

# **Good News Bible**

Old Testament  
(Psalms s.d. Malachi)

# Psalms

**1** <sup>1</sup> Happy are those who reject the advice of evil people, who do not follow the example of sinners or join those who have no use for God.

<sup>2</sup> Instead, they find joy in obeying the Law of the LORD, and they study it day and night.

<sup>3</sup> They are like trees that grow beside a stream, that bear fruit at the right time, and whose leaves do not dry up. They succeed in everything they do.

<sup>4</sup> But evil people are not like this at all; they are like straw that the wind blows away.

<sup>5</sup> Sinners will be condemned by God and kept apart from God's own people.

<sup>6</sup> The righteous are guided and protected by the LORD, but the evil are on the way to their doom.

**2** <sup>1</sup> Why do the nations plan rebellion? Why do people make their useless plots?

<sup>2</sup>Their kings revolt, their rulers plot together against the LORD and against the king he chose.

<sup>3</sup>Let us free ourselves from their rule, they say; let us throw off their control.

<sup>4</sup>From his throne in heaven the Lord laughs and mocks their feeble plans.

<sup>5</sup>Then he warns them in anger and terrifies them with his fury.

<sup>6</sup>On Zion, my sacred hill, he says, I have installed my king.

<sup>7</sup>I will announce, says the king, what the LORD has declared. He said to me: You are my son; today I have become your father.

<sup>8</sup>Ask, and I will give you all the nations; the whole earth will be yours.

<sup>9</sup>You will break them with an iron rod; you will shatter them in pieces like a clay pot.

<sup>10</sup>Now listen to this warning, you kings; learn this lesson, you rulers of the world:

<sup>11</sup>Serve the LORD with fear; tremble

<sup>12</sup>and bow down to him; or else his anger will be quickly aroused, and you will suddenly die. Happy are all who go to him for protection.

**3**<sup>1</sup> I have so many enemies, LORD, so many who turn against me!

<sup>2</sup> They talk about me and say, God will not help him.

<sup>3</sup> But you, O LORD, are always my shield from danger; you give me victory and restore my courage.

<sup>4</sup> I call to the LORD for help, and from his sacred hill he answers me.

<sup>5</sup> I lie down and sleep, and all night long the LORD protects me.

<sup>6</sup> I am not afraid of the thousands of enemies who surround me on every side.

<sup>7</sup> Come, LORD! Save me, my God! You punish all my enemies and leave them powerless to harm me.

<sup>8</sup> Victory comes from the LORD -- may he bless his people.

**4**<sup>1</sup> Answer me when I pray, O God, my defender! When I was in trouble, you helped me. Be kind to me now and hear my prayer.

<sup>2</sup> How long will you people insult me? How long will you love what is worthless and go after what is false?

<sup>3</sup> Remember that the LORD has chosen the righteous for his own, and he hears me when I call to him.

<sup>4</sup>Tremble with fear and stop sinning; think deeply about this, when you lie in silence on your beds.

<sup>5</sup>Offer the right sacrifices to the LORD, and put your trust in him.

<sup>6</sup>There are many who pray: Give us more blessings, O LORD. Look on us with kindness!

<sup>7</sup>But the joy that you have given me is more than they will ever have with all their grain and wine.

<sup>8</sup>When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace; you alone, O LORD, keep me perfectly safe.

**5**<sup>1</sup>Listen to my words, O LORD, and hear my sighs.

<sup>2</sup>Listen to my cry for help, my God and king! I pray to you, O LORD;

<sup>3</sup>you hear my voice in the morning; at sunrise I offer my prayer and wait for your answer.

<sup>4</sup>You are not a God who is pleased with wrongdoing; you allow no evil in your presence.

<sup>5</sup>You cannot stand the sight of the proud; you hate all wicked people.

<sup>6</sup>You destroy all liars and despise violent, deceitful people.

<sup>7</sup> But because of your great love I can come into your house; I can worship in your holy Temple and bow down to you in reverence.

<sup>8</sup> LORD, I have so many enemies! Lead me to do your will; make your way plain for me to follow.

<sup>9</sup> What my enemies say can never be trusted; they only want to destroy. Their words are flattering and smooth, but full of deadly deceit.

<sup>10</sup> Condemn and punish them, O God; may their own plots cause their ruin. Drive them out of your presence because of their many sins and their rebellion against you.

<sup>11</sup> But all who find safety in you will rejoice; they can always sing for joy. Protect those who love you; because of you they are truly happy.

<sup>12</sup> You bless those who obey you, LORD; your love protects them like a shield.

**6**<sup>1</sup> LORD, don't be angry and rebuke me! Don't punish me in your anger!

<sup>2</sup> I am worn out, O LORD; have pity on me! Give me strength; I am completely exhausted

<sup>3</sup>and my whole being is deeply troubled.  
How long, O LORD, will you wait to help  
me?

<sup>4</sup>Come and save me, LORD; in your  
mercy rescue me from death.

<sup>5</sup>In the world of the dead you are not  
remembered; no one can praise you  
there.

<sup>6</sup>I am worn out with grief; every night  
my bed is damp from my weeping; my  
pillow is soaked with tears.

<sup>7</sup>I can hardly see; my eyes are so  
swollen from the weeping caused by my  
enemies.

<sup>8</sup>Keep away from me, you evil people!  
The LORD hears my weeping;

<sup>9</sup>he listens to my cry for help and will  
answer my prayer.

<sup>10</sup>My enemies will know the bitter  
shame of defeat; in sudden confusion  
they will be driven away.

**7**<sup>1</sup>O LORD, my God, I come to you for  
protection; rescue me and save me  
from all who pursue me,

<sup>2</sup>or else like a lion they will carry me off  
where no one can save me, and there  
they will tear me to pieces.

<sup>3</sup>O LORD, my God, if I have wronged anyone, if I have betrayed a friend or without cause done violence to my enemy -- if I have done any of these things --

<sup>4</sup>(7:3)

<sup>5</sup>then let my enemies pursue me and catch me, let them cut me down and kill me and leave me lifeless on the ground!

<sup>6</sup>Rise in your anger, O LORD! Stand up against the fury of my enemies; rouse yourself and help me! Justice is what you demand,

<sup>7</sup>so bring together all the peoples around you, and rule over them from above.

<sup>8</sup>You are the judge of all people. Judge in my favor, O LORD; you know that I am innocent.

<sup>9</sup>You are a righteous God and judge our thoughts and desires. Stop the wickedness of evildoers and reward those who are good.

<sup>10</sup>God is my protector; he saves those who obey him.

<sup>11</sup>God is a righteous judge and always condemns the wicked.



<sup>12</sup>If they do not change their ways, God will sharpen his sword. He bends his bow and makes it ready;

<sup>13</sup>he takes up his deadly weapons and aims his burning arrows.

<sup>14</sup>See how wicked people think up evil; they plan trouble and practice deception.

<sup>15</sup>But in the traps they set for others, they themselves get caught.

<sup>16</sup>So they are punished by their own evil and are hurt by their own violence.

<sup>17</sup>I thank the LORD for his justice; I sing praises to the LORD, the Most High.

**8**<sup>1</sup>O LORD, our Lord, your greatness is seen in all the world! Your praise reaches up to the heavens;

<sup>2</sup>it is sung by children and babies. You are safe and secure from all your enemies; you stop anyone who opposes you.

<sup>3</sup>When I look at the sky, which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places --

<sup>4</sup>what are human beings, that you think of them; mere mortals, that you care for them?

<sup>5</sup> Yet you made them inferior only to yourself; you crowned them with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup> You appointed them rulers over everything you made; you placed them over all creation:

<sup>7</sup> sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too;

<sup>8</sup> the birds and the fish and the creatures in the seas.

<sup>9</sup> O LORD, our Lord, your greatness is seen in all the world!

**9**<sup>1</sup> I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all the wonderful things you have done.

<sup>2</sup> I will sing with joy because of you. I will sing praise to you, Almighty God.

<sup>3</sup> My enemies turn back when you appear; they fall down and die.

<sup>4</sup> You are fair and honest in your judgments, and you have judged in my favor.

<sup>5</sup> You have condemned the heathen and destroyed the wicked; they will be remembered no more.

<sup>6</sup> Our enemies are finished forever; you have destroyed their cities, and they are completely forgotten.

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD is king forever; he has set up his throne for judgment.

<sup>8</sup> He rules the world with righteousness; he judges the nations with justice.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a place of safety in times of trouble.

<sup>10</sup> Those who know you, LORD, will trust you; you do not abandon anyone who comes to you.

<sup>11</sup> Sing praise to the LORD, who rules in Zion! Tell every nation what he has done!

<sup>12</sup> God remembers those who suffer; he does not forget their cry, and he punishes those who wrong them.

<sup>13</sup> Be merciful to me, O LORD! See the sufferings my enemies cause me! Rescue me from death, O LORD,

<sup>14</sup> that I may stand before the people of Jerusalem and tell them all the things for which I praise you. I will rejoice because you saved me.

<sup>15</sup> The heathen have dug a pit and fallen in; they have been caught in their own trap.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD has revealed himself by his righteous judgments, and the wicked are trapped by their own deeds.

<sup>17</sup>Death is the destiny of all the wicked, of all those who reject God.

<sup>18</sup>The needy will not always be neglected; the hope of the poor will not be crushed forever.

<sup>19</sup>Come, LORD! Do not let anyone defy you! Bring the heathen before you and pronounce judgment on them.

<sup>20</sup>Make them afraid, O LORD; make them know that they are only mortal beings.

**10**<sup>1</sup>Why are you so far away, O LORD? Why do you hide yourself when we are in trouble?

<sup>2</sup>The wicked are proud and persecute the poor; catch them in the traps they have made.

<sup>3</sup>The wicked are proud of their evil desires; the greedy curse and reject the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>The wicked do not care about the LORD; in their pride they think that God doesn't matter.

<sup>5</sup>The wicked succeed in everything. They cannot understand God's judgments; they sneer at their enemies.

<sup>6</sup>They say to themselves, We will never fail; we will never be in trouble.

<sup>7</sup>Their speech is filled with curses, lies, and threats; they are quick to speak hateful, evil words.

<sup>8</sup>They hide themselves in the villages, waiting to murder innocent people. They spy on their helpless victims;

<sup>9</sup>they wait in their hiding place like lions. They lie in wait for the poor; they catch them in their traps and drag them away.

<sup>10</sup>The helpless victims lie crushed; brute strength has defeated them.

<sup>11</sup>The wicked say to themselves, God doesn't care! He has closed his eyes and will never see me!

<sup>12</sup>O LORD, punish those wicked people! Remember those who are suffering!

<sup>13</sup>How can the wicked despise God and say to themselves, He will not punish me?

<sup>14</sup>But you do see; you take notice of trouble and suffering and are always ready to help. The helpless commit

themselves to you; you have always helped the needy.

<sup>15</sup>Break the power of wicked and evil people; punish them for the wrong they have done until they do it no more.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD is king forever and ever. Those who worship other gods will vanish from his land.

<sup>17</sup>You will listen, O LORD, to the prayers of the lowly; you will give them courage.

<sup>18</sup>You will hear the cries of the oppressed and the orphans; you will judge in their favor, so that mortal men may cause terror no more.

**11** <sup>1</sup>I trust in the LORD for safety. How foolish of you to say to me,

Fly away like a bird to the mountains,

<sup>2</sup>because the wicked have drawn their bows and aimed their arrows to shoot from the shadows at good people.

<sup>3</sup>There is nothing a good person can do when everything falls apart.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD is in his holy temple; he has his throne in heaven. He watches people everywhere and knows what they are doing.

<sup>5</sup>He examines the good and the wicked alike; the lawless he hates with all his heart.

<sup>6</sup>He sends down flaming coals and burning sulfur on the wicked; he punishes them with scorching winds.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD is righteous and loves good deeds; those who do them will live in his presence.

**12**<sup>1</sup>Help us, LORD! There is not a good person left; honest people can no longer be found.

<sup>2</sup>All of them lie to one another; they deceive each other with flattery.

<sup>3</sup>Silence those flattering tongues, O LORD! Close those boastful mouths that say,

<sup>4</sup>With our words we get what we want. We will say what we wish, and no one can stop us.

<sup>5</sup>But now I will come, says the LORD, because the needy are oppressed and the persecuted groan in pain. I will give them the security they long for.

<sup>6</sup>The promises of the LORD can be trusted; they are as genuine as silver refined seven times in the furnace.

<sup>7</sup>The wicked are everywhere, and everyone praises what is evil. Keep us always safe, O LORD, and preserve us from such people.

<sup>8</sup>(12:7)

**13**<sup>1</sup>How much longer will you forget me, LORD? Forever? How much longer will you hide yourself from me?

<sup>2</sup>How long must I endure trouble? How long will sorrow fill my heart day and night? How long will my enemies triumph over me?

<sup>3</sup>Look at me, O LORD my God, and answer me. Restore my strength; don't let me die.

<sup>4</sup>Don't let my enemies say, We have defeated him. Don't let them gloat over my downfall.

<sup>5</sup>I rely on your constant love; I will be glad, because you will rescue me.

<sup>6</sup>I will sing to you, O LORD, because you have been good to me.

**14**<sup>1</sup>Fools say to themselves, There is no God! They are all corrupt, and they have done terrible things; there is no one who does what is right.



<sup>2</sup>The LORD looks down from heaven at us humans to see if there are any who are wise, any who worship him.

<sup>3</sup>But they have all gone wrong; they are all equally bad. Not one of them does what is right, not a single one.

<sup>4</sup>Don't they know? asks the LORD. Are all these evildoers ignorant? They live by robbing my people, and they never pray to me.

<sup>5</sup>But then they will be terrified, for God is with those who obey him.

<sup>6</sup>Evildoers frustrate the plans of the humble, but the LORD is their protection.

<sup>7</sup>How I pray that victory will come to Israel from Zion. How happy the people of Israel will be when the LORD makes them prosperous again!

**15**<sup>1</sup> LORD, who may enter your Temple? Who may worship on Zion, your sacred hill?

<sup>2</sup>Those who obey God in everything and always do what is right, whose words are true and sincere,

<sup>3</sup>and who do not slander others. They do no wrong to their friends nor spread rumors about their neighbors.

<sup>4</sup>They despise those whom God rejects, but honor those who obey the LORD. They always do what they promise, no matter how much it may cost.

<sup>5</sup>They make loans without charging interest and cannot be bribed to testify against the innocent. Whoever does these things will always be secure.

**16**<sup>1</sup>Protect me, O God; I trust in you for safety.

<sup>2</sup>I say to the LORD, You are my Lord; all the good things I have come from you.

<sup>3</sup>How excellent are the LORD's faithful people! My greatest pleasure is to be with them.

<sup>4</sup>Those who rush to other gods bring many troubles on themselves. I will not take part in their sacrifices; I will not worship their gods.

<sup>5</sup>You, LORD, are all I have, and you give me all I need; my future is in your hands.

<sup>6</sup>How wonderful are your gifts to me; how good they are!

<sup>7</sup>I praise the LORD, because he guides me, and in the night my conscience warns me.

<sup>8</sup>I am always aware of the LORD's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me.

<sup>9</sup>And so I am thankful and glad, and I feel completely secure,

<sup>10</sup>because you protect me from the power of death. I have served you faithfully, and you will not abandon me to the world of the dead.

<sup>11</sup>You will show me the path that leads to life; your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever.

**17** <sup>1</sup>Listen, O LORD, to my plea for justice; pay attention to my cry for help! Listen to my honest prayer.

<sup>2</sup>You will judge in my favor, because you know what is right.

<sup>3</sup>You know my heart. You have come to me at night; you have examined me completely and found no evil desire in me. I speak no evil,

<sup>4</sup>as others do; I have obeyed your command and have not followed paths of violence.

<sup>5</sup>I have always walked in your way and have never strayed from it.

<sup>6</sup>I pray to you, O God, because you answer me; so turn to me and listen to my words.

<sup>7</sup>Reveal your wonderful love and save me; at your side I am safe from my enemies.

<sup>8</sup>Protect me as you would your very eyes; hide me in the shadow of your wings

<sup>9</sup>from the attacks of the wicked. Deadly enemies surround me;

<sup>10</sup>they have no pity and speak proudly.

<sup>11</sup>They are around me now, wherever I turn, watching for a chance to pull me down.

<sup>12</sup>They are like lions, waiting for me, wanting to tear me to pieces.

<sup>13</sup>Come, LORD! Oppose my enemies and defeat them! Save me from the wicked by your sword;

<sup>14</sup>save me from those who in this life have all they want. Punish them with the sufferings you have stored up for them; may there be enough for their children and some left over for their children's children!

<sup>15</sup>But I will see you, because I have done no wrong; and when I awake, your presence will fill me with joy.

**18**<sup>1</sup>How I love you, LORD! You are my defender.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD is my protector; he is my strong fortress. My God is my protection, and with him I am safe. He protects me like a shield; he defends me and keeps me safe.

<sup>3</sup>I call to the LORD, and he saves me from my enemies. Praise the LORD!

<sup>4</sup>The danger of death was all around me; the waves of destruction rolled over me.

<sup>5</sup>The danger of death was around me, and the grave set its trap for me.

<sup>6</sup>In 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.

<sup>7</sup>Then the earth trembled and shook; the foundations of the mountains rocked and quivered, because God was angry.

<sup>8</sup>Smoke poured out of his nostrils, a consuming flame and burning coals from his mouth.

<sup>9</sup>He tore the sky open and came down with a dark cloud under his feet.

<sup>10</sup>He flew swiftly on his winged creature; he traveled on the wings of the wind.

<sup>11</sup>He covered himself with darkness; thick clouds, full of water, surrounded him.

