury and anger.

²⁴ When they try to escape from an iron sword, a bronze bow will shoot them down.

²⁵ Arrows stick through their bodies; the shiny points drip with their blood, and terror grips their hearts.

²⁶ Everything they have saved is destroyed; a fire not lit by human hands burns them and all their family.

²⁷ Heaven reveals their sin, and the earth gives testimony against them.

²⁸ All their wealth will be destroyed in the flood of God's anger.

²⁹ This is the fate of wicked people, the fate that God assigns to them.

21 ¹ Job Listen to what I am saying; that is all the comfort I ask from you.

² (21: 1)

³ Give me a chance to speak and then, when I am through, sneer if you like.

⁴ My quarrel is not with mortals; I have good reason to be impatient.

⁵ Look at me. Isn't that enough to make you stare in shocked silence?

⁶When I think of what has happened to me, I am stunned, and I tremble and shake.

⁷Why does God let evil people live, let them grow old and prosper?

⁸They have children and grandchildren, and live to watch them all grow up.

⁹God does not bring disaster on their homes; they never have to live in terror.

¹⁰Yes, all their cattle breed and give birth without trouble.

¹¹Their children run and play like lambs

¹²and dance to the music of harps and flutes.

¹³They live out their lives in peace and quietly die without suffering.

¹⁴The wicked tell God to leave them alone; they don't want to know his will for their lives.

¹⁵They think there is no need to serve God nor any advantage in praying to him.

¹⁶They claim they succeed by their own strength, but their way of thinking I can't accept.

¹⁷Was a wicked person's light ever put out? Did one of them ever meet with

disaster? Did God ever punish the wicked in anger

¹⁸and blow them away like straw in the wind, or like dust carried away in a storm?

¹⁹You claim God punishes a child for the sins of his father. No! Let God punish the sinners themselves; let him show that he does it because of their sins.

²⁰Let sinners bear their own punishment; let them feel the wrath of Almighty God.

²¹When our lives are over, do we really care whether our children are happy?

²²Can anyone teach God, who judges even those in high places?

²³Some people stay healthy till the day they die; they die happy and at ease, their bodies well-nourished.

²⁴(21: 23)

²⁵Others have no happiness at all; they live and die with bitter hearts.

²⁶But all alike die and are buried; they all are covered with worms.

²⁷I know what spiteful thoughts you have.

²⁸You ask, Where are the homes of great people now, those who practiced evil?

²⁹Haven't you talked with people who travel? Don't you know the reports they bring back?

³⁰On the day God is angry and punishes, it is the wicked who are always spared.

³¹There is no one to accuse the wicked or pay them back for all they have done.

³²When they are carried to the graveyard, to their well-guarded tombs,

³³thousands join the funeral procession, and even the earth lies gently on their bodies.

³⁴And you! You try to comfort me with nonsense! Every answer you give is a lie!

22¹ Eliphaz Is there anyone, even the wisest, who could ever be of use to God?

² (22: 1)

³ Does your doing right benefit God, or does your being good help him at all?

⁴ It is not because you stand in awe of God that he reprimands you and brings you to trial.

⁵No, it's because you have sinned so much; it's because of all the evil you do.

⁶To make a brother repay you the money he owed, you took away his clothes and left him nothing to wear.

⁷You refused water to those who were tired, and refused to feed those who were hungry.

⁸You used your power and your position to take over the whole land.

⁹You not only refused to help widows, but you also robbed and mistreated orphans.

¹⁰So now there are pitfalls all around you, and suddenly you are full of fear.

¹¹It has grown so dark that you cannot see, and a flood overwhelms you.

¹²Doesn't God live in the highest heavens and look down on the stars, even though they are high?

¹³And yet you ask, What does God know? He is hidden by clouds -- how can he judge us?

¹⁴You think the thick clouds keep him from seeing, as he walks on the dome of the sky.

¹⁵Are you determined to walk in the paths that evil people have always followed?

¹⁶Even before their time had come, they were washed away by a flood.

¹⁷These are the ones who rejected God and believed that he could do nothing to them.

¹⁸And yet it was God who made them prosperous -- I can't understand the thoughts of the wicked.

¹⁹Good people are glad and the innocent laugh when they see the wicked punished.

²⁰All that the wicked own is destroyed, and fire burns up anything that is left.

²¹Now, Job, make peace with God and stop treating him like an enemy; if you do, then he will bless you.

²²Accept the teaching he gives; keep his words in your heart.

²³Yes, you must humbly return to God and put an end to all the evil that is done in your house.

²⁴Throw away your gold; dump your finest gold in the dry stream bed.

²⁵Let Almighty God be your gold, and let him be silver, piled high for you.

²⁶ Then you will always trust in God and find that he is the source of your joy.

²⁷ When you pray, he will answer you, and you will keep the vows you made.

²⁸ You will succeed in all you do, and light will shine on your path.

²⁹ God brings down the proud and saves the humble.

³⁰ He will rescue you if you are innocent, if what you do is right.

23 ¹ Job I still rebel and complain against God; I cannot keep from groaning.

² (23: 1)

³ How I wish I knew where to find him, and knew how to go where he is.

⁴ I would state my case before him and present all the arguments in my favor.

⁵ I want to know what he would say and how he would answer me.

⁶ Would God use all his strength against me? No, he would listen as I spoke.