<sup>12</sup>Hailstones and flashes of fire came from the lightning before him and broke through the dark clouds.

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD thundered from the sky; and the voice of the Most High was heard.

<sup>14</sup>He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies; with flashes of lightning he sent them running.

<sup>15</sup>The floor of the ocean was laid bare, and the foundations of the earth were uncovered, when you rebuked your enemies, LORD, and roared at them in anger.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD reached down from above and took hold of me; he pulled me out of the deep waters.

<sup>17</sup>He rescued me from my powerful enemies and from all those who hate me -- they were too strong for me.

<sup>18</sup>When I was in trouble, they attacked me, but the LORD protected me.

<sup>19</sup>He helped me out of danger; he saved me because he was pleased with me.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD rewards me because I do what is right; he blesses me because I am innocent.

<sup>21</sup>I have obeyed the law of the LORD; I have not turned away from my God.

<sup>22</sup>I have observed all his laws; I have not disobeyed his commands.

<sup>23</sup>He knows that I am faultless, that I have kept myself from doing wrong.

<sup>24</sup>And so he rewards me because I do what is right, because he knows that I am innocent.

<sup>25</sup>O LORD, you are faithful to those who are faithful to you; completely good to those who are perfect.

<sup>26</sup>You are pure to those who are pure, but hostile to those who are wicked.

<sup>27</sup>You save those who are humble, but you humble those who are proud.

<sup>28</sup>O LORD, you give me light; you dispel my darkness.

<sup>29</sup>You give me strength to attack my enemies and power to overcome their defenses.

<sup>30</sup>This God -- how perfect are his deeds! How dependable his words! He is like a shield for all who seek his protection.

<sup>31</sup>The LORD alone is God; God alone is our defense.

<sup>32</sup>He is the God who makes me strong, who makes my pathway safe.

<sup>33</sup>He makes me sure-footed as a deer; he keeps me safe on the mountains.

<sup>34</sup>He trains me for battle, so that I can use the strongest bow.

<sup>35</sup>O LORD, you protect me and save me; your care has made me great, and your power has kept me safe.

<sup>36</sup>You have kept me from being captured, and I have never fallen.

<sup>37</sup>I pursue my enemies and catch them; I do not stop until I destroy them.

<sup>38</sup>I strike them down, and they cannot rise; they lie defeated before me.

<sup>39</sup>You give me strength for the battle and victory over my enemies.

<sup>40</sup>You make my enemies run from me; I destroy those who hate me.



<sup>41</sup> They cry for help, but no one saves them; they call to the LORD, but he does not answer.

<sup>42</sup> I crush them, so that they become like dust which the wind blows away. I trample on them like mud in the streets.

<sup>43</sup> You saved me from a rebellious people and made me ruler over the nations; people I did not know have now become my subjects.

<sup>44</sup> Foreigners bow before me; when they hear me, they obey.

<sup>45</sup> They lose their courage and come trembling from their fortresses.

<sup>46</sup> The LORD lives! Praise my defender! Proclaim the greatness of the God who saves me.

<sup>47</sup> He gives me victory over my enemies; he subdues the nations under me

<sup>48</sup> and saves me from my foes. O LORD, you give me victory over my enemies and protect me from violent people.

<sup>49</sup> And so I praise you among the nations; I sing praises to you.

<sup>50</sup> God gives great victories to his king; he shows constant love to the one he has

chosen, to David and his descendants forever.

**19**<sup>1</sup> How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what he has done!

<sup>2</sup> Each day announces it to the following day; each night repeats it to the next.

<sup>3</sup> No speech or words are used, no sound is heard;

<sup>4</sup> yet their message goes out to all the world and is heard to the ends of the earth. God made a home in the sky for the sun;

<sup>5</sup> it comes out in the morning like a happy bridegroom, like an athlete eager to run a race.

<sup>6</sup> It starts at one end of the sky and goes across to the other. Nothing can hide from its heat.

<sup>7</sup> The law of the LORD is perfect; it gives new strength. The commands of the LORD are trustworthy, giving wisdom to those who lack it.

<sup>8</sup> The laws of the LORD are right, and those who obey them are happy. The commands of the LORD are just and give understanding to the mind.

<sup>9</sup>Reverence for the LORD is good; it will continue forever. The judgments of the LORD are just; they are always fair.

<sup>10</sup>They are more desirable than the finest gold; they are sweeter than the purest honey.

<sup>11</sup>They give knowledge to me, your servant; I am rewarded for obeying them.

<sup>12</sup>None of us can see our own errors; deliver me, LORD, from hidden faults!

<sup>13</sup>Keep me safe, also, from willful sins; don't let them rule over me. Then I shall be perfect and free from the evil of sin.

<sup>14</sup>May my words and my thoughts be acceptable to you, O LORD, my refuge and my redeemer!

**20**<sup>1</sup>May the LORD answer you when you are in trouble! May the God of Jacob protect you!

<sup>2</sup>May he send you help from his Temple and give you aid from Mount Zion.

<sup>3</sup>May he accept all your offerings and be pleased with all your sacrifices.

<sup>4</sup>May he give you what you desire and make all your plans succeed.

<sup>5</sup>Then we will shout for joy over your victory and celebrate your triumph by

praising our God. May the LORD answer all your requests.

<sup>6</sup>Now I know that the LORD gives victory to his chosen king; he answers him from his holy heaven and by his power gives him great victories.

<sup>7</sup>Some trust in their war chariots and others in their horses, but we trust in the power of the LORD our God.

<sup>8</sup>Such people will stumble and fall, but we will rise and stand firm.

<sup>9</sup>Give victory to the king, O LORD; answer us when we call.

**21** <sup>1</sup>The king is glad, O LORD, because you gave him strength; he rejoices because you made him victorious.

<sup>2</sup>You have given him his heart's desire; you have answered his request.

<sup>3</sup>You came to him with great blessings and set a crown of gold on his head.

<sup>4</sup>He asked for life, and you gave it, a long and lasting life.

<sup>5</sup>His glory is great because of your help; you have given him fame and majesty.

<sup>6</sup>Your blessings are with him forever, and your presence fills him with joy.

<sup>7</sup>The king trusts in the LORD Almighty; and because of the LORD's constant love he will always be secure.

<sup>8</sup>The king will capture all his enemies; he will capture everyone who hates him.

<sup>9</sup>He will destroy them like a blazing fire when he appears. The LORD will devour them in his anger, and fire will consume them.

<sup>10</sup>None of their descendants will survive; the king will kill them all.

<sup>11</sup>They make their plans, and plot against him, but they will not succeed.

<sup>12</sup>He will shoot his arrows at them and make them turn and run.

<sup>13</sup>We praise you, LORD, for your great strength! We will sing and praise your power.

**22**<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? I have cried desperately for help, but still it does not come.

<sup>2</sup>During the day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer; I call at night, but get no rest.

<sup>3</sup>But you are enthroned as the Holy One, the one whom Israel praises.

<sup>4</sup> Our ancestors put their trust in you; they trusted you, and you saved them.

<sup>5</sup> They called to you and escaped from danger; they trusted you and were not disappointed.

<sup>6</sup> But I am no longer a human being; I am a worm, despised and scorned by everyone!

<sup>7</sup> All who see me make fun of me; they stick out their tongues and shake their heads.

<sup>8</sup> You relied on the LORD, they say. Why doesn't he save you? If the LORD likes you, why doesn't he help you?

<sup>9</sup> It was you who brought me safely through birth, and when I was a baby, you kept me safe.

<sup>10</sup> I have relied on you since the day I was born, and you have always been my God.

<sup>11</sup> Do not stay away from me! Trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

<sup>12</sup> Many enemies surround me like bulls; they are all around me, like fierce bulls from the land of Bashan.

<sup>13</sup> They open their mouths like lions, roaring and tearing at me.

<sup>14</sup> My strength is gone, gone like water spilled on the ground. All my bones are out of joint; my heart is like melted wax.

<sup>15</sup> My throat is as dry as dust, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have left me for dead in the dust.

<sup>16</sup> An evil gang is around me; like a pack of dogs they close in on me; they tear at my hands and feet.

<sup>17</sup> All my bones can be seen. My enemies look at me and stare.

<sup>18</sup> They gamble for my clothes and divide them among themselves.

<sup>19</sup> O LORD, don't stay away from me! Come quickly to my rescue!

<sup>20</sup> Save me from the sword; save my life from these dogs.

<sup>21</sup> Rescue me from these lions; I am helpless before these wild bulls.

<sup>22</sup> I will tell my people what you have done; I will praise you in their assembly:

<sup>23</sup> Praise him, you servants of the LORD! Honor him, you descendants of Jacob! Worship him, you people of Israel!

<sup>24</sup> He does not neglect the poor or ignore their suffering; he does not turn away from them, but answers when they call for help.

<sup>25</sup>In the full assembly I will praise you for what you have done; in the presence of those who worship you I will offer the sacrifices I promised.

<sup>26</sup>The poor will eat as much as they want; those who come to the LORD will praise him. May they prosper forever!

<sup>27</sup>All nations will remember the LORD. From every part of the world they will turn to him; all races will worship him.

<sup>28</sup>The LORD is king, and he rules the nations.

<sup>29</sup>All proud people will bow down to him; all mortals will bow down before him.

<sup>30</sup>Future generations will serve him; they will speak of the Lord to the coming generation.

<sup>31</sup>People not yet born will be told: The Lord saved his people.

**23**<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd; I have everything I need.

<sup>2</sup>He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.

<sup>3</sup>He gives me new strength. He guides me in the right paths, as he has promised.



<sup>4</sup>Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid, LORD, for you are with me. Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a banquet for me, where all my enemies can see me; you welcome me as an honored guest and fill my cup to the brim.

<sup>6</sup>I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life; and your house will be my home as long as I live.

**24** <sup>1</sup>The world and all that is in it belong to the LORD; the earth and all who live on it are his.

<sup>2</sup>He built it on the deep waters beneath the earth and laid its foundations in the ocean depths.

<sup>3</sup>Who has the right to go up the LORD's hill? Who may enter his holy Temple?

<sup>4</sup>Those who are pure in act and in thought, who do not worship idols or make false promises.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD will bless them and save them; God will declare them innocent.

<sup>6</sup>Such are the people who come to God, who come into the presence of the God of Jacob.

<sup>7</sup> Fling wide the gates, open the ancient doors, and the great king will come in.

<sup>8</sup> Who is this great king? He is the LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, victorious in battle.

<sup>9</sup> Fling wide the gates, open the ancient doors, and the great king will come in.

<sup>10</sup> Who is this great king? The triumphant LORD -- he is the great king!

**25** <sup>1</sup> To you, O LORD, I offer my prayer;

<sup>2</sup> in you, my God, I trust. Save me from the shame of defeat; don't let my enemies gloat over me!

<sup>3</sup> Defeat does not come to those who trust in you, but to those who are quick to rebel against you.

<sup>4</sup> Teach me your ways, O LORD; make them known to me.

<sup>5</sup> Teach me to live according to your truth, for you are my God, who saves me. I always trust in you.

<sup>6</sup> Remember, O LORD, your kindness and constant love which you have shown from long ago.

<sup>7</sup> Forgive the sins and errors of my youth. In your constant love and goodness, remember me, LORD!

<sup>8</sup>Because the LORD is righteous and good, he teaches sinners the path they should follow.

<sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in the right way and teaches them his will.

<sup>10</sup>With faithfulness and love he leads all who keep his covenant and obey his commands.

<sup>11</sup>Keep your promise, LORD, and forgive my sins, for they are many.

<sup>12</sup>Those who have reverence for the LORD will learn from him the path they should follow.

<sup>13</sup>They will always be prosperous, and their children will possess the land.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD is the friend of those who obey him and he affirms his covenant with them.

<sup>15</sup>I look to the LORD for help at all times, and he rescues me from danger.

<sup>16</sup>Turn to me, LORD, and be merciful to me, because I am lonely and weak.

<sup>17</sup>Relieve me of my worries and save me from all my troubles.

<sup>18</sup>Consider my distress and suffering and forgive all my sins.

<sup>19</sup>See how many enemies I have; see how much they hate me.

<sup>20</sup>Protect me and save me; keep me from defeat. I come to you for safety.

<sup>21</sup>May my goodness and honesty preserve me, because I trust in you.

<sup>22</sup>From all their troubles, O God, save your people Israel!

**26** <sup>1</sup>Declare me innocent, O LORD, because I do what is right and trust you completely.

<sup>2</sup>Examine me and test me, LORD; judge my desires and thoughts.

<sup>3</sup>Your constant love is my guide; your faithfulness always leads me.

<sup>4</sup>I do not keep company with worthless people; I have nothing to do with hypocrites.

<sup>5</sup>I hate the company of the evil and avoid the wicked.

<sup>6</sup>LORD, I wash my hands to show that I am innocent and march in worship around your altar.

<sup>7</sup>I sing a hymn of thanksgiving and tell of all your wonderful deeds.

<sup>8</sup>I love the house where you live, O LORD, the place where your glory dwells.

<sup>9</sup>Do not destroy me with the sinners; spare me from the fate of murderers --

<sup>10</sup> those who do evil all the time and are always ready to take bribes.

<sup>11</sup> As for me, I do what is right; be merciful to me and save me!

<sup>12</sup> I am safe from all dangers; in the assembly of his people I praise the LORD.

**27** <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my light and my salvation; I will fear no one. The LORD protects me from all danger; I will never be afraid.

<sup>2</sup> When evil people attack me and try to kill me, they stumble and fall.

<sup>3</sup> Even if a whole army surrounds me, I will not be afraid; even if enemies attack me, I will still trust God.

<sup>4</sup> I have asked the LORD for one thing; one thing only do I want: to live in the LORD's house all my life, to marvel there at his goodness, and to ask for his guidance.

<sup>5</sup> In times of trouble he will shelter me; he will keep me safe in his Temple and make me secure on a high rock.

<sup>6</sup> So I will triumph over my enemies around me. With shouts of joy I will offer sacrifices in his Temple; I will sing, I will praise the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>Hear me, LORD, when I call to you! Be merciful and answer me!

<sup>8</sup>When you said, Come worship me, I answered, I will come, LORD.

<sup>9</sup>Don't hide yourself from me! Don't be angry with me; don't turn your servant away. You have been my help; don't leave me, don't abandon me, O God, my savior.

<sup>10</sup>My father and mother may abandon me, but the LORD will take care of me.

<sup>11</sup>Teach me, LORD, what you want me to do, and lead me along a safe path, because I have many enemies.

<sup>12</sup>Don't abandon me to my enemies, who attack me with lies and threats.

<sup>13</sup>I know that I will live to see the LORD's goodness in this present life.

<sup>14</sup>Trust in the LORD. Have faith, do not despair. Trust in the LORD.

**28**<sup>1</sup>O LORD, my defender, I call to you. Listen to my cry! If you do not answer me, I will be among those who go down to the world of the dead.

<sup>2</sup>Hear me when I cry to you for help, when I lift my hands toward your holy Temple.

<sup>3</sup> Do not condemn me with the wicked, with those who do evil -- those whose words are friendly, but who have hatred in their hearts.

<sup>4</sup> Punish them for what they have done, for the evil they have committed. Punish them for all their deeds; give them what they deserve!

<sup>5</sup> They take no notice of what the LORD has done or of what he has made; so he will punish them and destroy them forever.

<sup>6</sup> Give praise to the LORD; he has heard my cry for help.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD protects and defends me; I trust in him. He gives me help and makes me glad; I praise him with joyful songs.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD protects his people; he defends and saves his chosen king.

<sup>9</sup> Save your people, LORD, and bless those who are yours. Be their shepherd, and take care of them forever.

**29**<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD, you heavenly beings; praise his glory and power.

<sup>2</sup>Praise the LORD's glorious name;  
bow down before the Holy One when he  
appears.

<sup>3</sup>The voice of the LORD is heard on the  
seas; the glorious God thunders, and his  
voice echoes over the ocean.

<sup>4</sup>The voice of the LORD is heard in all  
its might and majesty.

<sup>5</sup>The voice of the LORD breaks the  
cedars, even the cedars of Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup>He makes the mountains of Lebanon  
jump like calves and makes Mount  
Hermon leap like a young bull.

<sup>7</sup>The voice of the LORD makes the  
lightning flash.

<sup>8</sup>His voice makes the desert shake; he  
shakes the desert of Kadesh.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD's voice shakes the oaks and  
strips the leaves from the trees while  
everyone in his Temple shouts, Glory to  
God!

<sup>10</sup>The LORD rules over the deep waters;  
he rules as king forever.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD gives strength to his  
people and blesses them with peace.

**30**<sup>1</sup>I praise you, LORD, because  
you have saved me and kept my  
enemies from gloating over me.



<sup>2</sup>I cried to you for help, O LORD my God, and you healed me;

<sup>3</sup>you kept me from the grave. I was on my way to the depths below, but you restored my life.

<sup>4</sup>Sing praise to the LORD, all his faithful people! Remember what the Holy One has done, and give him thanks!

<sup>5</sup>His anger lasts only a moment, his goodness for a lifetime. Tears may flow in the night, but joy comes in the morning.

<sup>6</sup>I felt secure and said to myself, I will never be defeated.

<sup>7</sup>You were good to me, LORD; you protected me like a mountain fortress. But then you hid yourself from me, and I was afraid.

<sup>8</sup>I called to you, LORD; I begged for your help:

<sup>9</sup>What will you gain from my death? What profit from my going to the grave? Are dead people able to praise you? Can they proclaim your unfailing goodness?

<sup>10</sup>Hear me, LORD, and be merciful! Help me, LORD!

<sup>11</sup> You have changed my sadness into a joyful dance; you have taken away my sorrow and surrounded me with joy.