⁷ I am honest; I could reason with God; he would declare me innocent once and for all.

⁸ I have searched in the East, but God is not there; I have not found him when I searched in the West.

⁹God has been at work in the North and the South, but still I have not seen him.

¹⁰Yet God knows every step I take; if he tests me, he will find me pure.

¹¹I follow faithfully the road he chooses, and never wander to either side.

¹²I always do what God commands; I follow his will, not my own desires.

¹³He never changes. No one can oppose him or stop him from doing what he wants to do.

¹⁴He will fulfill what he has planned for me; that plan is just one of the many he has;

¹⁵I tremble with fear before him.

¹⁶Almighty God has destroyed my courage. It is God, not the dark, that makes me afraid -- even though the darkness has made me blind.

¹⁷(23:16)

24¹ Why doesn't God set a time for judging, a day of justice for those who serve him?

²People move property lines to get more land; they steal sheep and put them with their own flocks.

³They take donkeys that belong to orphans, and keep a widow's ox till she pays her debts.

⁴They prevent the poor from getting their rights and force the needy to run and hide.

⁵So the poor, like wild donkeys, search for food in the dry wilderness; nowhere else can they find food for their children.

⁶They have to harvest fields they don't own, and gather grapes in vineyards of the wicked.

⁷At night they sleep with nothing to cover them, nothing to keep them from the cold.

⁸They are drenched by the rain that falls on the mountains, and they huddle beside the rocks for shelter.

⁹Evil people make slaves of fatherless infants and take the children of the poor in payment for debts.

¹⁰But the poor must go out with no clothes to protect them; they must go hungry while harvesting wheat.

¹¹They press olives for oil, and grapes for wine, but they themselves are thirsty.

¹²In the cities the wounded and dying cry out, but God ignores their prayers.

¹³ There are those who reject the light; they don't understand it or go where it leads.

¹⁴ At dawn the murderer gets up and goes out to kill the poor, and at night he steals.

¹⁵ The adulterer waits for twilight to come; he covers his face so that no one can see him.

¹⁶ At night thieves break into houses, but by day they hide and avoid the light.

¹⁷ They fear the light of day, but darkness holds no terror for them.

[Zophar]

¹⁸ The wicked are swept away by floods, and the land they own is under God's curse; they no longer go to work in their vineyards.

¹⁹ As snow vanishes in heat and drought, so sinners vanish from the land of the living.

²⁰ Not even their mothers remember them now; they are eaten by worms and destroyed like fallen trees.

²¹ That happens because they mistreated widows and showed no kindness to childless women.

²² God, in his strength, destroys the mighty; God acts -- and the wicked die.

²³ God may let them live secure, but keeps an eye on them all the time.

²⁴ For a while the wicked prosper, but then they wither like weeds, like stalks of grain that have been cut down.

²⁵ Can anyone deny that this is so? Can anyone prove that my words are not true?

25 ¹ Bildad God is powerful; all must stand in awe of him; he keeps his heavenly kingdom in peace.

² (25: 1)

³ Can anyone count the angels who serve him? Is there any place where God's light does not shine?

⁴ Can anyone be righteous or pure in God's sight?

⁵ In his eyes even the moon is not bright, or the stars pure.

⁶ Then what about a human being, that worm, that insect? What is a human life worth in God's eyes?

26 ¹ Job What a big help you are to me -- poor, weak man that I am!

² (26: 1)

³You give such good advice and share your knowledge with a fool like me!

⁴Who do you think will hear all your words? Who inspired you to speak like this? [Bildad]

⁵The spirits of the dead tremble in the waters under the earth.

⁶The world of the dead lies open to God; no covering shields it from his sight.

⁷God stretched out the northern sky and hung the earth in empty space.

⁸It is God who fills the clouds with water and keeps them from bursting with the weight.

⁹He hides the full moon behind a cloud.

¹⁰He divided light from darkness by a circle drawn on the face of the sea.

¹¹When he threatens the pillars that hold up the sky, they shake and tremble with fear.

¹²It is his strength that conquered the sea; by his skill he destroyed the monster Rahab.

¹³It is his breath that made the sky clear, and his hand that killed the escaping monster.

¹⁴ But these are only hints of his power, only the whispers that we have heard. Who can know how truly great God is?

27 ¹ Job I swear by the living Almighty God, who refuses me justice and makes my life bitter --

² (27: 1)

³ as long as God gives me breath,

⁴ my lips will never say anything evil, my tongue will never tell a lie.

⁵ I will never say that you men are right; I will insist on my innocence to my dying day.

⁶ I will never give up my claim to be right; my conscience is clear.

⁷ May all who oppose me and fight against me be punished like the wicked and the unrighteous.

⁸ What hope is there for the godless in the hour when God demands their life?

⁹ When trouble comes, will God hear their cries?

¹⁰ They should have desired the joy he gives; they should have constantly prayed to him.

¹¹ Let me teach you how great is God's power, and explain what Almighty God has planned.

¹²But no, after all, you have seen for yourselves; so why do you talk such nonsense? [Zophar]

¹³This is how Almighty God punishes wicked, violent people.

¹⁴They may have many sons, but all will be killed in war; their children never have enough to eat.

¹⁵Those who survive will die from disease, and even their widows will not mourn their death.