<sup>12</sup> So I will not be silent; I will sing praise to you. LORD, you are my God; I will give you thanks forever.

**31** <sup>1</sup> I come to you, LORD, for protection; never let me be defeated. You are a righteous God; save me, I pray!

<sup>2</sup> Hear me! Save me now! Be my refuge to protect me; my defense to save me.

<sup>3</sup> You are my refuge and defense; guide me and lead me as you have promised.

<sup>4</sup> Keep me safe from the trap that has been set for me; shelter me from danger.

<sup>5</sup> I place myself in your care. You will save me, LORD; you are a faithful God.

<sup>6</sup> You hate those who worship false gods, but I trust in you.

<sup>7</sup> I will be glad and rejoice because of your constant love. You see my suffering; you know my trouble.

<sup>8</sup> You have not let my enemies capture me; you have given me freedom to go where I wish.

<sup>9</sup>Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in trouble; my eyes are tired from so much crying; I am completely worn out.

<sup>10</sup>I am exhausted by sorrow, and weeping has shortened my life. I am weak from all my troubles; even my bones are wasting away.

<sup>11</sup>All my enemies, and especially my neighbors, treat me with contempt. Those who know me are afraid of me; when they see me in the street, they run away.

<sup>12</sup>Everyone has forgotten me, as though I were dead; I am like something thrown away.

<sup>13</sup>I hear many enemies whispering; terror is all around me. They are making plans against me, plotting to kill me.

<sup>14</sup>But my trust is in you, O LORD; you are my God.

<sup>15</sup>I am always in your care; save me from my enemies, from those who persecute me.

<sup>16</sup>Look on your servant with kindness; save me in your constant love.

<sup>17</sup>I call to you, LORD; don't let me be disgraced. May the wicked be disgraced;

may they go silently down to the world of the dead.

<sup>18</sup>Silence those liars -- all the proud and arrogant who speak with contempt about the righteous.

<sup>19</sup>How wonderful are the good things you keep for those who honor you! Everyone knows how good you are, how securely you protect those who trust you.

<sup>20</sup>You hide them in the safety of your presence from the plots of others; in a safe shelter you hide them from the insults of their enemies.

<sup>21</sup>Praise the LORD! How wonderfully he showed his love for me when I was surrounded and attacked!

<sup>22</sup>I was afraid and thought that he had driven me out of his presence. But he heard my cry, when I called to him for help.

<sup>23</sup>Love the LORD, all his faithful people. The LORD protects the faithful, but punishes the proud as they deserve.

<sup>24</sup>Be strong, be courageous, all you that hope in the LORD.

**32**<sup>1</sup> Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned.

<sup>2</sup> Happy is the one whom the LORD does not accuse of doing wrong and who is free from all deceit.

<sup>3</sup> When I did not confess my sins, I was worn out from crying all day long.

<sup>4</sup> Day and night you punished me, LORD; my strength was completely drained, as moisture is dried up by the summer heat.

<sup>5</sup> Then I confessed my sins to you; I did not conceal my wrongdoings. I decided to confess them to you, and you forgave all my sins.

<sup>6</sup> So all your loyal people should pray to you in times of need; when a great flood of trouble comes rushing in, it will not reach them.

<sup>7</sup> You are my hiding place; you will save me from trouble. I sing aloud of your salvation, because you protect me.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD says, I will teach you the way you should go; I will instruct you and advise you.

<sup>9</sup>Don't be stupid like a horse or a mule, which must be controlled with a bit and bridle to make it submit.

<sup>10</sup>The wicked will have to suffer, but those who trust in the LORD are protected by his constant love.

<sup>11</sup>You that are righteous, be glad and rejoice because of what the LORD has done. You that obey him, shout for joy!

**33** <sup>1</sup>All you that are righteous, shout for joy for what the LORD has done; praise him, all you that obey him.

<sup>2</sup>Give thanks to the LORD with harps, sing to him with stringed instruments.

<sup>3</sup>Sing a new song to him, play the harp with skill, and shout for joy!

<sup>4</sup>The words of the LORD are true, and all his works are dependable.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD loves what is righteous and just; his constant love fills the earth.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD created the heavens by his command, the sun, moon, and stars by his spoken word.

<sup>7</sup>He gathered all the seas into one place; he shut up the ocean depths in storerooms.

<sup>8</sup>Worship the LORD, all the earth! Honor him, all peoples of the world!

<sup>9</sup>When he spoke, the world was created; at his command everything appeared.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD frustrates the purposes of the nations; he keeps them from carrying out their plans.

<sup>11</sup>But his plans endure forever; his purposes last eternally.

<sup>12</sup>Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD; happy are the people he has chosen for his own!

<sup>13</sup>The LORD looks down from heaven and sees all of us humans.

<sup>14</sup>From where he rules, he looks down on all who live on earth.

<sup>15</sup>He forms all their thoughts and knows everything they do.

<sup>16</sup>A king does not win because of his powerful army; a soldier does not triumph because of his strength.

<sup>17</sup>War horses are useless for victory; their great strength cannot save.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD watches over those who obey him, those who trust in his constant love.

<sup>19</sup>He saves them from death; he keeps them alive in times of famine.

<sup>20</sup>We put our hope in the LORD; he is our protector and our help.

<sup>21</sup>We are glad because of him; we trust in his holy name.

<sup>22</sup>May your constant love be with us, LORD, as we put our hope in you.

**34** <sup>1</sup>I will always thank the LORD; I will never stop praising him.

<sup>2</sup>I will praise him for what he has done; may all who are oppressed listen and be glad!

<sup>3</sup>Proclaim with me the LORD's greatness; let us praise his name together!

<sup>4</sup>I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me; he freed me from all my fears.

<sup>5</sup>The oppressed look to him and are glad; they will never be disappointed.

<sup>6</sup>The helpless call to him, and he answers; he saves them from all their troubles.

<sup>7</sup>His angel guards those who honor the LORD and rescues them from danger.

<sup>8</sup>Find out for yourself how good the LORD is. Happy are those who find safety with him.

<sup>9</sup>Honor the LORD, all his people; those who obey him have all they need.



<sup>10</sup>Even lions go hungry for lack of food, but those who obey the LORD lack nothing good.

<sup>11</sup>Come, my young friends, and listen to me, and I will teach you to honor the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>Would you like to enjoy life? Do you want long life and happiness?

<sup>13</sup>Then keep from speaking evil and from telling lies.

<sup>14</sup>Turn away from evil and do good; strive for peace with all your heart.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD watches over the righteous and listens to their cries;

<sup>16</sup>but he opposes those who do evil, so that when they die, they are soon forgotten.

<sup>17</sup>The righteous call to the LORD, and he listens; he rescues them from all their troubles.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD is near to those who are discouraged; he saves those who have lost all hope.

<sup>19</sup>Good people suffer many troubles, but the LORD saves them from them all;

<sup>20</sup>the LORD preserves them completely; not one of their bones is broken.

<sup>21</sup> Evil will kill the wicked; those who hate the righteous will be punished.

<sup>22</sup> The LORD will save his people; those who go to him for protection will be spared.

**35** <sup>1</sup> Oppose those who oppose me, LORD, and fight those who fight against me!

<sup>2</sup> Take your shield and armor and come to my rescue.

<sup>3</sup> Lift up your spear and war ax against those who pursue me. Promise that you will save me.

<sup>4</sup> May those who try to kill me be defeated and disgraced! May those who plot against me be turned back and confused!

<sup>5</sup> May they be like straw blown by the wind as the angel of the LORD pursues them!

<sup>6</sup> May their path be dark and slippery while the angel of the LORD strikes them down!

<sup>7</sup> Without any reason they laid a trap for me and dug a deep hole to catch me.

<sup>8</sup> But destruction will catch them before they know it; they will be caught in their own trap and fall to their destruction!

<sup>9</sup>Then I will be glad because of the LORD; I will be happy because he saved me.

<sup>10</sup>With all my heart I will say to the LORD, There is no one like you. You protect the weak from the strong, the poor from the oppressor.

<sup>11</sup>Evil people testify against me and accuse me of crimes I know nothing about.

<sup>12</sup>They pay me back evil for good, and I sink in despair.

<sup>13</sup>But when they were sick, I dressed in mourning; I deprived myself of food; I prayed with my head bowed low,

<sup>14</sup>as I would pray for a friend or a brother. I went around bent over in mourning, as one who mourns for his mother.

<sup>15</sup>But when I was in trouble, they were all glad and gathered around to make fun of me; strangers beat me and kept striking me.

<sup>16</sup>Like those who would mock a cripple, they glared at me with hate.

<sup>17</sup>How much longer, Lord, will you just look on? Rescue me from their attacks; save my life from these lions!

<sup>18</sup>Then I will thank you in the assembly of your people; I will praise you before them all.

<sup>19</sup>Don't let my enemies, those liars, gloat over my defeat. Don't let those who hate me for no reason smirk with delight over my sorrow.

<sup>20</sup>They do not speak in a friendly way; instead they invent all kinds of lies about peace-loving people.

<sup>21</sup>They accuse me, shouting, We saw what you did!

<sup>22</sup>But you, O LORD, have seen this. So don't be silent, Lord; don't keep yourself far away!

<sup>23</sup>Rouse yourself, O Lord, and defend me; rise up, my God, and plead my cause.

<sup>24</sup>You are righteous, O LORD, so declare me innocent; don't let my enemies gloat over me.

<sup>25</sup>Don't let them say to themselves, We are rid of him! That's just what we wanted!

<sup>26</sup>May those who gloat over my suffering be completely defeated and confused; may those who claim to be

better than I am be covered with shame and disgrace.

<sup>27</sup> May those who want to see me acquitted shout for joy and say again and again, How great is the LORD! He is pleased with the success of his servant.

<sup>28</sup> Then I will proclaim your righteousness, and I will praise you all day long.

**36** <sup>1</sup> Sin speaks to the wicked deep in their hearts; they reject God and do not have reverence for him.

<sup>2</sup> Because they think so highly of themselves, they think that God will not discover their sin and condemn it.

<sup>3</sup> Their speech is wicked and full of lies; they no longer do what is wise and good.

<sup>4</sup> They make evil plans as they lie in bed; nothing they do is good, and they never reject anything evil.

<sup>5</sup> LORD, your constant love reaches the heavens; your faithfulness extends to the skies.

<sup>6</sup> Your righteousness is towering like the mountains; your justice is like the depths of the sea. People and animals are in your care.

<sup>7</sup> How precious, O God, is your constant love! We find protection under the shadow of your wings.

<sup>8</sup> We feast on the abundant food you provide; you let us drink from the river of your goodness.

<sup>9</sup> You are the source of all life, and because of your light we see the light.

<sup>10</sup> Continue to love those who know you and to do good to those who are righteous.

<sup>11</sup> Do not let proud people attack me or the wicked make me run away.

<sup>12</sup> See where evil people have fallen. There they lie, unable to rise.

**37** <sup>1</sup> Don't be worried on account of the wicked; don't be jealous of those who do wrong.

<sup>2</sup> They will soon disappear like grass that dries up; they will die like plants that wither.

<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD and do good; live in the land and be safe.

<sup>4</sup> Seek your happiness in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desire.

<sup>5</sup> Give yourself to the LORD; trust in him, and he will help you;

<sup>6</sup> he will make your righteousness shine like the noonday sun.

<sup>7</sup> Be patient and wait for the LORD to act; don't be worried about those who prosper or those who succeed in their evil plans.

<sup>8</sup> Don't give in to worry or anger; it only leads to trouble.

<sup>9</sup> Those who trust in the LORD will possess the land, but the wicked will be driven out.

<sup>10</sup> Soon the wicked will disappear; you may look for them, but you won't find them;

<sup>11</sup> but the humble will possess the land and enjoy prosperity and peace.

<sup>12</sup> The wicked plot against good people and glare at them with hate.

<sup>13</sup> But the Lord laughs at wicked people, because he knows they will soon be destroyed.

<sup>14</sup> The wicked draw their swords and bend their bows to kill the poor and needy, to slaughter those who do what is right;

<sup>15</sup> but they will be killed by their own swords, and their bows will be smashed.

<sup>16</sup>The little that a good person owns is worth more than the wealth of all the wicked,

<sup>17</sup>because the LORD will take away the strength of the wicked, but protect those who are good.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD takes care of those who obey him, and the land will be theirs forever.

<sup>19</sup>They will not suffer when times are bad; they will have enough in time of famine.

<sup>20</sup>But the wicked will die; the enemies of the LORD will vanish like wild flowers; they will disappear like smoke.

<sup>21</sup>The wicked borrow and never pay back, but good people are generous with their gifts.

<sup>22</sup>Those who are blessed by the LORD will possess the land, but those who are cursed by him will be driven out.

<sup>23</sup>The LORD guides us in the way we should go and protects those who please him.

<sup>24</sup>If they fall, they will not stay down, because the LORD will help them up.

<sup>25</sup>I am old now; I have lived a long time, but I have never seen good people



abandoned by the LORD or their children begging for food.

<sup>26</sup>At all times they give freely and lend to others, and their children are a blessing.

<sup>27</sup>Turn away from evil and do good, and your descendants will always live in the land;

<sup>28</sup>for the LORD loves what is right and does not abandon his faithful people. He protects them forever, but the descendants of the wicked will be driven out.

<sup>29</sup>The righteous will possess the land and live in it forever.

<sup>30</sup>The words of good people are wise, and they are always fair.

<sup>31</sup>They keep the law of their God in their hearts and never depart from it.

<sup>32</sup>Wicked people watch good people and try to kill them;

<sup>33</sup>but the LORD will not abandon them to their enemy's power or let them be condemned when they are on trial.

<sup>34</sup>Put your hope in the LORD and obey his commands; he will honor you by giving you the land, and you will see the wicked driven out.

<sup>35</sup>I once knew someone wicked who was a tyrant; he towered over everyone like a cedar of Lebanon;

<sup>36</sup>but later I passed by, and he wasn't there; I looked for him, but couldn't find him.

<sup>37</sup>Notice good people, observe the righteous; peaceful people have descendants,

<sup>38</sup>but sinners are completely destroyed, and their descendants are wiped out.

<sup>39</sup>The LORD saves the righteous and protects them in times of trouble.

<sup>40</sup>He helps them and rescues them; he saves them from the wicked, because they go to him for protection.

**38** <sup>1</sup>O LORD, don't punish me in your anger!

<sup>2</sup>You have wounded me with your arrows; you have struck me down.

<sup>3</sup>Because of your anger, I am in great pain; my whole body is diseased because of my sins.

<sup>4</sup>I am drowning in the flood of my sins; they are a burden too heavy to bear.

<sup>5</sup>Because I have been foolish, my sores stink and rot.

<sup>6</sup>I am bent over, I am crushed; I mourn all day long.

<sup>7</sup>I am burning with fever and I am near death.

<sup>8</sup>I am worn out and utterly crushed; my heart is troubled, and I groan with pain.

<sup>9</sup>O Lord, you know what I long for; you hear all my groans.

<sup>10</sup>My heart is pounding, my strength is gone, and my eyes have lost their brightness.

<sup>11</sup>My friends and neighbors will not come near me, because of my sores; even my family keeps away from me.

<sup>12</sup>Those who want to kill me lay traps for me, and those who want to hurt me threaten to ruin me; they never stop plotting against me.

<sup>13</sup>I am like the deaf and cannot hear, like the dumb and cannot speak.

<sup>14</sup>I am like those who do not answer, because they cannot hear.

<sup>15</sup>But I trust in you, O LORD; and you, O Lord my God, will answer me.

<sup>16</sup>Don't let my enemies gloat over my distress; don't let them boast about my downfall!

<sup>17</sup>I am about to fall and am in constant pain.

<sup>18</sup>I confess my sins; they fill me with anxiety.

<sup>19</sup>My enemies are healthy and strong; there are many who hate me for no reason.

<sup>20</sup>Those who pay back evil for good are against me because I try to do right.

<sup>21</sup>Do not abandon me, O LORD; do not stay away, my God!

<sup>22</sup>Help me now, O Lord my savior!

**39**<sup>1</sup>I said, I will be careful about what I do and will not let my tongue make me sin; I will not say anything while evil people are near.

<sup>2</sup>I kept quiet, not saying a word, not even about anything good! But my suffering only grew worse,

<sup>3</sup>and I was overcome with anxiety. The more I thought, the more troubled I became; I could not keep from asking:

<sup>4</sup>LORD, how long will I live? When will I die? Tell me how soon my life will end.

<sup>5</sup>How short you have made my life! In your sight my lifetime seems nothing. Indeed every living being is no more than a puff of wind,

<sup>6</sup>no more than a shadow. All we do is for nothing; we gather wealth, but don't know who will get it.

<sup>7</sup>What, then, can I hope for, Lord? I put my hope in you.

<sup>8</sup>Save me from all my sins, and don't let fools make fun of me.

<sup>9</sup>I will keep quiet, I will not say a word, for you are the one who made me suffer like this.

<sup>10</sup>Don't punish me any more! I am about to die from your blows.

<sup>11</sup>You punish our sins by your rebukes, and like a moth you destroy what we love. Indeed we are no more than a puff of wind!

<sup>12</sup>Hear my prayer, LORD, and listen to my cry; come to my aid when I weep. Like all my ancestors I am only your guest for a little while.

<sup>13</sup>Leave me alone so that I may have some happiness before I go away and am no more.

**40**<sup>1</sup>I waited patiently for the LORD's help; then he listened to me and heard my cry.

<sup>2</sup> He pulled me out of a dangerous pit, out of the deadly quicksand. He set me safely on a rock and made me secure.

<sup>3</sup> He taught me to sing a new song, a song of praise to our God. Many who see this will take warning and will put their trust in the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> Happy are those who trust the LORD, who do not turn to idols or join those who worship false gods.