¹⁶The wicked may have too much silver to count and more clothes than anyone needs;

¹⁷but some good person will wear the clothes, and someone honest will get the silver.

¹⁸The wicked build houses like a spider's web or like the hut of a slave guarding the fields.

¹⁹One last time they will lie down rich, and when they wake up, they will find their wealth gone.

²⁰Terror will strike like a sudden flood; a wind in the night will blow them away;

²¹the east wind will sweep them from their homes;

²²it will blow down on them without pity while they try their best to escape.

²³The wind howls at them as they run, frightening them with destructive power.

28¹ There are mines where silver is dug; There are places where gold is refined.

²We dig iron out of the ground And melt copper out of the stones.

³Miners explore the deepest darkness. They search the depths of the earth And dig for rocks in the darkness.

⁴Far from where anyone lives Or human feet ever travel, They dig the shafts of mines. There they work in loneliness, Clinging to ropes in the pits.

⁵Food grows out of the earth, But underneath the same earth All is torn up and crushed.

⁶The stones of the earth contain sapphires, And its dust contains gold.

⁷No hawk sees the roads to the mines, And no vulture ever flies over them.

⁸No lion or other fierce beast Ever travels those lonely roads.

⁹Miners dig the hardest rocks, Dig mountains away at their base.

¹⁰As they tunnel through the rocks,
They discover precious stones.

¹¹They dig to the sources of rivers And
bring to light what is hidden.

¹²But where can wisdom be found?
Where can we learn to understand?

¹³Wisdom is not to be found among
mortals; No one knows its true value.

¹⁴The depths of the oceans and seas
Say that wisdom is not found there.

¹⁵It cannot be bought with silver or
gold.

¹⁶The finest gold and jewels Cannot
equal its value.

¹⁷It is worth more than gold, Than a
gold vase or finest glass.

¹⁸The value of wisdom is more Than
coral or crystal or rubies.

¹⁹The finest topaz and the purest
gold Cannot compare with the value of
wisdom.

²⁰Where, then, is the source of wisdom?
Where can we learn to understand?

²¹No living creature can see it, Not
even a bird in flight.

²²Even death and destruction Admit
they have heard only rumors.

²³ God alone knows the way, Knows the place where wisdom is found,

²⁴ Because he sees the ends of the earth, Sees everything under the sky.

²⁵ When God gave the wind its power And determined the size of the sea;

²⁶ When God decided where the rain would fall, And the path that the thunderclouds travel;

²⁷ It was then he saw wisdom and tested its worth -- He gave it his approval.

²⁸ God said to us humans, To be wise, you must have reverence for the Lord. To understand, you must turn from evil.

29 ¹ Job began speaking again.

² Job If only my life could once again be as it was when God watched over me.

³ God was always with me then and gave me light as I walked through the darkness.

⁴ Those were the days when I was prosperous, and the friendship of God protected my home.

⁵ Almighty God was with me then, and I was surrounded by all my children.

⁶My cows and goats gave plenty of milk, and my olive trees grew in the rockiest soil.

⁷Whenever the city elders met and I took my place among them,

⁸young men stepped aside as soon as they saw me, and old men stood up to show me respect.

⁹The leaders of the people would stop talking;

¹⁰even the most important men kept silent.

¹¹Everyone who saw me or heard of me had good things to say about what I had done.

¹²When the poor cried out, I helped them; I gave help to orphans who had nowhere to turn.

¹³People who were in deepest misery praised me, and I helped widows find security.

¹⁴I have always acted justly and fairly.

¹⁵I was eyes for the blind, and feet for the lame.

¹⁶I was like a father to the poor and took the side of strangers in trouble.

¹⁷I destroyed the power of cruel men and rescued their victims.

¹⁸I always expected to live a long life and to die at home in comfort.

¹⁹I was like a tree whose roots always have water and whose branches are wet with dew.

²⁰Everyone was always praising me, and my strength never failed me.

²¹When I gave advice, people were silent and listened carefully to what I said;

²²they had nothing to add when I had finished. My words sank in like drops of rain;

²³everyone welcomed them just as farmers welcome rain in spring.

²⁴I smiled on them when they had lost confidence; my cheerful face encouraged them.

²⁵I took charge and made the decisions; I led them as a king leads his troops, and gave them comfort in their despair.

30¹But men younger than I am make fun of me now! Their fathers have always been so worthless that I wouldn't let them help my dogs guard sheep.

²They were a bunch of worn-out men, too weak to do any work for me.

³They were so poor and hungry that they would gnaw dry roots -- at night, in wild, desolate places.

⁴They pulled up the plants of the desert and ate them, even the tasteless roots of the broom tree!

⁵Everyone drove them away with shouts, as if they were shouting at thieves.

⁶They had to live in caves, in holes dug in the sides of cliffs.

⁷Out in the wilds they howled like animals and huddled together under the bushes.

⁸A worthless bunch of nameless nobodies! They were driven out of the land.

⁹Now they come and laugh at me; I am nothing but a joke to them.

¹⁰They treat me with disgust; they think they are too good for me, and even come and spit in my face.

¹¹Because God has made me weak and helpless, they turn against me with all their fury.

¹²This mob attacks me head-on; they send me running; they prepare their final assault.

¹³They cut off my escape and try to destroy me; and there is no one to stop them.

¹⁴They pour through the holes in my defenses and come crashing down on top of me;

¹⁵I am overcome with terror; my dignity is gone like a puff of wind, and my prosperity like a cloud.

¹⁶Now I am about to die; there is no relief for my suffering.

¹⁷At night my bones all ache; the pain that gnaws me never stops.

¹⁸God seizes me by my collar and twists my clothes out of shape.

¹⁹He throws me down in the mud; I am no better than dirt.

²⁰I call to you, O God, but you never answer; and when I pray, you pay no attention.

²¹You are treating me cruelly; you persecute me with all your power.

²²You let the wind blow me away; you toss me about in a raging storm.

²³I know you are taking me off to my death, to the fate in store for everyone.

²⁴Why do you attack a ruined man, one who can do nothing but beg for pity?

²⁵ Didn't I weep with people in trouble and feel sorry for those in need?

²⁶ I hoped for happiness and light, but trouble and darkness came instead.

²⁷ I am torn apart by worry and pain; I have had day after day of suffering.

²⁸ I go about in gloom, without any sunshine; I stand up in public and plead for help.

²⁹ My voice is as sad and lonely as the cries of a jackal or an ostrich.

³⁰ My skin has turned dark; I am burning with fever.

³¹ Where once I heard joyful music, now I hear only mourning and weeping.

31 ¹ I have made a solemn promise never to look with lust at a woman.

² What does Almighty God do to us? How does he repay human deeds?

³ He sends disaster and ruin to those who do wrong.

⁴ God knows everything I do; he sees every step I take.

⁵ I swear I have never acted wickedly and never tried to deceive others.

⁶ Let God weigh me on honest scales, and he will see how innocent I am.

⁷ If I have turned from the right path
or let myself be attracted to evil, if my
hands are stained with sin,

⁸ then let my crops be destroyed, or let
others eat the food I grow.

⁹ If I have been attracted to my
neighbor's wife, and waited, hidden,
outside her door,

¹⁰ then let my wife cook another man's
food and sleep in another man's bed.

¹¹ Such wickedness should be punished
by death.

¹² It would be like a destructive, hellish
fire, consuming everything I have.

¹³ When any of my servants complained
against me, I would listen and treat
them fairly.

¹⁴ If I did not, how could I then face
God? What could I say when God came
to judge me?

¹⁵ The same God who created me
created my servants also.

¹⁶ I have never refused to help the
poor; never have I let widows live in
despair

¹⁷ or let orphans go hungry while I ate.

¹⁸ All my life I have taken care of them.

¹⁹When I found someone in need, too poor to buy clothes,

²⁰I would give him clothing made of wool that had come from my own flock of sheep. Then he would praise me with all his heart.

²¹If I have ever cheated an orphan, knowing I could win in court,

²²then may my arms be broken; may they be torn from my shoulders.

²³Because I fear God's punishment, I could never do such a thing.

²⁴I have never trusted in riches

²⁵or taken pride in my wealth.

²⁶I have never worshiped the sun in its brightness or the moon in all its beauty.

²⁷I have not been led astray to honor them by kissing my hand in reverence to them.

²⁸Such a sin should be punished by death; it denies Almighty God.

²⁹I have never been glad when my enemies suffered, or pleased when they met with disaster;

³⁰I never sinned by praying for their death.

³¹All those who work for me know that I have always welcomed strangers.

³²I invited travelers into my home and never let them sleep in the streets.

³³Others try to hide their sins, but I have never concealed mine.

³⁴I have never feared what people would say; I have never kept quiet or stayed indoors because I feared their scorn.

³⁵Will no one listen to what I am saying? I swear that every word is true. Let Almighty God answer me. If the charges my opponent brings against me were written down so that I could see them,

³⁶I would wear them proudly on my shoulder and place them on my head like a crown.

³⁷I would tell God everything I have done, and hold my head high in his presence.

³⁸If I have stolen the land I farm and taken it from its rightful owners --

³⁹if I have eaten the food that grew there but let the farmers that grew it starve --

⁴⁰then instead of wheat and barley, may weeds and thistles grow. The words of Job are ended.

32¹ Because Job was convinced of his own innocence, the three men gave up trying to answer him.

² But a bystander named Elihu could not control his anger any longer, because Job was justifying himself and blaming God. (Elihu was the son of Barakel, a descendant of Buz, and belonged to the clan of Ram.)

³ He was also angry with Job's three friends. They could not find any way to answer Job, and this made it appear that God was in the wrong.

⁴ Because Elihu was the youngest one there, he had waited until everyone finished speaking.

⁵ When he saw that the three men could not answer Job, he was angry

⁶ and began to speak. Elihu I am young, and you are old, so I was afraid to tell you what I think.

⁷ I told myself that you ought to speak, that you older men should share your wisdom.

⁸ But it is the spirit of Almighty God that comes to us and gives us wisdom.

⁹ It is not growing old that makes us wise or helps us to know what is right.

¹⁰ So now I want you to listen to me; let me tell you what I think.

¹¹ I listened patiently while you were speaking and waited while you searched for wise phrases.

¹² I paid close attention and heard you fail; you have not disproved what Job has said.

¹³ How can you claim you have discovered wisdom? God must answer Job, for you have failed.

¹⁴ Job was speaking to you, not to me, but I would never answer the way you did.

¹⁵ Words have failed them, Job; they have no answer for you.