<sup>5</sup> You have done many things for us, O LORD our God; there is no one like you! You have made many wonderful plans for us. I could never speak of them all -- their number is so great!

<sup>6</sup> You do not want sacrifices and offerings; you do not ask for animals burned whole on the altar or for sacrifices to take away sins. Instead, you have given me ears to hear you,

<sup>7</sup> and so I answered, Here I am; your instructions for me are in the book of the Law.

<sup>8</sup> How I love to do your will, my God! I keep your teaching in my heart.

<sup>9</sup> In the assembly of all your people, LORD, I told the good news that you

save us. You know that I will never stop telling it.

<sup>10</sup>I have not kept the news of salvation to myself; I have always spoken of your faithfulness and help. In the assembly of all your people I have not been silent about your loyalty and constant love.

<sup>11</sup>LORD, I know you will never stop being merciful to me. Your love and loyalty will always keep me safe.

<sup>12</sup>I am surrounded by many troubles -- too many to count! My sins have caught up with me, and I can no longer see; they are more than the hairs of my head, and I have lost my courage.

<sup>13</sup>Save me, LORD! Help me now!

<sup>14</sup>May those who try to kill me be completely defeated and confused. May those who are happy because of my troubles be turned back and disgraced.

<sup>15</sup>May those who make fun of me be dismayed by their defeat.

<sup>16</sup>May all who come to you be glad and joyful. May all who are thankful for your salvation always say, How great is the LORD!

<sup>17</sup>I am weak and poor, O Lord, but you have not forgotten me. You are my savior and my God -- hurry to my aid!

**41** <sup>1</sup>Happy are those who are concerned for the poor; the LORD will help them when they are in trouble.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD will protect them and preserve their lives; he will make them happy in the land; he will not abandon them to the power of their enemies.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD will help them when they are sick and will restore them to health.

<sup>4</sup>I said, I have sinned against you, LORD; be merciful to me and heal me.

<sup>5</sup>My enemies say cruel things about me. They want me to die and be forgotten.

<sup>6</sup>Those who come to see me are not sincere; they gather bad news about me and then go out and tell it everywhere.

<sup>7</sup>All who hate me whisper to each other about me, they imagine the worst about me.

<sup>8</sup>They say, He is fatally ill; he will never leave his bed again.

<sup>9</sup>Even my best friend, the one I trusted most, the one who shared my food, has turned against me.



<sup>10</sup>Be merciful to me, LORD, and restore my health, and I will pay my enemies back.

<sup>11</sup>They will not triumph over me, and I will know that you are pleased with me.

<sup>12</sup>You will help me, because I do what is right; you will keep me in your presence forever.

<sup>13</sup>Praise the LORD, the God of Israel! Praise him now and forever! Amen! Amen!

**42**<sup>1</sup>As a deer longs for a stream of cool water, so I long for you, O God.

<sup>2</sup>I thirst for you, the living God. When can I go and worship in your presence?

<sup>3</sup>Day and night I cry, and tears are my only food; all the time my enemies ask me, Where is your God?

<sup>4</sup>My heart breaks when I remember the past, when I went with the crowds to the house of God and led them as they walked along, a happy crowd, singing and shouting praise to God.

<sup>5</sup>Why am I so sad? Why am I so troubled? I will put my hope in God, and once again I will praise him, my savior and my God.

<sup>6</sup>Here in exile my heart is breaking,  
and so I turn my thoughts to him. He  
has sent waves of sorrow over my soul;  
chaos roars at me like a flood, like  
waterfalls thundering down to the Jordan  
from Mount Hermon and Mount Mizar.

<sup>7</sup>(42: 6)

<sup>8</sup>May the LORD show his constant love  
during the day, so that I may have a  
song at night, a prayer to the God of my  
life.

<sup>9</sup>To God, my defender, I say, Why  
have you forgotten me? Why must I  
go on suffering from the cruelty of my  
enemies?

<sup>10</sup>I am crushed by their insults, as they  
keep on asking me, Where is your God?

<sup>11</sup>Why am I so sad? Why am I so  
troubled? I will put my hope in God, and  
once again I will praise him, my savior  
and my God.

**43**<sup>1</sup>O God, declare me innocent,  
and defend my cause against the  
ungodly; deliver me from lying and evil  
people!

<sup>2</sup>You are my protector; why have  
you abandoned me? Why must I go

on suffering from the cruelty of my enemies?

<sup>3</sup>Send your light and your truth; may they lead me and bring me back to Zion, your sacred hill, and to your Temple, where you live.

<sup>4</sup>Then I will go to your altar, O God; you are the source of my happiness. I will play my harp and sing praise to you, O God, my God.

<sup>5</sup>Why am I so sad? Why am I so troubled? I will put my hope in God, and once again I will praise him, my savior and my God.

**44**<sup>1</sup>With our own ears we have heard it, O God -- our ancestors have told us about it, about the great things you did in their time, in the days of long ago:

<sup>2</sup>how you yourself drove out the heathen and established your people in their land; how you punished the other nations and caused your own to prosper.

<sup>3</sup>Your people did not conquer the land with their swords; they did not win it by their own power; it was by your power and your strength, by the assurance of

your presence, which showed that you loved them.

<sup>4</sup>You are my king and my God; you give victory to your people,

<sup>5</sup>and by your power we defeat our enemies.

<sup>6</sup>I do not trust in my bow or in my sword to save me;

<sup>7</sup>but you have saved us from our enemies and defeated those who hate us.

<sup>8</sup>We will always praise you and give thanks to you forever.

<sup>9</sup>But now you have rejected us and let us be defeated; you no longer march out with our armies.

<sup>10</sup>You made us run from our enemies, and they took for themselves what was ours.

<sup>11</sup>You allowed us to be slaughtered like sheep; you scattered us in foreign countries.

<sup>12</sup>You sold your own people for a small price as though they had little value.

<sup>13</sup>Our neighbors see what you did to us, and they mock us and laugh at us.

<sup>14</sup>You have made us a joke among the nations; they shake their heads at us in scorn.

<sup>15</sup>I am always in disgrace; I am covered with shame

<sup>16</sup>from hearing the sneers and insults of my enemies and those who hate me.

<sup>17</sup>All this has happened to us, even though we have not forgotten you or broken the covenant you made with us.

<sup>18</sup>We have not been disloyal to you; we have not disobeyed your commands.

<sup>19</sup>Yet you left us helpless among wild animals; you abandoned us in deepest darkness.

<sup>20</sup>If we had stopped worshiping our God and prayed to a foreign god,

<sup>21</sup>you would surely have discovered it, because you know our secret thoughts.

<sup>22</sup>But it is on your account that we are being killed all the time, that we are treated like sheep to be slaughtered.

<sup>23</sup>Wake up, Lord! Why are you asleep? Rouse yourself! Don't reject us forever!

<sup>24</sup>Why are you hiding from us? Don't forget our suffering and trouble!

<sup>25</sup>We fall crushed to the ground; we lie defeated in the dust.

<sup>26</sup>Come to our aid! Because of your constant love save us!

**45** <sup>1</sup>Beautiful words fill my mind, as I compose this song for the king. Like the pen of a good writer my tongue is ready with a poem.

<sup>2</sup>You are the most handsome of men; you are an eloquent speaker. God has always blessed you.

<sup>3</sup>Buckle on your sword, mighty king; you are glorious and majestic.

<sup>4</sup>Ride on in majesty to victory for the defense of truth and justice! Your strength will win you great victories!

<sup>5</sup>Your arrows are sharp, they pierce the hearts of your enemies; nations fall down at your feet.

<sup>6</sup>The kingdom that God has given you will last forever and ever. You rule over your people with justice;

<sup>7</sup>you love what is right and hate what is evil. That is why God, your God, has chosen you and has poured out more happiness on you than on any other king.

<sup>8</sup>The perfume of myrrh and aloes is on your clothes; musicians entertain you in palaces decorated with ivory.

<sup>9</sup>Among the women of your court are daughters of kings, and at the right of your throne stands the queen, wearing ornaments of finest gold.

<sup>10</sup>Bride of the king, listen to what I say -- forget your people and your relatives.

<sup>11</sup>Your beauty will make the king desire you; he is your master, so you must obey him.

<sup>12</sup>The people of Tyre will bring you gifts; rich people will try to win your favor.

<sup>13</sup>The princess is in the palace -- how beautiful she is! Her gown is made of gold thread.

<sup>14</sup>In her colorful gown she is led to the king, followed by her bridesmaids, and they also are brought to him.

<sup>15</sup>With joy and gladness they come and enter the king's palace.

<sup>16</sup>You, my king, will have many sons to succeed your ancestors as kings, and you will make them rulers over the whole earth.

<sup>17</sup>My song will keep your fame alive forever, and everyone will praise you for all time to come.

**46** <sup>1</sup> God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

<sup>2</sup> So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken and mountains fall into the ocean depths;

<sup>3</sup> even if the seas roar and rage, and the hills are shaken by the violence.

<sup>4</sup> There is a river that brings joy to the city of God, to the sacred house of the Most High.

<sup>5</sup> God is in that city, and it will never be destroyed; at early dawn he will come to its aid.

<sup>6</sup> Nations are terrified, kingdoms are shaken; God thunders, and the earth dissolves.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

<sup>8</sup> Come and see what the LORD has done. See what amazing things he has done on earth.

<sup>9</sup> He stops wars all over the world; he breaks bows, destroys spears, and sets shields on fire.

<sup>10</sup> Stop fighting, he says, and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme over the world.



<sup>11</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

**47** <sup>1</sup> Clap your hands for joy, all peoples! Praise God with loud songs!

<sup>2</sup> The LORD, the Most High, is to be feared; he is a great king, ruling over all the world.

<sup>3</sup> He gave us victory over the peoples; he made us rule over the nations.

<sup>4</sup> He chose for us the land where we live, the proud possession of his people, whom he loves.

<sup>5</sup> God goes up to his throne. There are shouts of joy and the blast of trumpets, as the LORD goes up.

<sup>6</sup> Sing praise to God; sing praise to our king!

<sup>7</sup> God is king over all the world; praise him with songs!

<sup>8</sup> God sits on his sacred throne; he rules over the nations.

<sup>9</sup> The rulers of the nations assemble with the people of the God of Abraham. More powerful than all armies is he; he rules supreme.

**48**<sup>1</sup> The LORD is great and is to be highly praised in the city of our God, on his sacred hill.

<sup>2</sup> Zion, the mountain of God, is high and beautiful; the city of the great king brings joy to all the world.

<sup>3</sup> God has shown that there is safety with him inside the fortresses of the city.

<sup>4</sup> The kings gathered together and came to attack Mount Zion.

<sup>5</sup> But when they saw it, they were amazed; they were afraid and ran away.

<sup>6</sup> There they were seized with fear and anguish, like a woman about to bear a child,

<sup>7</sup> like ships tossing in a furious storm.

<sup>8</sup> We have heard what God has done, and now we have seen it in the city of our God, the LORD Almighty; he will keep the city safe forever.

<sup>9</sup> Inside your Temple, O God, we think of your constant love.

<sup>10</sup> You are praised by people everywhere, and your fame extends over all the earth. You rule with justice;

<sup>11</sup> let the people of Zion be glad! You give right judgments; let there be joy in the cities of Judah!

<sup>12</sup> People of God, walk around Zion and count the towers;

<sup>13</sup> take notice of the walls and examine the fortresses, so that you may tell the next generation:

<sup>14</sup> This God is our God forever and ever; he will lead us for all time to come.

**49** <sup>1</sup> Hear this, everyone! Listen, all people everywhere,

<sup>2</sup> great and small alike, rich and poor together.

<sup>3</sup> My thoughts will be clear; I will speak words of wisdom.

<sup>4</sup> I will turn my attention to proverbs and explain their meaning as I play the harp.

<sup>5</sup> I am not afraid in times of danger when I am surrounded by enemies,

<sup>6</sup> by evil people who trust in their riches and boast of their great wealth.

<sup>7</sup> We can never redeem ourselves; we cannot pay God the price for our lives,

<sup>8</sup> because the payment for a human life is too great. What we could pay would never be enough

<sup>9</sup> to keep us from the grave, to let us live forever.

<sup>10</sup> Anyone can see that even the wise die, as well as the foolish and stupid. They all leave their riches to their descendants.

<sup>11</sup> Their graves are their homes forever; there they stay for all time, though they once had lands of their own.

<sup>12</sup> Our greatness cannot keep us from death; we will still die like the animals.

<sup>13</sup> See what happens to those who trust in themselves, the fate of those who are satisfied with their wealth --

<sup>14</sup> they are doomed to die like sheep, and Death will be their shepherd. The righteous will triumph over them, as their bodies quickly decay in the world of the dead far from their homes.

<sup>15</sup> But God will rescue me; he will save me from the power of death.

<sup>16</sup> Don't be upset when someone becomes rich, when his wealth grows even greater;

<sup>17</sup> he cannot take it with him when he dies; his wealth will not go with him to the grave.

<sup>18</sup> Even if someone is satisfied with this life and is praised because he is successful,

<sup>19</sup> he will join all his ancestors in death, where the darkness lasts forever.

<sup>20</sup> Our greatness cannot keep us from death; we will still die like the animals.

**50** <sup>1</sup> The Almighty God, the LORD, speaks; he calls to the whole earth from east to west.

<sup>2</sup> God shines from Zion, the city perfect in its beauty.

<sup>3</sup> Our God is coming, but not in silence; a raging fire is in front of him, a furious storm around him.

<sup>4</sup> He calls heaven and earth as witnesses to see him judge his people.

<sup>5</sup> He says, Gather my faithful people to me, those who made a covenant with me by offering a sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> The heavens proclaim that God is righteous, that he himself is judge.

<sup>7</sup> Listen, my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel. I am God, your God.

<sup>8</sup> I do not reprimand you because of your sacrifices and the burnt offerings you always bring me.

<sup>9</sup> And yet I do not need bulls from your farms or goats from your flocks;

<sup>10</sup>all the animals in the forest are mine and the cattle on thousands of hills.

<sup>11</sup>All the wild birds are mine and all living things in the fields.

<sup>12</sup>If I were hungry, I would not ask you for food, for the world and everything in it is mine.

<sup>13</sup>Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

<sup>14</sup>Let the giving of thanks be your sacrifice to God, and give the Almighty all that you promised.

<sup>15</sup>Call to me when trouble comes; I will save you, and you will praise me.

<sup>16</sup>But God says to the wicked, Why should you recite my commandments? Why should you talk about my covenant?

<sup>17</sup>You refuse to let me correct you; you reject my commands.

<sup>18</sup>You become the friend of every thief you see, and you associate with adulterers.

<sup>19</sup>You are always ready to speak evil; you never hesitate to tell lies.

<sup>20</sup>You are ready to accuse your own relatives and to find fault with them.

<sup>21</sup>You have done all this, and I have said nothing, so you thought that I am

like you. But now I reprimand you and make the matter plain to you.

<sup>22</sup>Listen to this, you that ignore me, or I will destroy you, and there will be no one to save you.

<sup>23</sup>Giving thanks is the sacrifice that honors me, and I will surely save all who obey me.

**51** <sup>1</sup>Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love. Because of your great mercy wipe away my sins!

<sup>2</sup>Wash away all my evil and make me clean from my sin!

<sup>3</sup>I recognize my faults; I am always conscious of my sins.

<sup>4</sup>I have sinned against you -- only against you -- and done what you consider evil. So you are right in judging me; you are justified in condemning me.

<sup>5</sup>I have been evil from the day I was born; from the time I was conceived, I have been sinful.

<sup>6</sup>Sincerity and truth are what you require; fill my mind with your wisdom.

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sin, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup>Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness; and though you have crushed me and broken me, I will be happy once again.

<sup>9</sup>Close your eyes to my sins and wipe out all my evil.

<sup>10</sup>Create a pure heart in me, O God, and put a new and loyal spirit in me.

<sup>11</sup>Do not banish me from your presence; do not take your holy spirit away from me.

<sup>12</sup>Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

<sup>13</sup>Then I will teach sinners your commands, and they will turn back to you.

<sup>14</sup>Spare my life, O God, and save me, and I will gladly proclaim your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup>Help me to speak, Lord, and I will praise you.

<sup>16</sup>You do not want sacrifices, or I would offer them; you are not pleased with burnt offerings.

<sup>17</sup>My sacrifice is a humble spirit, O God; you will not reject a humble and repentant heart.



<sup>18</sup>O God, be kind to Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

<sup>19</sup>Then you will be pleased with proper sacrifices and with our burnt offerings; and bulls will be sacrificed on your altar.

**52**<sup>1</sup> Why do you boast, great one, of your evil? God's faithfulness is eternal.

<sup>2</sup>You make plans to ruin others; your tongue is like a sharp razor. You are always inventing lies.

<sup>3</sup>You love evil more than good and falsehood more than truth.

<sup>4</sup>You love to hurt people with your words, you liar!

<sup>5</sup>So God will ruin you forever; he will take hold of you and snatch you from your home; he will remove you from the world of the living.

<sup>6</sup>Righteous people will see this and be afraid; then they will laugh at you and say,

<sup>7</sup>Look, here is someone who did not depend on God for safety, but trusted instead in great wealth and looked for security in being wicked.

<sup>8</sup>But I am like an olive tree growing in the house of God; I trust in his constant love forever and ever.

<sup>9</sup>I will always thank you, God, for what you have done; in the presence of your people I will proclaim that you are good.

**53**<sup>1</sup>Fools say to themselves, There is no God. They are all corrupt, and they have done terrible things; there is no one who does what is right.

<sup>2</sup>God looks down from heaven at people to see if there are any who are wise, any who worship him.

<sup>3</sup>But they have all turned away; they are all equally bad. Not one of them does what is right, not a single one.

<sup>4</sup>Don't they know? God asks. Are these evildoers ignorant? They live by robbing my people, and they never pray to me.

<sup>5</sup>But then they will become terrified, as they have never been before, for God will scatter the bones of the enemies of his people. God has rejected them, and so Israel will totally defeat them.

<sup>6</sup>How I pray that victory will come to Israel from Zion. How happy the people of Israel will be when God makes them prosperous again!

**54** <sup>1</sup> Save me by your power, O God;  
set me free by your might!

<sup>2</sup> Hear my prayer, O God; listen to my words!

<sup>3</sup> Proud people are coming to attack me; cruel people are trying to kill me -- those who do not care about God.

<sup>4</sup> But God is my helper. The Lord is my defender.

<sup>5</sup> May God use their own evil to punish my enemies. He will destroy them because he is faithful.

<sup>6</sup> I will gladly offer you a sacrifice, O LORD; I will give you thanks because you are good.

<sup>7</sup> You have rescued me from all my troubles, and I have seen my enemies defeated.

**55** <sup>1</sup> Hear my prayer, O God; don't turn away from my plea!

<sup>2</sup> Listen to me and answer me; I am worn out by my worries.

<sup>3</sup> I am terrified by the threats of my enemies, crushed by the oppression of the wicked. They bring trouble on me; they are angry with me and hate me.

<sup>4</sup> I am terrified, and the terrors of death crush me.

<sup>5</sup>I am gripped by fear and trembling; I am overcome with horror.

<sup>6</sup>I wish I had wings like a dove. I would fly away and find rest.

<sup>7</sup>I would fly far away and make my home in the desert.

<sup>8</sup>I would hurry and find myself a shelter from the raging wind and the storm.

<sup>9</sup>Confuse the speech of my enemies, O Lord! I see violence and riots in the city,

<sup>10</sup>surrounding it day and night, filling it with crime and trouble.

<sup>11</sup>There is destruction everywhere; the streets are full of oppression and fraud.

<sup>12</sup>If it were an enemy making fun of me, I could endure it; if it were an opponent boasting over me, I could hide myself from him.

<sup>13</sup>But it is you, my companion, my colleague and close friend.

<sup>14</sup>We had intimate talks with each other and worshiped together in the Temple.

<sup>15</sup>May my enemies die before their time; may they go down alive into the world of the dead! Evil is in their homes and in their hearts.

<sup>16</sup>But I call to the LORD God for help, and he will save me.

<sup>17</sup> Morning, noon, and night my complaints and groans go up to him, and he will hear my voice.

<sup>18</sup> He will bring me safely back from the battles that I fight against so many enemies.

<sup>19</sup> God, who has ruled from eternity, will hear me and defeat them; for they refuse to change, and they do not fear him.

<sup>20</sup> My former companion attacked his friends; he broke his promises.

<sup>21</sup> His words were smoother than cream, but there was hatred in his heart; his words were as soothing as oil, but they cut like sharp swords.

<sup>22</sup> Leave your troubles with the LORD, and he will defend you; he never lets honest people be defeated.

<sup>23</sup> But you, O God, will bring those murderers and liars to their graves before half their life is over. As for me, I will trust in you.

**56** <sup>1</sup> Be merciful to me, O God, because I am under attack; my enemies persecute me all the time.

<sup>2</sup> All day long my opponents attack me. There are so many who fight against me.

<sup>3</sup>When I am afraid, O LORD Almighty, I put my trust in you.

<sup>4</sup>I trust in God and am not afraid; I praise him for what he has promised. What can a mere human being do to me?

<sup>5</sup>My enemies make trouble for me all day long; they are always thinking up some way to hurt me!

<sup>6</sup>They gather in hiding places and watch everything I do, hoping to kill me.

<sup>7</sup>Punish them, O God, for their evil; defeat those people in your anger!

<sup>8</sup>You know how troubled I am; you have kept a record of my tears. Aren't they listed in your book?

<sup>9</sup>The day I call to you, my enemies will be turned back. I know this: God is on my side --

<sup>10</sup>the LORD, whose promises I praise.

<sup>11</sup>In him I trust, and I will not be afraid. What can a mere human being do to me?

<sup>12</sup>O God, I will offer you what I have promised; I will give you my offering of thanksgiving,

<sup>13</sup>because you have rescued me from death and kept me from defeat. And so I walk in the presence of God, in the light that shines on the living.

**57** <sup>1</sup> Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful, because I come to you for safety. In the shadow of your wings I find protection until the raging storms are over.

<sup>2</sup> I call to God, the Most High, to God, who supplies my every need.

<sup>3</sup> He will answer from heaven and save me; he will defeat my oppressors. God will show me his constant love and faithfulness.

<sup>4</sup> I am surrounded by enemies, who are like lions hungry for human flesh. Their teeth are like spears and arrows; their tongues are like sharp swords.

<sup>5</sup> Show your greatness in the sky, O God, and your glory over all the earth.

<sup>6</sup> My enemies have spread a net to catch me; I am overcome with distress. They dug a pit in my path, but fell into it themselves.

<sup>7</sup> I have complete confidence, O God; I will sing and praise you!

<sup>8</sup> Wake up, my soul! Wake up, my harp and lyre! I will wake up the sun.

<sup>9</sup> I will thank you, O Lord, among the nations. I will praise you among the peoples.

<sup>10</sup>Your constant love reaches the heavens; your faithfulness touches the skies.

<sup>11</sup>Show your greatness in the sky, O God, and your glory over all the earth.

**58**<sup>1</sup> Do you rulers ever give a just decision? Do you judge everyone fairly?

<sup>2</sup>No! You think only of the evil you can do, and commit crimes of violence in the land.

<sup>3</sup>Evildoers go wrong all their lives; they tell lies from the day they are born.

<sup>4</sup>They are full of poison like snakes; they stop up their ears like a deaf cobra,

<sup>5</sup>which does not hear the voice of the snake charmer, or the chant of the clever magician.

<sup>6</sup>Break the teeth of these fierce lions, O God.

<sup>7</sup>May they disappear like water draining away; may they be crushed like weeds on a path.

<sup>8</sup>May they be like snails that dissolve into slime; may they be like a baby born dead that never sees the light.

<sup>9</sup>Before they know it, they are cut down like weeds; in his fierce anger God



will blow them away while they are still living.

<sup>10</sup>The righteous will be glad when they see sinners punished; they will wade through the blood of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>People will say, The righteous are indeed rewarded; there is indeed a God who judges the world.

**59** <sup>1</sup>Save me from my enemies, my God; protect me from those who attack me!

<sup>2</sup>Save me from those evil people; rescue me from those murderers!

<sup>3</sup>Look! They are waiting to kill me; cruel people are gathering against me. It is not because of any sin or wrong I have done,

<sup>4</sup>nor because of any fault of mine, O LORD, that they hurry to their places.

<sup>5</sup>Rise, LORD God Almighty, and come to my aid; see for yourself, God of Israel! Wake up and punish the heathen; show no mercy to evil traitors!

<sup>6</sup>They come back in the evening, snarling like dogs as they go about the city.

<sup>7</sup>Listen to their insults and threats. Their tongues are like swords in their

mouths, yet they think that no one hears them.

<sup>8</sup>But you laugh at them, LORD; you mock all the heathen.

<sup>9</sup>I have confidence in your strength; you are my refuge, O God.

<sup>10</sup>My God loves me and will come to me; he will let me see my enemies defeated.

<sup>11</sup>Do not kill them, O God, or my people may forget. Scatter them by your strength and defeat them, O Lord, our protector.

<sup>12</sup>Sin is on their lips; all their words are sinful; may they be caught in their pride! Because they curse and lie,

<sup>13</sup>destroy them in your anger; destroy them completely. Then everyone will know that God rules in Israel, that his rule extends over all the earth.

<sup>14</sup>My enemies come back in the evening, snarling like dogs as they go about the city,

<sup>15</sup>like dogs roaming about for food and growling if they do not find enough.

<sup>16</sup>But I will sing about your strength; every morning I will sing aloud of your

constant love. You have been a refuge for me, a shelter in my time of trouble.

<sup>17</sup> I will praise you, my defender. My refuge is God, the God who loves me.

**60** <sup>1</sup> You have rejected us, God, and defeated us; you have been angry with us -- but now turn back to us.

<sup>2</sup> You have made the land tremble, and you have cut it open; now heal its wounds, because it is falling apart.

<sup>3</sup> You have made your people suffer greatly; we stagger around as though we were drunk.

<sup>4</sup> You have warned those who have reverence for you, so that they might escape destruction.

<sup>5</sup> Save us by your might; answer our prayer, so that the people you love may be rescued.

<sup>6</sup> From his sanctuary God has said, In triumph I will divide Shechem and distribute Sukkoth Valley to my people.

<sup>7</sup> Gilead is mine, and Manasseh too; Ephraim is my helmet and Judah my royal scepter.

<sup>8</sup> But I will use Moab as my washbowl, and I will throw my sandals on Edom, as a sign that I own it. Did the Philistines

think they would shout in triumph over me?

<sup>9</sup>Who, O God, will take me into the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom?

<sup>10</sup>Have you really rejected us? Aren't you going to march out with our armies?

<sup>11</sup>Help us against the enemy; human help is worthless.

<sup>12</sup>With God on our side we will win; he will defeat our enemies.

**61** <sup>1</sup>Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer!

<sup>2</sup>In despair and far from home I call to you! Take me to a safe refuge,

<sup>3</sup>for you are my protector, my strong defense against my enemies.

<sup>4</sup>Let me live in your sanctuary all my life; let me find safety under your wings.

<sup>5</sup>You have heard my promises, O God, and you have given me what belongs to those who honor you.

<sup>6</sup>Add many years to the king's life; let him live on and on!

<sup>7</sup>May he rule forever in your presence, O God; protect him with your constant love and faithfulness.

<sup>8</sup>So I will always sing praises to you, as I offer you daily what I have promised.

**62**<sup>1</sup> I wait patiently for God to save me; I depend on him alone.

<sup>2</sup> He alone protects and saves me; he is my defender, and I shall never be defeated.

<sup>3</sup> How much longer will all of you attack someone who is no stronger than a broken-down fence?

<sup>4</sup> You only want to bring him down from his place of honor; you take pleasure in lies. You speak words of blessing, but in your heart you curse him.

<sup>5</sup> I depend on God alone; I put my hope in him.

<sup>6</sup> He alone protects and saves me; he is my defender, and I shall never be defeated.

<sup>7</sup> My salvation and honor depend on God; he is my strong protector; he is my shelter.

<sup>8</sup> Trust in God at all times, my people. Tell him all your troubles, for he is our refuge.

<sup>9</sup> Human beings are all like a puff of breath; great and small alike are worthless. Put them on the scales, and they weigh nothing; they are lighter than a mere breath.

<sup>10</sup> Don't put your trust in violence; don't hope to gain anything by robbery; even if your riches increase, don't depend on them.

<sup>11</sup> More than once I have heard God say that power belongs to him

<sup>12</sup> and that his love is constant. You yourself, O Lord, reward everyone according to their deeds.

**63** <sup>1</sup> O God, you are my God, and I long for you. My whole being desires you; like a dry, worn-out, and waterless land, my soul is thirsty for you.

<sup>2</sup> Let me see you in the sanctuary; let me see how mighty and glorious you are.

<sup>3</sup> Your constant love is better than life itself, and so I will praise you.

<sup>4</sup> I will give you thanks as long as I live; I will raise my hands to you in prayer.

<sup>5</sup> My soul will feast and be satisfied, and I will sing glad songs of praise to you.

<sup>6</sup> As I lie in bed, I remember you; all night long I think of you,

<sup>7</sup> because you have always been my help. In the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

<sup>8</sup>I cling to you, and your hand keeps me safe.

<sup>9</sup>Those who are trying to kill me will go down into the world of the dead.

<sup>10</sup>They will be killed in battle, and their bodies eaten by wolves.

<sup>11</sup>Because God gives him victory, the king will rejoice. Those who make promises in God's name will praise him, but the mouths of liars will be shut.

**64** <sup>1</sup>I am in trouble, God -- listen to my prayer! I am afraid of my enemies -- save my life!

<sup>2</sup>Protect me from the plots of the wicked, from mobs of evil people.

<sup>3</sup>They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim cruel words like arrows.

<sup>4</sup>They are quick to spread their shameless lies; they destroy good people with cowardly slander.

<sup>5</sup>They encourage each other in their evil plots; they talk about where they will place their traps. No one can see them, they say.

<sup>6</sup>They make evil plans and say, We have planned a perfect crime. The human heart and mind are a mystery.

<sup>7</sup> But God shoots his arrows at them,  
and suddenly they are wounded.

<sup>8</sup> He will destroy them because of those  
words; all who see them will shake their  
heads.

<sup>9</sup> They will all be afraid; they will think  
about what God has done and tell about  
his deeds.

<sup>10</sup> All righteous people will rejoice  
because of what the LORD has done.  
They will find safety in him; all good  
people will praise him.

**65** <sup>1</sup> O God, it is right for us to praise  
you in Zion and keep our promises  
to you,

<sup>2</sup> because you answer prayers. People  
everywhere will come to you

<sup>3</sup> on account of their sins. Our faults  
defeat us, but you forgive them.

<sup>4</sup> Happy are those whom you choose,  
whom you bring to live in your sanctuary.  
We shall be satisfied with the good  
things of your house, the blessings of  
your sacred Temple.

<sup>5</sup> You answer us by giving us victory,  
and you do wonderful things to save us.  
People all over the world and across the  
distant seas trust in you.



<sup>6</sup>You set the mountains in place by your strength, showing your mighty power.

<sup>7</sup>You calm the roar of the seas and the noise of the waves; you calm the uproar of the peoples.

<sup>8</sup>The whole world stands in awe of the great things that you have done. Your deeds bring shouts of joy from one end of the earth to the other.

<sup>9</sup>You show your care for the land by sending rain; you make it rich and fertile. You fill the streams with water; you provide the earth with crops. This is how you do it:

<sup>10</sup>you send abundant rain on the plowed fields and soak them with water; you soften the soil with showers and cause the young plants to grow.

<sup>11</sup>What a rich harvest your goodness provides! Wherever you go there is plenty.

<sup>12</sup>The pastures are filled with flocks; the hillsides are full of joy.

<sup>13</sup>The fields are covered with sheep; the valleys are full of wheat. Everything shouts and sings for joy.

**66** <sup>1</sup>Praise God with shouts of joy, all people!

<sup>2</sup>Sing to the glory of his name; offer him glorious praise!

<sup>3</sup>Say to God, How wonderful are the things you do! Your power is so great that your enemies bow down in fear before you.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone on earth worships you; they sing praises to you, they sing praises to your name.

<sup>5</sup>Come and see what God has done, his wonderful acts among people.

<sup>6</sup>He changed the sea into dry land; our ancestors crossed the river on foot. There we rejoiced because of what he did.

<sup>7</sup>He rules forever by his might and keeps his eyes on the nations. Let no rebels rise against him.

<sup>8</sup>Praise our God, all nations; let your praise be heard.

<sup>9</sup>He has kept us alive and has not allowed us to fall.

<sup>10</sup>You have put us to the test, God; as silver is purified by fire, so you have tested us.

<sup>11</sup>You let us fall into a trap and placed heavy burdens on our backs.

<sup>12</sup>You let our enemies trample us; we went through fire and flood, but now you have brought us to a place of safety.

<sup>13</sup>I will bring burnt offerings to your house; I will offer you what I promised.

<sup>14</sup>I will give you what I said I would when I was in trouble.

<sup>15</sup>I will offer sheep to be burned on the altar; I will sacrifice bulls and goats, and the smoke will go up to the sky.

<sup>16</sup>Come and listen, all who honor God, and I will tell you what he has done for me.

<sup>17</sup>I cried to him for help; I praised him with songs.

<sup>18</sup>If I had ignored my sins, the Lord would not have listened to me.

<sup>19</sup>But God has indeed heard me; he has listened to my prayer.

<sup>20</sup>I praise God, because he did not reject my prayer or keep back his constant love from me.

**67** <sup>1</sup>God, be merciful to us and bless us; look on us with kindness,  
<sup>2</sup>so that the whole world may know your will; so that all nations may know your salvation.

<sup>3</sup> May the peoples praise you, O God;  
may all the peoples praise you!

<sup>4</sup> May the nations be glad and sing for  
joy, because you judge the peoples with  
justice and guide every nation on earth.

<sup>5</sup> May the peoples praise you, O God;  
may all the peoples praise you!

<sup>6</sup> The land has produced its harvest;  
God, our God, has blessed us.

<sup>7</sup> God has blessed us; may all people  
everywhere honor him.

**68** <sup>1</sup> God rises up and scatters his  
enemies. Those who hate him run  
away in defeat.

<sup>2</sup> As smoke is blown away, so he drives  
them off; as wax melts in front of the  
fire, so do the wicked perish in God's  
presence.

<sup>3</sup> But the righteous are glad and rejoice  
in his presence; they are happy and  
shout for joy.

<sup>4</sup> Sing to God, sing praises to his name;  
prepare a way for him who rides on the  
clouds. His name is the LORD -- be glad  
in his presence!

<sup>5</sup> God, who lives in his sacred Temple,  
cares for orphans and protects widows.

<sup>6</sup>He gives the lonely a home to live in and leads prisoners out into happy freedom, but rebels will have to live in a desolate land.

<sup>7</sup>O God, when you led your people, when you marched across the desert,

<sup>8</sup>the earth shook, and the sky poured down rain, because of the coming of the God of Sinai, the coming of the God of Israel.