¹⁶ Shall I go on waiting when they are silent? They stand there with nothing more to say.

¹⁷ No, I will give my own answer now and tell you what I think.

¹⁸ I can hardly wait to speak. I can't hold back the words.

¹⁹ If I don't get a chance to speak, I will burst like a wineskin full of new wine.

²⁰ I can't stand it; I have to speak.

²¹ I will not take sides in this debate; I am not going to flatter anyone.

²²I don't know how to flatter, and God would quickly punish me if I did.

33¹ And now, Job, listen carefully to all that I have to say.

²I am ready to say what's on my mind.

³All my words are sincere, and I am speaking the truth.

⁴God's spirit made me and gave me life.

⁵Answer me if you can. Prepare your arguments.

⁶You and I are the same in God's sight, both of us were formed from clay.

⁷So you have no reason to fear me; I will not overpower you.

⁸Now this is what I heard you say:

⁹I am not guilty; I have done nothing wrong. I am innocent and free from sin.

¹⁰But God finds excuses for attacking me and treats me like an enemy.

¹¹He binds chains on my feet; he watches every move I make.

¹²But I tell you, Job, you are wrong. God is greater than any human being.

¹³Why do you accuse God of never answering our complaints?

¹⁴ Although God speaks again and again, no one pays attention to what he says.

¹⁵ At night when people are asleep, God speaks in dreams and visions.

¹⁶ He makes them listen to what he says, and they are frightened at his warnings.

¹⁷ God speaks to make them stop their sinning and to save them from becoming proud.

¹⁸ He will not let them be destroyed; he saves them from death itself.

¹⁹ God corrects us by sending sickness and filling our bodies with pain.

²⁰ Those who are sick lose their appetites, and even the finest food looks revolting.

²¹ Their bodies waste away to nothing; you can see all their bones;

²² they are about to go to the world of the dead.

²³ Perhaps an angel may come to their aid -- one of God's thousands of angels, who remind us of our duty.

²⁴ In mercy the angel will say, Release them! They are not to go down to the

world of the dead. Here is the ransom to set them free.

²⁵ Their bodies will grow young and strong again;

²⁶ when they pray, God will answer; they will worship God with joy; God will set things right for them again.

²⁷ Each one will say in public, I have sinned. I have not done right, but God spared me.

²⁸ He kept me from going to the world of the dead, and I am still alive.

²⁹ God does all this again and again;

³⁰ each one saves a person's life, and gives him the joy of living.

³¹ Now, Job, listen to what I am saying; be quiet and let me speak.

³² But if you have something to say, let me hear it; I would gladly admit you are in the right.

³³ But if not, be quiet and listen to me, and I will teach you how to be wise.

34 ¹ You men are so wise, so clever; listen now to what I am saying.

² (34: 1)

³ You know good food when you taste it, but not wise words when you hear them.

⁴ It is up to us to decide the case.

⁵ Job claims that he is innocent, that God refuses to give him justice.

⁶ He asks, How could I lie and say I am wrong? I am fatally wounded, but I am sinless.

⁷ Have you ever seen anyone like this man Job? He never shows respect for God.

⁸ He likes the company of evil people and goes around with sinners.

⁹ He says that it never does any good to try to follow God's will.

¹⁰ Listen to me, you men who understand! Will Almighty God do what is wrong?

¹¹ He rewards people for what they do and treats them as they deserve.

¹² Almighty God does not do evil; he is never unjust to anyone.

¹³ Did God get his power from someone else? Did someone put him in charge of the world?

¹⁴ If God took back the breath of life,

¹⁵ then everyone living would die and turn into dust again.

¹⁶ Now listen to me, if you are wise.

¹⁷ Are you condemning the righteous God? Do you think that he hates justice?

¹⁸ God condemns kings and rulers when they are worthless or wicked.

¹⁹ He does not take the side of rulers nor favor the rich over the poor, for he created everyone.

²⁰ We may suddenly die at night. God strikes us down and we perish; he kills the mighty with no effort at all.

²¹ He watches every step we take.

²² There is no darkness dark enough to hide a sinner from God.

²³ God does not need to set a time for us to go and be judged by him.

²⁴ He does not need an investigation to remove leaders and replace them with others.

²⁵ Because he knows what they do; he overthrows them and crushes them by night.

²⁶ He punishes sinners where all can see it,

²⁷ because they have stopped following him and ignored all his commands.

²⁸ They forced the poor to cry out to God, and he heard their calls for help.

²⁹ If God decided to do nothing at all, no one could criticize him. If he hid his face, we would be helpless.

³⁰There would be nothing that nations could do to keep godless oppressors from ruling them.

³¹Job, have you confessed your sins to God and promised not to sin again?

³²Have you asked God to show you your faults, and have you agreed to stop doing evil?

³³Since you object to what God does, can you expect him to do what you want? The decision is yours, not mine; tell us now what you think.

³⁴Any sensible person will surely agree; and the wise who hear me will say

³⁵that Job is speaking from ignorance and that nothing he says makes sense.

³⁶Think through everything that Job says; you will see that he talks like an evil man.

³⁷To his sins he adds rebellion; in front of us all he mocks God.

35¹It is not right, Job, for you to say that you are innocent in God's sight,

²(35:1)

³or to ask God, How does my sin affect you? What have I gained by not sinning?