<sup>9</sup>You caused abundant rain to fall and restored your worn-out land;

<sup>10</sup>your people made their home there; in your goodness you provided for the poor.

<sup>11</sup>The Lord gave the command, and many women carried the news:

<sup>12</sup>Kings and their armies are running away! The women at home divided what was captured:

<sup>13</sup>figures of doves covered with silver, whose wings glittered with fine gold.

(Why did some of you stay among the sheep pens on the day of battle?)

<sup>14</sup>When Almighty God scattered the kings on Mount Zalmon, he caused snow to fall there.

<sup>15</sup>What a mighty mountain is Bashan, a mountain of many peaks!

<sup>16</sup>Why from your mighty peaks do you look with scorn on the mountain on which God chose to live? The LORD will live there forever!

<sup>17</sup>With his many thousands of mighty chariots the Lord comes from Sinai into the holy place.

<sup>18</sup>He goes up to the heights, taking many captives with him; he receives gifts from rebellious people. The LORD God will live there.

<sup>19</sup>Praise the Lord, who carries our burdens day after day; he is the God who saves us.

<sup>20</sup>Our God is a God who saves; he is the LORD, our Lord, who rescues us from death.

<sup>21</sup>God will surely break the heads of his enemies, of those who persist in their sinful ways.

<sup>22</sup>The Lord has said, I will bring your enemies back from Bashan; I will bring them back from the depths of the ocean,

<sup>23</sup>so that you may wade in their blood, and your dogs may lap up as much as they want.

<sup>24</sup> O God, your march of triumph is seen by all, the procession of God, my king, into his sanctuary.

<sup>25</sup> The singers are in front, the musicians are behind, in between are the young women beating the tambourines.

<sup>26</sup> Praise God in the meeting of his people; praise the LORD, all you descendants of Jacob!

<sup>27</sup> First comes Benjamin, the smallest tribe, then the leaders of Judah with their group, followed by the leaders of Zebulun and Naphtali.

<sup>28</sup> Show your power, O God, the power you have used on our behalf

<sup>29</sup> from your Temple in Jerusalem, where kings bring gifts to you.

<sup>30</sup> Rebuke Egypt, that wild animal in the reeds; rebuke the nations, that herd of bulls with their calves, until they all bow down and offer you their silver. Scatter those people who love to make war!

<sup>31</sup> Ambassadors will come from Egypt; the Ethiopians will raise their hands in prayer to God.

<sup>32</sup> Sing to God, kingdoms of the world, sing praise to the Lord,

<sup>33</sup> to him who rides in the sky, the ancient sky. Listen to him shout with a mighty roar.

<sup>34</sup> Proclaim God's power; his majesty is over Israel, his might is in the skies.

<sup>35</sup> How awesome is God as he comes from his sanctuary -- the God of Israel! He gives strength and power to his people. Praise God!

**69** <sup>1</sup> Save me, O God! The water is up to my neck;

<sup>2</sup> I am sinking in deep mud, and there is no solid ground; I am out in deep water, and the waves are about to drown me.

<sup>3</sup> I am worn out from calling for help, and my throat is aching. I have strained my eyes, looking for your help.

<sup>4</sup> Those who hate me for no reason are more numerous than the hairs of my head. My enemies tell lies against me; they are strong and want to kill me. They made me give back things I did not steal.

<sup>5</sup> My sins, O God, are not hidden from you; you know how foolish I have been.

<sup>6</sup> Don't let me bring shame on those who trust in you, Sovereign LORD



Almighty! Don't let me bring disgrace to those who worship you, O God of Israel!

<sup>7</sup>It is for your sake that I have been insulted and that I am covered with shame.

<sup>8</sup>I am like a stranger to my relatives, like a foreigner to my family.

<sup>9</sup>My devotion to your Temple burns in me like a fire; the insults which are hurled at you fall on me.

<sup>10</sup>I humble myself by fasting, and people insult me;

<sup>11</sup>I dress myself in clothes of mourning, and they laugh at me.

<sup>12</sup>They talk about me in the streets, and drunkards make up songs about me.

<sup>13</sup>But as for me, I will pray to you, LORD; answer me, God, at a time you choose. Answer me because of your great love, because you keep your promise to save.

<sup>14</sup>Save me from sinking in the mud; keep me safe from my enemies, safe from the deep water.

<sup>15</sup>Don't let the flood come over me; don't let me drown in the depths or sink into the grave.

<sup>16</sup> Answer me, LORD, in the goodness of your constant love; in your great compassion turn to me!

<sup>17</sup> Don't hide yourself from your servant; I am in great trouble -- answer me now!

<sup>18</sup> Come to me and save me; rescue me from my enemies.

<sup>19</sup> You know how I am insulted, how I am disgraced and dishonored; you see all my enemies.

<sup>20</sup> Insults have broken my heart, and I am in despair. I had hoped for sympathy, but there was none; for comfort, but I found none.

<sup>21</sup> When I was hungry, they gave me poison; when I was thirsty, they offered me vinegar.

<sup>22</sup> May their banquets cause their ruin; may their sacred feasts cause their downfall.

<sup>23</sup> Strike them with blindness! Make their backs always weak!

<sup>24</sup> Pour out your anger on them; let your indignation overtake them.

<sup>25</sup> May their camps be left deserted; may no one be left alive in their tents.

<sup>26</sup>They persecute those whom you have punished; they talk about the sufferings of those you have wounded.

<sup>27</sup>Keep a record of all their sins; don't let them have any part in your salvation.

<sup>28</sup>May their names be erased from the book of the living; may they not be included in the list of your people.

<sup>29</sup>But I am in pain and despair; lift me up, O God, and save me!

<sup>30</sup>I will praise God with a song; I will proclaim his greatness by giving him thanks.

<sup>31</sup>This will please the LORD more than offering him cattle, more than sacrificing a full-grown bull.

<sup>32</sup>When the oppressed see this, they will be glad; those who worship God will be encouraged.

<sup>33</sup>The LORD listens to those in need and does not forget his people in prison.

<sup>34</sup>Praise God, O heaven and earth, seas and all creatures in them.

<sup>35</sup>He will save Jerusalem and rebuild the towns of Judah. His people will live there and possess the land;

<sup>36</sup> the descendants of his servants will inherit it, and those who love him will live there.

**70** <sup>1</sup> Save me, O God! LORD, help me now!

<sup>2</sup> May those who try to kill me be defeated and confused. May those who are happy because of my troubles be turned back and disgraced.

<sup>3</sup> May those who make fun of me be dismayed by their defeat.

<sup>4</sup> May all who come to you be glad and joyful. May all who are thankful for your salvation always say, How great is God!

<sup>5</sup> I am weak and poor; come to me quickly, O God. You are my savior and my LORD -- hurry to my aid!

**71** <sup>1</sup> LORD, I have come to you for protection; never let me be defeated!

<sup>2</sup> Because you are righteous, help me and rescue me. Listen to me and save me!

<sup>3</sup> Be my secure shelter and a strong fortress to protect me; you are my refuge and defense.

<sup>4</sup> My God, rescue me from wicked people, from the power of cruel and evil people.

<sup>5</sup> Sovereign LORD, I put my hope in you; I have trusted in you since I was young.

<sup>6</sup> I have relied on you all my life; you have protected me since the day I was born. I will always praise you.

<sup>7</sup> My life has been an example to many, because you have been my strong defender.

<sup>8</sup> All day long I praise you and proclaim your glory.

<sup>9</sup> Do not reject me now that I am old; do not abandon me now that I am feeble.

<sup>10</sup> My enemies want to kill me; they talk and plot against me.

<sup>11</sup> They say, God has abandoned him; let's go after him and catch him; there is no one to rescue him.

<sup>12</sup> Don't stay so far away, O God; my God, hurry to my aid!

<sup>13</sup> May those who attack me be defeated and destroyed. May those who try to hurt me be shamed and disgraced.

<sup>14</sup> I will always put my hope in you; I will praise you more and more.

<sup>15</sup>I will tell of your goodness; all day long I will speak of your salvation, though it is more than I can understand.

<sup>16</sup>I will go in the strength of the LORD God; I will proclaim your goodness, yours alone.

<sup>17</sup>You have taught me ever since I was young, and I still tell of your wonderful acts.

<sup>18</sup>Now that I am old and my hair is gray, do not abandon me, O God! Be with me while I proclaim your power and might to all generations to come.

<sup>19</sup>Your righteousness, God, reaches the skies. You have done great things; there is no one like you.

<sup>20</sup>You have sent troubles and suffering on me, but you will restore my strength; you will keep me from the grave.

<sup>21</sup>You will make me greater than ever; you will comfort me again.

<sup>22</sup>I will indeed praise you with the harp; I will praise your faithfulness, my God. On my harp I will play hymns to you, the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>23</sup>I will shout for joy as I play for you; with my whole being I will sing because you have saved me.

<sup>24</sup>I will speak of your righteousness all day long, because those who tried to harm me have been defeated and disgraced.

**72**<sup>1</sup> Teach the king to judge with your righteousness, O God; share with him your own justice,

<sup>2</sup>so that he will rule over your people with justice and govern the oppressed with righteousness.

<sup>3</sup>May the land enjoy prosperity; may it experience righteousness.

<sup>4</sup>May the king judge the poor fairly; may he help the needy and defeat their oppressors.

<sup>5</sup>May your people worship you as long as the sun shines, as long as the moon gives light, for ages to come.

<sup>6</sup>May the king be like rain on the fields, like showers falling on the land.

<sup>7</sup>May righteousness flourish in his lifetime, and may prosperity last as long as the moon gives light.

<sup>8</sup>His kingdom will reach from sea to sea, from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth.

<sup>9</sup>The peoples of the desert will bow down before him; his enemies will throw themselves to the ground.

<sup>10</sup>The kings of Spain and of the islands will offer him gifts; the kings of Sheba and Seba will bring him offerings.

<sup>11</sup>All kings will bow down before him; all nations will serve him.

<sup>12</sup>He rescues the poor who call to him, and those who are needy and neglected.

<sup>13</sup>He has pity on the weak and poor; he saves the lives of those in need.

<sup>14</sup>He rescues them from oppression and violence; their lives are precious to him.

<sup>15</sup>Long live the king! May he be given gold from Sheba; may prayers be said for him at all times; may God's blessings be on him always!

<sup>16</sup>May there be plenty of grain in the land; may the hills be covered with crops, as fruitful as those of Lebanon. May the cities be filled with people, like fields full of grass.

<sup>17</sup>May the king's name never be forgotten; may his fame last as long as the sun. May all nations ask God to bless them as he has blessed the king.



<sup>18</sup>Praise the LORD, the God of Israel!  
He alone does these wonderful things.

<sup>19</sup>Praise his glorious name forever! May  
his glory fill the whole world. Amen!  
Amen!

<sup>20</sup>This is the end of the prayers of David  
son of Jesse.

**73** <sup>1</sup>God is indeed good to Israel, to  
those who have pure hearts.

<sup>2</sup>But I had nearly lost confidence; my  
faith was almost gone

<sup>3</sup>because I was jealous of the proud  
when I saw that things go well for the  
wicked.

<sup>4</sup>They do not suffer pain; they are  
strong and healthy.

<sup>5</sup>They do not suffer as other people do;  
they do not have the troubles that others  
have.

<sup>6</sup>And so they wear pride like a necklace  
and violence like a robe;

<sup>7</sup>their hearts pour out evil, and their  
minds are busy with wicked schemes.

<sup>8</sup>They laugh at other people and speak  
of evil things; they are proud and make  
plans to oppress others.

<sup>9</sup>They speak evil of God in heaven and give arrogant orders to everyone on earth,

<sup>10</sup>so that even God's people turn to them and eagerly believe whatever they say.

<sup>11</sup>They say, God will not know; the Most High will not find out.

<sup>12</sup>That is what the wicked are like. They have plenty and are always getting more.

<sup>13</sup>Is it for nothing, then, that I have kept myself pure and have not committed sin?

<sup>14</sup>O God, you have made me suffer all day long; every morning you have punished me.

<sup>15</sup>If I had said such things, I would not be acting as one of your people.

<sup>16</sup>I tried to think this problem through, but it was too difficult for me

<sup>17</sup>until I went into your Temple. Then I understood what will happen to the wicked.

<sup>18</sup>You will put them in slippery places and make them fall to destruction!

<sup>19</sup>They are instantly destroyed; they go down to a horrible end.

<sup>20</sup>They are like a dream that goes away in the morning; when you rouse yourself, O Lord, they disappear.

<sup>21</sup>When my thoughts were bitter and my feelings were hurt,

<sup>22</sup>I was as stupid as an animal; I did not understand you.

<sup>23</sup>Yet I always stay close to you, and you hold me by the hand.

<sup>24</sup>You guide me with your instruction and at the end you will receive me with honor.

<sup>25</sup>What else do I have in heaven but you? Since I have you, what else could I want on earth?

<sup>26</sup>My mind and my body may grow weak, but God is my strength; he is all I ever need.

<sup>27</sup>Those who abandon you will certainly perish; you will destroy those who are unfaithful to you.

<sup>28</sup>But as for me, how wonderful to be near God, to find protection with the Sovereign LORD and to proclaim all that he has done!

**74**<sup>1</sup> Why have you abandoned us like this, O God? Will you be angry with your own people forever?

<sup>2</sup>Remember your people, whom you chose for yourself long ago, whom you brought out of slavery to be your own tribe. Remember Mount Zion, where once you lived.

<sup>3</sup>Walk over these total ruins; our enemies have destroyed everything in the Temple.

<sup>4</sup>Your enemies have shouted in triumph in your Temple; they have placed their flags there as signs of victory.

<sup>5</sup>They looked like woodsmen cutting down trees with their axes.

<sup>6</sup>They smashed all the wooden panels with their axes and sledge hammers.

<sup>7</sup>They wrecked your Temple and set it on fire; they desecrated the place where you are worshiped.

<sup>8</sup>They wanted to crush us completely; they burned down every holy place in the land.

<sup>9</sup>All our sacred symbols are gone; there are no prophets left, and no one knows how long this will last.

<sup>10</sup>How long, O God, will our enemies laugh at you? Will they insult your name forever?

<sup>11</sup> Why have you refused to help us?  
Why do you keep your hands behind  
you?

<sup>12</sup> But you have been our king from the  
beginning, O God; you have saved us  
many times.

<sup>13</sup> With your mighty strength you  
divided the sea and smashed the heads  
of the sea monsters;

<sup>14</sup> you crushed the heads of the monster  
Leviathan and fed his body to desert  
animals.

<sup>15</sup> You made springs and fountains flow;  
you dried up large rivers.

<sup>16</sup> You created the day and the night;  
you set the sun and the moon in their  
places;

<sup>17</sup> you set the limits of the earth; you  
made summer and winter.

<sup>18</sup> But remember, O LORD, that your  
enemies laugh at you, that they are  
godless and despise you.

<sup>19</sup> Don't abandon your helpless people  
to their cruel enemies; don't forget your  
persecuted people!

<sup>20</sup> Remember the covenant you made  
with us. There is violence in every dark  
corner of the land.

<sup>21</sup> Don't let the oppressed be put to shame; let those poor and needy people praise you.

<sup>22</sup> Rouse yourself, God, and defend your cause! Remember that godless people laugh at you all day long.

<sup>23</sup> Don't forget the angry shouts of your enemies, the continuous noise made by your foes.

**75** <sup>1</sup> We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks to you! We proclaim how great you are and tell of the wonderful things you have done.

<sup>2</sup> I have set a time for judgment, says God, and I will judge with fairness.

<sup>3</sup> Though every living creature tremble and the earth itself be shaken, I will keep its foundations firm.

<sup>4</sup> I tell the wicked not to be arrogant;

<sup>5</sup> I tell them to stop their boasting.

<sup>6</sup> Judgment does not come from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south;

<sup>7</sup> it is God who is the judge, condemning some and acquitting others.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD holds a cup in his hand, filled with the strong wine of his anger.

He pours it out, and all the wicked drink it; they drink it down to the last drop.

<sup>9</sup>But I will never stop speaking of the God of Jacob or singing praises to him.

<sup>10</sup>He will break the power of the wicked, but the power of the righteous will be increased.

**76** <sup>1</sup>God is known in Judah; his name is honored in Israel.

<sup>2</sup>He has his home in Jerusalem; he lives on Mount Zion.

<sup>3</sup>There he broke the arrows of the enemy, their shields and swords, yes, all their weapons.

<sup>4</sup>How glorious you are, O God! How majestic, as you return from the mountains where you defeated your foes.

<sup>5</sup>Their brave soldiers have been stripped of all they had and now are sleeping the sleep of death; all their strength and skill was useless.

<sup>6</sup>When you threatened them, O God of Jacob, the horses and their riders fell dead.

<sup>7</sup>But you, LORD, are feared by all. No one can stand in your presence when you are angry.

<sup>8</sup>You made your judgment known from heaven; the world was afraid and kept silent,

<sup>9</sup>when you rose up to pronounce judgment, to save all the oppressed on earth.

<sup>10</sup>Human anger only results in more praise for you; those who survive the wars will keep your festivals.

<sup>11</sup>Give the LORD your God what you promised him; bring gifts to him, all you nearby nations. God makes everyone fear him;

<sup>12</sup>he humbles proud princes and terrifies great kings.

**77** <sup>1</sup>I cry aloud to God; I cry aloud, and he hears me.

<sup>2</sup>In times of trouble I pray to the Lord; all night long I lift my hands in prayer, but I cannot find comfort.

<sup>3</sup>When I think of God, I sigh; when I meditate, I feel discouraged.

<sup>4</sup>He keeps me awake all night; I am so worried that I cannot speak.

<sup>5</sup>I think of days gone by and remember years of long ago.

<sup>6</sup>I spend the night in deep thought; I meditate, and this is what I ask myself:



<sup>7</sup> Will the Lord always reject us? Will he never again be pleased with us?

<sup>8</sup> Has he stopped loving us? Does his promise no longer stand?

<sup>9</sup> Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has anger taken the place of his compassion?

<sup>10</sup> Then I said, What hurts me most is this -- that God is no longer powerful.

<sup>11</sup> I will remember your great deeds, LORD; I will recall the wonders you did in the past.

<sup>12</sup> I will think about all that you have done; I will meditate on all your mighty acts.

<sup>13</sup> Everything you do, O God, is holy. No god is as great as you.

<sup>14</sup> You are the God who works miracles; you showed your might among the nations.

<sup>15</sup> By your power you saved your people, the descendants of Jacob and of Joseph.

<sup>16</sup> When the waters saw you, O God, they were afraid, and the depths of the sea trembled.

<sup>17</sup> The clouds poured down rain; thunder crashed from the sky, and lightning flashed in all directions.

<sup>18</sup>The crash of your thunder rolled out,  
and flashes of lightning lit up the world;  
the earth trembled and shook.

<sup>19</sup>You walked through the waves; you  
crossed the deep sea, but your footprints  
could not be seen.

<sup>20</sup>You led your people like a shepherd,  
with Moses and Aaron in charge.

**78**<sup>1</sup> Listen, my people, to my  
teaching, and pay attention to  
what I say.

<sup>2</sup>I am going to use wise sayings and  
explain mysteries from the past,

<sup>3</sup>things we have heard and known,  
things that our ancestors told us.

<sup>4</sup>We will not keep them from our  
children; we will tell the next generation  
about the LORD's power and his great  
deeds and the wonderful things he has  
done.

<sup>5</sup>He gave laws to the people of Israel  
and commandments to the descendants  
of Jacob. He instructed our ancestors to  
teach his laws to their children,

<sup>6</sup>so that the next generation might  
learn them and in turn should tell their  
children.

<sup>7</sup>In this way they also will put their trust in God and not forget what he has done, but always obey his commandments.

<sup>8</sup>They will not be like their ancestors, a rebellious and disobedient people, whose trust in God was never firm and who did not remain faithful to him.

<sup>9</sup>The Ephraimites, armed with bows and arrows, ran away on the day of battle.

<sup>10</sup>They did not keep their covenant with God; they refused to obey his law.

<sup>11</sup>They forgot what he had done, the miracles they had seen him perform.

<sup>12</sup>While their ancestors watched, God performed miracles in the plain of Zoan in the land of Egypt.

<sup>13</sup>He divided the sea and took them through it; he made the waters stand like walls.

<sup>14</sup>By day he led them with a cloud and all night long with the light of a fire.

<sup>15</sup>He split rocks open in the desert and gave them water from the depths.

<sup>16</sup>He caused a stream to come out of the rock and made water flow like a river.

<sup>17</sup> But they continued to sin against God, and in the desert they rebelled against the Most High.

<sup>18</sup> They deliberately put God to the test by demanding the food they wanted.

<sup>19</sup> They spoke against God and said, Can God supply food in the desert?

<sup>20</sup> It is true that he struck the rock, and water flowed out in a torrent; but can he also provide us with bread and give his people meat?

<sup>21</sup> And so the LORD was angry when he heard them; he attacked his people with fire, and his anger against them grew,

<sup>22</sup> because they had no faith in him and did not believe that he would save them.

<sup>23</sup> But he spoke to the sky above and commanded its doors to open;

<sup>24</sup> he gave them grain from heaven, by sending down manna for them to eat.

<sup>25</sup> So they ate the food of angels, and God gave them all they wanted.

<sup>26</sup> He also caused the east wind to blow, and by his power he stirred up the south wind;

<sup>27</sup> and to his people he sent down birds, as many as the grains of sand on the shore;

<sup>28</sup> they fell in the middle of the camp all around the tents.

<sup>29</sup> So the people ate and were satisfied; God gave them what they wanted.

<sup>30</sup> But they had not yet satisfied their craving and were still eating,

<sup>31</sup> when God became angry with them and killed their strongest men, the best young men of Israel.

<sup>32</sup> In spite of all this the people kept sinning; in spite of his miracles they did not trust him.

<sup>33</sup> So he ended their days like a breath and their lives with sudden disaster.

<sup>34</sup> Whenever he killed some of them, the rest would turn to him; they would repent and pray earnestly to him.

<sup>35</sup> They remembered that God was their protector, that the Almighty came to their aid.

<sup>36</sup> But their words were all lies; nothing they said was sincere.

<sup>37</sup> They were not loyal to him; they were not faithful to their covenant with him.

<sup>38</sup> But God was merciful to his people. He forgave their sin and did not destroy

them. Many times he held back his anger and restrained his fury.

<sup>39</sup>He remembered that they were only mortal beings, like a wind that blows by and is gone.

<sup>40</sup>How often they rebelled against him in the desert; how many times they made him sad!

<sup>41</sup>Again and again they put God to the test and brought pain to the Holy God of Israel.

<sup>42</sup>They forgot his great power and the day when he saved them from their enemies

<sup>43</sup>and performed his mighty acts and miracles in the plain of Zoan in the land of Egypt.

<sup>44</sup>He turned the rivers into blood, and the Egyptians had no water to drink.

<sup>45</sup>He sent flies among them, that tormented them, and frogs that ruined their land.

<sup>46</sup>He sent locusts to eat their crops and to destroy their fields.

<sup>47</sup>He killed their grapevines with hail and their fig trees with frost.

<sup>48</sup>He killed their cattle with hail and their flocks with lightning.

<sup>49</sup> He caused them great distress by pouring out his anger and fierce rage, which came as messengers of death.

<sup>50</sup> He did not restrain his anger or spare their lives, but killed them with a plague.

<sup>51</sup> He killed the first-born sons of all the families of Egypt.

<sup>52</sup> Then he led his people out like a shepherd and guided them through the desert.

<sup>53</sup> He led them safely, and they were not afraid; but the sea came rolling over their enemies.

<sup>54</sup> He brought them to his holy land, to the mountains which he himself conquered.

<sup>55</sup> He drove out the inhabitants as his people advanced; he divided their land among the tribes of Israel and gave their homes to his people.

<sup>56</sup> But they rebelled against Almighty God and put him to the test. They did not obey his commandments,

<sup>57</sup> but were rebellious and disloyal like their ancestors, unreliable as a crooked arrow.

<sup>58</sup>They angered him with their heathen places of worship, and with their idols they made him furious.

<sup>59</sup>God was angry when he saw it, so he rejected his people completely.

<sup>60</sup>He abandoned his tent in Shiloh, the home where he had lived among us.

<sup>61</sup>He allowed our enemies to capture the Covenant Box, the symbol of his power and glory.

<sup>62</sup>He was angry with his own people and let them be killed by their enemies.

<sup>63</sup>Young men were killed in war, and young women had no one to marry.

<sup>64</sup>Priests died by violence, and their widows were not allowed to mourn.

<sup>65</sup>At last the Lord woke up as though from sleep; he was like a strong man excited by wine.

<sup>66</sup>He drove his enemies back in lasting and shameful defeat.

<sup>67</sup>But he rejected the descendants of Joseph; he did not select the tribe of Ephraim.

<sup>68</sup>Instead he chose the tribe of Judah and Mount Zion, which he dearly loves.



<sup>69</sup>There he built his Temple like his home in heaven; he made it firm like the earth itself, secure for all time.

<sup>70</sup>He chose his servant David; he took him from the pastures,

<sup>71</sup>where he looked after his flocks, and he made him king of Israel, the shepherd of the people of God.

<sup>72</sup>David took care of them with unselfish devotion and led them with skill.

**79**<sup>1</sup>O God, the heathen have invaded your land. They have desecrated your holy Temple and left Jerusalem in ruins.

<sup>2</sup>They left the bodies of your people for the vultures, the bodies of your servants for wild animals to eat.

<sup>3</sup>They shed your people's blood like water; blood flowed like water all through Jerusalem, and no one was left to bury the dead.

<sup>4</sup>The surrounding nations insult us; they laugh at us and mock us.

<sup>5</sup>LORD, will you be angry with us forever? Will your anger continue to burn like fire?

<sup>6</sup>Turn your anger on the nations that do not worship you, on the people who do not pray to you.

<sup>7</sup>For they have killed your people; they have ruined your country.

<sup>8</sup>Do not punish us for the sins of our ancestors. Have mercy on us now; we have lost all hope.

<sup>9</sup>Help us, O God, and save us; rescue us and forgive our sins for the sake of your own honor.

<sup>10</sup>Why should the nations ask us, Where is your God? Let us see you punish the nations for shedding the blood of your servants.

<sup>11</sup>Listen to the groans of the prisoners, and by your great power free those who are condemned to die.

<sup>12</sup>Lord, pay the other nations back seven times for all the insults they have hurled at you.

<sup>13</sup>Then we, your people, the sheep of your flock, will thank you forever and praise you for all time to come.

**80**<sup>1</sup>Listen to us, O Shepherd of Israel; hear us, leader of your flock. Seated on your throne above the winged creatures,

<sup>2</sup> reveal yourself to the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Show us your strength; come and save us!

<sup>3</sup> Bring us back, O God! Show us your mercy, and we will be saved!

<sup>4</sup> How much longer, LORD God Almighty, will you be angry with your people's prayers?

<sup>5</sup> You have given us sorrow to eat, a large cup of tears to drink.

<sup>6</sup> You let the surrounding nations fight over our land; our enemies insult us.

<sup>7</sup> Bring us back, Almighty God! Show us your mercy, and we will be saved!

<sup>8</sup> You brought a grapevine out of Egypt; you drove out other nations and planted it in their land.

<sup>9</sup> You cleared a place for it to grow; its roots went deep, and it spread out over the whole land.

<sup>10</sup> It covered the hills with its shade; its branches overshadowed the giant cedars.

<sup>11</sup> It extended its branches to the Mediterranean Sea and as far as the Euphrates River.

<sup>12</sup>Why did you break down the fences around it? Now anyone passing by can steal its grapes;

<sup>13</sup>wild hogs trample it down, and wild animals feed on it.

<sup>14</sup>Turn to us, Almighty God! Look down from heaven at us; come and save your people!

<sup>15</sup>Come and save this grapevine that you planted, this young vine you made grow so strong!

<sup>16</sup>Our enemies have set it on fire and cut it down; look at them in anger and destroy them!

<sup>17</sup>Preserve and protect the people you have chosen, the nation you made so strong.

<sup>18</sup>We will never turn away from you again; keep us alive, and we will praise you.

<sup>19</sup>Bring us back, LORD God Almighty. Show us your mercy, and we will be saved.

**81** <sup>1</sup>Shout for joy to God our defender; sing praise to the God of Jacob!

<sup>2</sup>Start the music and beat the tambourines; play pleasant music on the harps and the lyres.

<sup>3</sup>Blow the trumpet for the festival, when the moon is new and when the moon is full.

<sup>4</sup>This is the law in Israel, an order from the God of Jacob.

<sup>5</sup>He gave it to the people of Israel when he attacked the land of Egypt. I hear an unknown voice saying,

<sup>6</sup>I took the burdens off your backs; I let you put down your loads of bricks.

<sup>7</sup>When you were in trouble, you called to me, and I saved you. From my hiding place in the storm, I answered you. I put you to the test at the springs of Meribah.

<sup>8</sup>Listen, my people, to my warning; Israel, how I wish you would listen to me!

<sup>9</sup>You must never worship another god.

<sup>10</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt. Open your mouth, and I will feed you.

<sup>11</sup>But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not obey me.

<sup>12</sup>So I let them go their stubborn ways and do whatever they wanted.

<sup>13</sup>How I wish my people would listen to me; how I wish they would obey me!

<sup>14</sup>I would quickly defeat their enemies and conquer all their foes.

<sup>15</sup>Those who hate me would bow in fear before me; their punishment would last forever.

<sup>16</sup>But I would feed you with the finest wheat and satisfy you with wild honey.

**82** <sup>1</sup>God presides in the heavenly council; in the assembly of the gods he gives his decision:

<sup>2</sup>You must stop judging unjustly; you must no longer be partial to the wicked!

<sup>3</sup>Defend the rights of the poor and the orphans; be fair to the needy and the helpless.

<sup>4</sup>Rescue them from the power of evil people.

<sup>5</sup>How ignorant you are! How stupid! You are completely corrupt, and justice has disappeared from the world.

<sup>6</sup>You are gods, I said; all of you are children of the Most High.

<sup>7</sup>But you will die like mortals; your life will end like that of any prince.

<sup>8</sup>Come, O God, and rule the world; all the nations are yours.

**83** <sup>1</sup>O God, do not keep silent; do not be still, do not be quiet!

<sup>2</sup>Look! Your enemies are in revolt, and those who hate you are rebelling.

<sup>3</sup>They are making secret plans against your people; they are plotting against those you protect.

<sup>4</sup>Come, they say, let us destroy their nation, so that Israel will be forgotten forever.

<sup>5</sup>They agree on their plan and form an alliance against you:

<sup>6</sup>the people of Edom and the Ishmaelites; the people of Moab and the Hagrites;

<sup>7</sup>the people of Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek, and of Philistia and Tyre.

<sup>8</sup>Assyria has also joined them as a strong ally of the Ammonites and Moabites, the descendants of Lot.

<sup>9</sup>Do to them what you did to the Midianites, and to Sisera and Jabin at the Kishon River.

<sup>10</sup>You defeated them at Endor, and their bodies rotted on the ground.

<sup>11</sup>Do to their leaders what you did to Oreb and Zeeb; defeat all their rulers as you did Zebah and Zalmunna,

<sup>12</sup>who said, We will take for our own the land that belongs to God.

<sup>13</sup>Scatter them like dust, O God, like straw blown away by the wind.

<sup>14</sup>As fire burns the forest, as flames set the hills on fire,

<sup>15</sup>chase them away with your storm and terrify them with your fierce winds.

<sup>16</sup>Cover their faces with shame, O LORD, and make them acknowledge your power.

<sup>17</sup>May they be defeated and terrified forever; may they die in complete disgrace.

<sup>18</sup>May they know that you alone are the LORD, supreme ruler over all the earth.

**84** <sup>1</sup>How I love your Temple, LORD Almighty!

<sup>2</sup>How I want to be there! I long to be in the LORD's Temple. With my whole being I sing for joy to the living God.

<sup>3</sup>Even the sparrows have built a nest, and the swallows have their own home; they keep their young near your altars, LORD Almighty, my king and my God.

<sup>4</sup>How happy are those who live in your Temple, always singing praise to you.



<sup>5</sup>How happy are those whose strength comes from you, who are eager to make the pilgrimage to Mount Zion.

<sup>6</sup>As they pass through the dry valley of Baca, it becomes a place of springs; the autumn rain fills it with pools.

<sup>7</sup>They grow stronger as they go; they will see the God of gods on Zion.

<sup>8</sup>Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty. Listen, O God of Jacob!

<sup>9</sup>Bless our king, O God, the king you have chosen.

<sup>10</sup>One day spent in your Temple is better than a thousand anywhere else; I would rather stand at the gate of the house of my God than live in the homes of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD is our protector and glorious king, blessing us with kindness and honor. He does not refuse any good thing to those who do what is right.

<sup>12</sup>LORD Almighty, how happy are those who trust in you!

**85** <sup>1</sup>LORD, you have been merciful to your land; you have made Israel prosperous again.

<sup>2</sup>You have forgiven your people's sins and pardoned all their wrongs.

<sup>3</sup>You stopped being angry with them and held back your furious rage.

<sup>4</sup>Bring us back, O God our savior, and stop being displeased with us!

<sup>5</sup>Will you be angry with us forever? Will your anger never cease?

<sup>6</sup>Make us strong again, and we, your people, will praise you.

<sup>7</sup>Show us your constant love, O LORD, and give us your saving help.

<sup>8</sup>I am listening to what the LORD God is saying; he promises peace to us, his own people, if we do not go back to our foolish ways.

<sup>9</sup>Surely he is ready to save those who honor him, and his saving presence will remain in our land.

<sup>10</sup>Love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will embrace.

<sup>11</sup>Human loyalty will reach up from the earth, and God's righteousness will look down from heaven.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD will make us prosperous, and our land will produce rich harvests.

<sup>13</sup>Righteousness will go before the LORD and prepare the path for him.

**86** <sup>1</sup>Listen to me, LORD, and answer me, for I am helpless and weak.

<sup>2</sup> Save me from death, because I am loyal to you; save me, for I am your servant and I trust in you.

<sup>3</sup> You are my God, so be merciful to me; I pray to you all day long.

<sup>4</sup> Make your servant glad, O Lord, because my prayers go up to you.

<sup>5</sup> You are good to us and forgiving, full of constant love for all who pray to you.

<sup>6</sup> Listen, LORD, to my prayer; hear my cries for help.

<sup>7</sup> I call to you in times of trouble, because you answer my prayers.

<sup>8</sup> There is no god like you, O Lord, not one has done what you have done.

<sup>9</sup> All the nations that you have created will come and bow down to you; they will praise your greatness.

<sup>10</sup> You are mighty and do wonderful things; you alone are God.

<sup>11</sup> Teach me, LORD, what you want me to do, and I will obey you faithfully; teach me to serve you with complete devotion.

<sup>12</sup> I will praise you with all my heart, O Lord my God; I will proclaim your greatness forever.

<sup>13</sup>How great is your constant love for me! You have saved me from the grave itself.

<sup>14</sup>Proud people are coming against me, O God; a cruel gang is trying to kill me -- people who pay no attention to you.