⁴I am going to answer you and your friends too.

⁵Look at the sky! See how high the clouds are!

⁶If you sin, that does no harm to God. If you do wrong many times, does that affect him?

⁷Do you help God by being so righteous? There is nothing God needs from you.

⁸Others suffer from your sins, and the good you do helps them.

⁹When people are oppressed, they groan; they cry for someone to save them.

¹⁰But they don't turn to God, their Creator, who gives them hope in their darkest hours.

¹¹They don't turn to God, who makes us wise, wiser than any animal or bird.

¹²They cry for help, but God doesn't answer, for they are proud and evil.

¹³It is useless for them to cry out; Almighty God does not see or hear them.

¹⁴Job, you say you can't see God; but wait patiently -- your case is before him.

¹⁵You think that God does not punish, that he pays little attention to sin.

¹⁶It is useless for you to go on talking; it is clear you don't know what you are saying.

36 ¹Be patient and listen a little longer to what I am saying on God's behalf.

²(36: 1)

³My knowledge is wide; I will use what I know to show that God, my Creator, is just.

⁴Nothing I say to you is false; you see before you a truly wise man.

⁵How strong God is! He despises no one; there is nothing he doesn't understand.

⁶He does not let sinners live on, and he always treats the poor with justice.

⁷He protects those who are righteous; he allows them to rule like kings and lets them be honored forever.

⁸But if people are bound in chains, suffering for what they have done,

⁹God shows them their sins and their pride.

¹⁰He makes them listen to his warning to turn away from evil.

¹¹ If they obey God and serve him, they live out their lives in peace and prosperity.

¹² But if not, they will die in ignorance and cross the stream into the world of the dead.

¹³ Those who are godless keep on being angry, and even when punished, they don't pray for help.

¹⁴ They die while they are still young, worn out by a life of disgrace.

¹⁵ But God teaches people through suffering and uses distress to open their eyes.

¹⁶ God brought you out of trouble, and let you enjoy security; your table was piled high with food.

¹⁷ But now you are being punished as you deserve.

¹⁸ Be careful not to let bribes deceive you, or riches lead you astray.

¹⁹ It will do you no good to cry out for help; all your strength can't help you now.

²⁰ Don't wish for night to come, the time when nations will perish.

²¹ Be careful not to turn to evil; your suffering was sent to keep you from it.

²² Remember how great is God's power; he is the greatest teacher of all.

²³ No one can tell God what to do or accuse him of doing evil.

²⁴ He has always been praised for what he does; you also must praise him.

²⁵ Everyone has seen what he has done; but we can only watch from a distance.

²⁶ We cannot fully know his greatness or count the number of his years.

²⁷ It is God who takes water from the earth and turns it into drops of rain.

²⁸ He lets the rain pour from the clouds in showers for all human beings.

²⁹ No one knows how the clouds move or how the thunder roars through the sky, where God dwells.

³⁰ He sends lightning through all the sky, but the depths of the sea remain dark.

³¹ This is how he feeds the people and provides an abundance of food.

³² He seizes the lightning with his hands and commands it to hit the mark.

³³ Thunder announces the approaching storm, and the cattle know it is coming.

37 ¹ The storm makes my heart beat wildly.

² Listen, all of you, to the voice of God, to the thunder that comes from his mouth.

³ He sends the lightning across the sky, from one end of the earth to the other.

⁴ Then the roar of his voice is heard, the majestic sound of thunder, and all the while the lightning flashes.

⁵ At God's command amazing things happen, wonderful things that we can't understand.

⁶ He commands snow to fall on the earth, and sends torrents of drenching rain.

⁷ He brings our work to a stop; he shows us what he can do.

⁸ The wild animals go to their dens.

⁹ The storm winds come from the south, and the biting cold from the north.

¹⁰ The breath of God freezes the waters, and turns them to solid ice.

¹¹ Lightning flashes from the clouds,

¹² as they move at God's will. They do all that God commands, everywhere throughout the world.

¹³ God sends rain to water the earth; he may send it to punish us, or to show us his favor.

¹⁴ Pause a moment, Job, and listen; consider the wonderful things God does.

¹⁵ Do you know how God gives the command and makes lightning flash from the clouds?

¹⁶ Do you know how clouds float in the sky, the work of God's amazing skill?

¹⁷ No, you can only suffer in the heat when the south wind oppresses the land.

¹⁸ Can you help God stretch out the sky and make it as hard as polished metal?

¹⁹ Teach us what to say to God; our minds are blank; we have nothing to say.

²⁰ I won't ask to speak with God; why should I give him a chance to destroy me?

²¹ And now the light in the sky is dazzling, too bright for us to look at it; and the sky has been swept clean by the wind.

²² A golden glow is seen in the north, and the glory of God fills us with awe.

²³ God's power is so great that we cannot come near him; he is righteous and just in his dealings with us.

²⁴ No wonder, then, that everyone is awed by him, and that he ignores those who claim to be wise.

38¹ Then out of the storm the LORD spoke to Job.

² The LORD Who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant, empty words?

³ Now stand up straight and answer the questions I ask you.

⁴ Were you there when I made the world? If you know so much, tell me about it.

⁵ Who decided how large it would be? Who stretched the measuring line over it? Do you know all the answers?

⁶ What holds up the pillars that support the earth? Who laid the cornerstone of the world?

⁷ In the dawn of that day the stars sang together, and the heavenly beings shouted for joy.

⁸ Who closed the gates to hold back the sea when it burst from the womb of the earth?

⁹ It was I who covered the sea with clouds and wrapped it in darkness.

¹⁰ I marked a boundary for the sea and kept it behind bolted gates.

¹¹ I told it, So far and no farther! Here your powerful waves must stop.

¹² Job, have you ever in all your life commanded a day to dawn?

¹³ Have you ordered the dawn to seize the earth and shake the wicked from their hiding places?

¹⁴ Daylight makes the hills and valleys stand out like the folds of a garment, clear as the imprint of a seal on clay.

¹⁵ The light of day is too bright for the wicked and restrains them from doing violence.

¹⁶ Have you been to the springs in the depths of the sea? Have you walked on the floor of the ocean?

¹⁷ Has anyone ever shown you the gates that guard the dark world of the dead?

¹⁸ Have you any idea how big the world is? Answer me if you know.

¹⁹ Do you know where the light comes from or what the source of darkness is?

²⁰ Can you show them how far to go, or send them back again?

²¹ I am sure you can, because you're so old and were there when the world was made!

²² Have you ever visited the storerooms, where I keep the snow and the hail?

²³I keep them ready for times of trouble, for days of battle and war.

²⁴Have you been to the place where the sun comes up, or the place from which the east wind blows?

²⁵Who dug a channel for the pouring rain and cleared the way for the thunderstorm?

²⁶Who makes rain fall where no one lives?

²⁷Who waters the dry and thirsty land, so that grass springs up?

²⁸Does either the rain or the dew have a father?

²⁹Who is the mother of the ice and the frost,

³⁰which turn the waters to stone and freeze the face of the sea?

³¹Can you tie the Pleiades together or loosen the bonds that hold Orion?

³²Can you guide the stars season by season and direct the Big and the Little Dipper?

³³Do you know the laws that govern the skies, and can you make them apply to the earth?

³⁴Can you shout orders to the clouds and make them drench you with rain?

³⁵ And if you command the lightning to flash, will it come to you and say, At your service?

³⁶ Who tells the ibis when the Nile will flood, or who tells the rooster that rain will fall?

³⁷ Who is wise enough to count the clouds and tilt them over to pour out the rain,

³⁸ rain that hardens the dust into lumps?

³⁹ Do you find food for lions to eat, and satisfy hungry young lions

⁴⁰ when they hide in their caves, or lie in wait in their dens?

⁴¹ Who is it that feeds the ravens when they wander about hungry, when their young cry to me for food?

39¹ Do you know when mountain goats are born? Have you watched wild deer give birth?

² Do you know how long they carry their young? Do you know the time for their birth?

³ Do you know when they will crouch down and bring their young into the world?

⁴In the wilds their young grow strong;
they go away and don't come back.

⁵Who gave the wild donkeys their
freedom? Who turned them loose and let
them roam?

⁶I gave them the desert to be their
home, and let them live on the salt
plains.

⁷They keep far away from the noisy
cities, and no one can tame them and
make them work.

⁸The mountains are the pastures
where they feed, where they search for
anything green to eat.

⁹Will a wild ox work for you? Is he
willing to spend the night in your stable?

¹⁰Can you hold one with a rope and
make him plow? Or make him pull a
harrow in your fields?

¹¹Can you rely on his great strength
and expect him to do your heavy work?

¹²Do you expect him to bring in your
harvest and gather the grain from your
threshing place?

¹³How fast the wings of an ostrich beat!
But no ostrich can fly like a stork.

¹⁴The ostrich leaves her eggs on the ground for the heat in the soil to warm them.

¹⁵She is unaware that a foot may crush them or a wild animal break them.

¹⁶She acts as if the eggs were not hers, and is unconcerned that her efforts were wasted.

¹⁷It was I who made her foolish and did not give her wisdom.

¹⁸But when she begins to run, she can laugh at any horse and rider.

¹⁹Was it you, Job, who made horses so strong and gave them their flowing manes?

²⁰Did you make them leap like locusts and frighten people with their snorting?

²¹They eagerly paw the ground in the valley; they rush into battle with all their strength.

²²They do not know the meaning of fear, and no sword can turn them back.

²³The weapons which their riders carry rattle and flash in the sun.

²⁴Trembling with excitement, the horses race ahead; when the trumpet blows, they can't stand still.

²⁵At each blast of the trumpet they snort; they can smell a battle before they get near, and they hear the officers shouting commands.

²⁶Does a hawk learn from you how to fly when it spreads its wings toward the south?

²⁷Does an eagle wait for your command to build its nest high in the mountains?

²⁸It makes its home on the highest rocks and makes the sharp peaks its fortress.

²⁹From there it watches near and far for something to kill and eat.

³⁰Around dead bodies the eagles gather, and the young eagles drink the blood.

40¹Job, you challenged Almighty God; will you give up now, or will you answer?

²(40: 1)

³Job I spoke foolishly, LORD. What can I answer? I will not try to say anything else.

⁴(40: 3)

⁵I have already said more than I should.

⁶Then out of the storm the LORD spoke to Job once again.

⁷The LORD Now stand up straight and answer my questions.

⁸Are you trying to prove that I am unjust -- to put me in the wrong and yourself in the right?

⁹Are you as strong as I am? Can your voice thunder as loud as mine?

¹⁰If so, stand up in your honor and pride; clothe yourself with majesty and glory.

¹¹Look at those who are proud; pour out your anger and humble them.

¹²Yes, look at them and bring them down; crush the wicked where they stand.

¹³Bury them all in the ground; bind them in the world of the dead.

¹⁴Then I will be the first to praise you and admit that you won the victory yourself.

¹⁵Look at the monster Behemoth; I created him and I created you. He eats grass like a cow,

¹⁶but what strength there is in his body, and what power there is in his muscles!

¹⁷ His tail stands up like a cedar, and the muscles in his legs are strong.

¹⁸ His bones are as strong as bronze, and his legs are like iron bars.

¹⁹ The most amazing of all my creatures! Only his Creator can defeat him.

²⁰ Grass to feed him grows on the hills where wild beasts play.

²¹ He lies down under the thorn bushes, and hides among the reeds in the swamp.

²² The thorn bushes and the willows by the stream give him shelter in their shade.

²³ He is not afraid of a rushing river; he is calm when the Jordan dashes in his face.

²⁴ Who can blind his eyes and capture him? Or who can catch his snout in a trap?

41 ¹ Can you catch Leviathan with a fishhook or tie his tongue down with a rope?

² Can you put a rope through his snout or put a hook through his jaws?

³ Will he beg you to let him go? Will he plead with you for mercy?

⁴ Will he make an agreement with you and promise to serve you forever?

⁵ Will you tie him like a pet bird, like something to amuse your servant women?

⁶ Will fishermen bargain over him? Will merchants cut him up to sell?

⁷ Can you fill his hide with fishing spears or pierce his head with a harpoon?

⁸ Touch him once and you'll never try it again; you'll never forget the fight!

⁹ Anyone who sees Leviathan loses courage and falls to the ground.

¹⁰ When he is aroused, he is fierce; no one would dare to stand before him.

¹¹ Who can attack him and still be safe? No one in all the world can do it.

¹² Let me tell you about Leviathan's legs and describe how great and strong he is.

¹³ No one can tear off his outer coat or pierce the armor he wears.

¹⁴ Who can make him open his jaws, ringed with those terrifying teeth?

¹⁵ His back is made of rows of shields, fastened together and hard as stone.

¹⁶ Each one is joined so tight to the next, not even a breath can come between.

¹⁷ They all are fastened so firmly together that nothing can ever pull them apart.

¹⁸ Light flashes when he sneezes, and his eyes glow like the rising sun.

¹⁹ Flames blaze from his mouth, and streams of sparks fly out.

²⁰ Smoke comes pouring out of his nose, like smoke from weeds burning under a pot.

²¹ His breath starts fires burning; flames leap out of his mouth.

²² His neck is so powerful that all who meet him are terrified.

²³ There is not a weak spot in his skin; it is as hard and unyielding as iron.

²⁴ His stony heart is without fear, as unyielding and hard as a millstone.

²⁵ When he rises up, even the strongest are frightened; they are helpless with fear.

²⁶ There is no sword that can wound him; no spear or arrow or lance that can harm him.

²⁷ For him iron is as flimsy as straw, and bronze as soft as rotten wood.

²⁸There is no arrow that can make him run; rocks thrown at him are like bits of straw.

²⁹To him a club is a piece of straw, and he laughs when men throw spears.

³⁰The scales on his belly are like jagged pieces of pottery; they tear up the muddy ground like a threshing sledge.

³¹He churns up the sea like boiling water and makes it bubble like a pot of oil.

³²He leaves a shining path behind him and turns the sea to white foam.

³³There is nothing on earth to compare with him; he is a creature that has no fear.

³⁴He looks down on even the proudest animals; he is king of all wild beasts.

42¹ Then Job answered the LORD.

²Job I know, LORD, that you are all-powerful; that you can do everything you want.

³You ask how I dare question your wisdom when I am so very ignorant. I talked about things I did not understand, about marvels too great for me to know.

⁴You told me to listen while you spoke and to try to answer your questions.

⁵In the past I knew only what others had told me, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

⁶So I am ashamed of all I have said and repent in dust and ashes.

⁷After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz, I am angry with you and your two friends, because you did not speak the truth about me, the way my servant Job did.

⁸Now take seven bulls and seven rams to Job and offer them as a sacrifice for yourselves. Job will pray for you, and I will answer his prayer and not disgrace you the way you deserve. You did not speak the truth about me as he did.

⁹Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did what the LORD had told them to do, and the LORD answered Job's prayer.

¹⁰Then, after Job had prayed for his three friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had had before.

¹¹All Job's brothers and sisters and former friends came to visit him and feasted with him in his house. They expressed their sympathy and comforted him for all the troubles the LORD had

brought on him. Each of them gave him some money and a gold ring.

¹²The LORD blessed the last part of Job's life even more than he had blessed the first. Job owned fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, two thousand head of cattle, and one thousand donkeys.

¹³He was the father of seven sons and three daughters.

¹⁴He called the oldest daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the youngest Keren Happuch.

¹⁵There were no other women in the whole world as beautiful as Job's daughters. Their father gave them a share of the inheritance along with their brothers.

¹⁶Job lived a hundred and forty years after this, long enough to see his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

¹⁷And then he died at a very great age.

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