<sup>15</sup>But you, O Lord, are a merciful and loving God, always patient, always kind and faithful.

<sup>16</sup>Turn to me and have mercy on me; strengthen me and save me, because I serve you just as my mother did.

<sup>17</sup>Show me proof of your goodness, LORD; those who hate me will be ashamed when they see that you have given me comfort and help.

**87** <sup>1</sup>The LORD built his city on the sacred hill;

<sup>2</sup>more than any other place in Israel he loves the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>Listen, city of God, to the wonderful things he says about you:

<sup>4</sup>I will include Egypt and Babylonia when I list the nations that obey me; the people of Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia I will number among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

<sup>5</sup>Of Zion it will be said that all nations belong there and that the Almighty will make her strong.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD will write a list of the peoples and include them all as citizens of Jerusalem.

<sup>7</sup>They dance and sing, In Zion is the source of all our blessings.

**88**<sup>1</sup>LORD God, my savior, I cry out all day, and at night I come before you.

<sup>2</sup>Hear my prayer; listen to my cry for help!

<sup>3</sup>So many troubles have fallen on me that I am close to death.

<sup>4</sup>I am like all others who are about to die; all my strength is gone.

<sup>5</sup>I am abandoned among the dead; I am like the slain lying in their graves, those you have forgotten completely, who are beyond your help.

<sup>6</sup>You have thrown me into the depths of the tomb, into the darkest and deepest pit.

<sup>7</sup>Your anger lies heavy on me, and I am crushed beneath its waves.

<sup>8</sup>You have caused my friends to abandon me; you have made me

repulsive to them. I am closed in and cannot escape;

<sup>9</sup>my eyes are weak from suffering. LORD, every day I call to you and lift my hands to you in prayer.

<sup>10</sup>Do you perform miracles for the dead? Do they rise up and praise you?

<sup>11</sup>Is your constant love spoken of in the grave or your faithfulness in the place of destruction?

<sup>12</sup>Are your miracles seen in that place of darkness or your goodness in the land of the forgotten?

<sup>13</sup>LORD, I call to you for help; every morning I pray to you.

<sup>14</sup>Why do you reject me, LORD? Why do you turn away from me?

<sup>15</sup>Ever since I was young, I have suffered and been near death; I am worn out from the burden of your punishments.

<sup>16</sup>Your furious anger crushes me; your terrible attacks destroy me.

<sup>17</sup>All day long they surround me like a flood; they close in on me from every side.

<sup>18</sup>You have made even my closest friends abandon me, and darkness is my only companion.

**89**<sup>1</sup> O LORD, I will always sing of your constant love; I will proclaim your faithfulness forever.

<sup>2</sup>I know that your love will last for all time, that your faithfulness is as permanent as the sky.

<sup>3</sup>You said, I have made a covenant with the man I chose; I have promised my servant David,

<sup>4</sup>A descendant of yours will always be king; I will preserve your dynasty forever.

<sup>5</sup>The heavens sing of the wonderful things you do; the holy ones sing of your faithfulness, LORD.

<sup>6</sup>No one in heaven is like you, LORD; none of the heavenly beings is your equal.

<sup>7</sup>You are feared in the council of the holy ones; they all stand in awe of you.

<sup>8</sup>LORD God Almighty, none is as mighty as you; in all things you are faithful, O LORD.

<sup>9</sup>You rule over the powerful sea; you calm its angry waves.

<sup>10</sup>You crushed the monster Rahab and killed it; with your mighty strength you defeated your enemies.

<sup>11</sup>Heaven is yours, the earth also; you made the world and everything in it.

<sup>12</sup>You created the north and the south; Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon sing to you for joy.

<sup>13</sup>How powerful you are! How great is your strength!

<sup>14</sup>Your kingdom is founded on righteousness and justice; love and faithfulness are shown in all you do.

<sup>15</sup>How happy are the people who worship you with songs, who live in the light of your kindness!

<sup>16</sup>Because of you they rejoice all day long, and they praise you for your goodness.

<sup>17</sup>You give us great victories; in your love you make us triumphant.

<sup>18</sup>You, O LORD, chose our protector; you, the Holy God of Israel, gave us our king.

<sup>19</sup>In a vision long ago you said to your faithful servants, I have given help to a famous soldier; I have given the throne to one I chose from the people.



<sup>20</sup>I have made my servant David king by anointing him with holy oil.

<sup>21</sup>My strength will always be with him, my power will make him strong.

<sup>22</sup>His enemies will never succeed against him; the wicked will not defeat him.

<sup>23</sup>I will crush his foes and kill everyone who hates him.

<sup>24</sup>I will love him and be loyal to him; I will make him always victorious.

<sup>25</sup>I will extend his kingdom from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates River.

<sup>26</sup>He will say to me, You are my father and my God; you are my protector and savior.

<sup>27</sup>I will make him my first-born son, the greatest of all kings.

<sup>28</sup>I will always keep my promise to him, and my covenant with him will last forever.

<sup>29</sup>His dynasty will be as permanent as the sky; a descendant of his will always be king.

<sup>30</sup>But if his descendants disobey my law and do not live according to my commands,

<sup>31</sup> if they disregard my instructions and do not keep my commandments,

<sup>32</sup> then I will punish them for their sins; I will make them suffer for their wrongs.

<sup>33</sup> But I will not stop loving David or fail to keep my promise to him.

<sup>34</sup> I will not break my covenant with him or take back even one promise I made him.

<sup>35</sup> Once and for all I have promised by my holy name: I will never lie to David.

<sup>36</sup> He will always have descendants, and I will watch over his kingdom as long as the sun shines.

<sup>37</sup> It will be as permanent as the moon, that faithful witness in the sky.

<sup>38</sup> But you are angry with your chosen king; you have deserted and rejected him.

<sup>39</sup> You have broken your covenant with your servant and thrown his crown in the dirt.

<sup>40</sup> You have torn down the walls of his city and left his forts in ruins.

<sup>41</sup> All who pass by steal his belongings; all his neighbors laugh at him.

<sup>42</sup> You have given the victory to his enemies; you have made them all happy.

<sup>43</sup>You have made his weapons useless and let him be defeated in battle.

<sup>44</sup>You have taken away his royal scepter and knocked his throne to the ground.

<sup>45</sup>You have made him old before his time and covered him with disgrace.

<sup>46</sup>LORD, will you hide yourself forever? How long will your anger burn like fire?

<sup>47</sup>Remember how short my life is; remember that you created all of us mortal!

<sup>48</sup>Who can live and never die? How can we humans keep ourselves from the grave?

<sup>49</sup>Lord, where are the former proofs of your love? Where are the promises you made to David?

<sup>50</sup>Don't forget how I, your servant, am insulted, how I endure all the curses of the heathen.

<sup>51</sup>Your enemies insult your chosen king, O LORD! They insult him wherever he goes.

<sup>52</sup>Praise the LORD forever! Amen!  
Amen!

**90**<sup>1</sup> O Lord, you have always been our home.

<sup>2</sup> Before you created the hills or brought the world into being, you were eternally God, and will be God forever.

<sup>3</sup> You tell us to return to what we were; you change us back to dust.

<sup>4</sup> A thousand years to you are like one day; they are like yesterday, already gone, like a short hour in the night.

<sup>5</sup> You carry us away like a flood; we last no longer than a dream. We are like weeds that sprout in the morning,

<sup>6</sup> that grow and burst into bloom, then dry up and die in the evening.

<sup>7</sup> We are destroyed by your anger; we are terrified by your fury.

<sup>8</sup> You place our sins before you, our secret sins where you can see them.

<sup>9</sup> Our life is cut short by your anger; it fades away like a whisper.

<sup>10</sup> Seventy years is all we have -- eighty years, if we are strong; yet all they bring us is trouble and sorrow; life is soon over, and we are gone.

<sup>11</sup> Who has felt the full power of your anger? Who knows what fear your fury can bring?

<sup>12</sup> Teach us how short our life is, so that we may become wise.

<sup>13</sup>How much longer will your anger last?  
Have pity, O LORD, on your servants!

<sup>14</sup>Fill us each morning with your  
constant love, so that we may sing and  
be glad all our life.

<sup>15</sup>Give us now as much happiness as  
the sadness you gave us during all our  
years of misery.

<sup>16</sup>Let us, your servants, see your  
mighty deeds; let our descendants see  
your glorious might.

<sup>17</sup>Lord our God, may your blessings be  
with us. Give us success in all we do!

**91** <sup>1</sup>Whoever goes to the LORD for  
safety, whoever remains under  
the protection of the Almighty,

<sup>2</sup>can say to him, You are my defender  
and protector. You are my God; in you I  
trust.

<sup>3</sup>He will keep you safe from all hidden  
dangers and from all deadly diseases.

<sup>4</sup>He will cover you with his wings; you  
will be safe in his care; his faithfulness  
will protect and defend you.

<sup>5</sup>You need not fear any dangers at night  
or sudden attacks during the day

<sup>6</sup>or the plagues that strike in the dark  
or the evils that kill in daylight.

<sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall dead beside you, ten thousand all around you, but you will not be harmed.

<sup>8</sup> You will look and see how the wicked are punished.

<sup>9</sup> You have made the LORD your defender, the Most High your protector,

<sup>10</sup> and so no disaster will strike you, no violence will come near your home.

<sup>11</sup> God will put his angels in charge of you to protect you wherever you go.

<sup>12</sup> They will hold you up with their hands to keep you from hurting your feet on the stones.

<sup>13</sup> You will trample down lions and snakes, fierce lions and poisonous snakes.

<sup>14</sup> God says, I will save those who love me and will protect those who acknowledge me as LORD.

<sup>15</sup> When they call to me, I will answer them; when they are in trouble, I will be with them. I will rescue them and honor them.

<sup>16</sup> I will reward them with long life; I will save them.

**92**<sup>1</sup> How good it is to give thanks to you, O LORD, to sing in your honor, O Most High God,

<sup>2</sup> to proclaim your constant love every morning and your faithfulness every night,

<sup>3</sup> with the music of stringed instruments and with melody on the harp.

<sup>4</sup> Your mighty deeds, O LORD, make me glad; because of what you have done, I sing for joy.

<sup>5</sup> How great are your actions, LORD! How deep are your thoughts!

<sup>6</sup> This is something a fool cannot know; someone who is stupid cannot understand:

<sup>7</sup> the wicked may grow like weeds, those who do wrong may prosper; yet they will be totally destroyed,

<sup>8</sup> because you, LORD, are supreme forever.

<sup>9</sup> We know that your enemies will die, and all the wicked will be defeated.

<sup>10</sup> You have made me as strong as a wild ox; you have blessed me with happiness.

<sup>11</sup> I have seen the defeat of my enemies and heard the cries of the wicked.

<sup>12</sup>The righteous will flourish like palm trees; they will grow like the cedars of Lebanon.

<sup>13</sup>They are like trees planted in the house of the LORD, that flourish in the Temple of our God,

<sup>14</sup>that still bear fruit in old age and are always green and strong.

<sup>15</sup>This shows that the LORD is just, that there is no wrong in my protector.

**93**<sup>1</sup>The LORD is king. He is clothed with majesty and strength. The earth is set firmly in place and cannot be moved.

<sup>2</sup>Your throne, O LORD, has been firm from the beginning, and you existed before time began.

<sup>3</sup>The ocean depths raise their voice, O LORD; they raise their voice and roar.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD rules supreme in heaven, greater than the roar of the ocean, more powerful than the waves of the sea.

<sup>5</sup>Your laws are eternal, LORD, and your Temple is holy indeed, forever and ever.

**94**<sup>1</sup>LORD, you are a God who punishes; reveal your anger!

<sup>2</sup>You are the judge of us all; rise and give the proud what they deserve!



<sup>3</sup> How much longer will the wicked be glad? How much longer, LORD?

<sup>4</sup> How much longer will criminals be proud and boast about their crimes?

<sup>5</sup> They crush your people, LORD; they oppress those who belong to you.

<sup>6</sup> They kill widows and orphans, and murder the strangers who live in our land.

<sup>7</sup> They say, The LORD does not see us; the God of Israel does not notice.

<sup>8</sup> My people, how can you be such stupid fools? When will you ever learn?

<sup>9</sup> God made our ears -- can't he hear? He made our eyes -- can't he see?

<sup>10</sup> He scolds the nations -- won't he punish them? He is the teacher of us all -- hasn't he any knowledge?

<sup>11</sup> The LORD knows what we think; he knows how senseless our reasoning is.

<sup>12</sup> LORD, how happy are those you instruct, the ones to whom you teach your law!

<sup>13</sup> You give them rest from days of trouble until a pit is dug to trap the wicked.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD will not abandon his people; he will not desert those who belong to him.

<sup>15</sup>Justice will again be found in the courts, and all righteous people will support it.

<sup>16</sup>Who stood up for me against the wicked? Who took my side against the evildoers?

<sup>17</sup>If the LORD had not helped me, I would have gone quickly to the land of silence.

<sup>18</sup>I said, I am falling; but your constant love, O LORD, held me up.

<sup>19</sup>Whenever I am anxious and worried, you comfort me and make me glad.

<sup>20</sup>You have nothing to do with corrupt judges, who make injustice legal,

<sup>21</sup>who plot against good people and sentence the innocent to death.

<sup>22</sup>But the LORD defends me; my God protects me.

<sup>23</sup>He will punish them for their wickedness and destroy them for their sins; the LORD our God will destroy them.

**95** <sup>1</sup> Come, let us praise the LORD!  
Let us sing for joy to God, who  
protects us!

<sup>2</sup> Let us come before him with  
thanksgiving and sing joyful songs of  
praise.

<sup>3</sup> For the LORD is a mighty God, a  
mighty king over all the gods.

<sup>4</sup> He rules over the whole earth, from  
the deepest caves to the highest hills.

<sup>5</sup> He rules over the sea, which he made;  
the land also, which he himself formed.

<sup>6</sup> Come, let us bow down and worship  
him; let us kneel before the LORD, our  
Maker!

<sup>7</sup> He is our God; we are the people he  
cares for, the flock for which he provides.  
Listen today to what he says:

<sup>8</sup> Don't be stubborn, as your ancestors  
were at Meribah, as they were that day  
in the desert at Massah.

<sup>9</sup> There they put me to the test and  
tried me, although they had seen what I  
did for them.

<sup>10</sup> For forty years I was disgusted with  
those people. I said, How disloyal they  
are! They refuse to obey my commands.

<sup>11</sup> I was angry and made a solemn promise: You will never enter the land where I would have given you rest.

**96** <sup>1</sup> Sing a new song to the LORD!  
Sing to the LORD, all the world!

<sup>2</sup> Sing to the LORD, and praise him!  
Proclaim every day the good news that he has saved us.

<sup>3</sup> Proclaim his glory to the nations, his mighty deeds to all peoples.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD is great and is to be highly praised; he is to be honored more than all the gods.

<sup>5</sup> The gods of all other nations are only idols, but the LORD created the heavens.

<sup>6</sup> Glory and majesty surround him; power and beauty fill his Temple.

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD, all people on earth; praise his glory and might.

<sup>8</sup> Praise the LORD's glorious name; bring an offering and come into his Temple.

<sup>9</sup> Bow down before the Holy One when he appears; tremble before him, all the earth!

<sup>10</sup> Say to all the nations, The LORD is king! The earth is set firmly in place

and cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with justice.

<sup>11</sup> Be glad, earth and sky! Roar, sea, and every creature in you;

<sup>12</sup> be glad, fields, and everything in you! The trees in the woods will shout for joy

<sup>13</sup> when the LORD comes to rule the earth. He will rule the peoples of the world with justice and fairness.

**97** <sup>1</sup> The LORD is king! Earth, be glad! Rejoice, you islands of the seas!

<sup>2</sup> Clouds and darkness surround him; he rules with righteousness and justice.

<sup>3</sup> Fire goes in front of him and burns up his enemies around him.

<sup>4</sup> His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees it and trembles.

<sup>5</sup> The hills melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.

<sup>6</sup> The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the nations see his glory.

<sup>7</sup> Everyone who worships idols is put to shame; all the gods bow down before the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>The people of Zion are glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice because of your judgments, O LORD.

<sup>9</sup>LORD Almighty, you are ruler of all the earth; you are much greater than all the gods.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD loves those who hate evil; he protects the lives of his people; he rescues them from the power of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>Light shines on the righteous, and gladness on the good.

<sup>12</sup>All you that are righteous be glad because of what the LORD has done! Remember what the holy God has done, and give thanks to him.

**98** <sup>1</sup>Sing a new song to the LORD; he has done wonderful things! By his own power and holy strength he has won the victory.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD announced his victory; he made his saving power known to the nations.

<sup>3</sup>He kept his promise to the people of Israel with loyalty and constant love for them. All people everywhere have seen the victory of our God.

<sup>4</sup> Sing for joy to the LORD, all the earth; praise him with songs and shouts of joy!

<sup>5</sup> Sing praises to the LORD! Play music on the harps!

<sup>6</sup> Blow trumpets and horns, and shout for joy to the LORD, our king.

<sup>7</sup> Roar, sea, and every creature in you; sing, earth, and all who live on you!

<sup>8</sup> Clap your hands, you rivers; you hills, sing together with joy before the LORD,

<sup>9</sup> because he comes to rule the earth. He will rule the peoples of the world with justice and fairness.

**99** <sup>1</sup> The LORD is king, and the people tremble. He sits on his throne above the winged creatures, and the earth shakes.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD is mighty in Zion; he is supreme over all the nations.

<sup>3</sup> Everyone will praise his great and majestic name. Holy is he!

<sup>4</sup> Mighty king, you love what is right; you have established justice in Israel; you have brought righteousness and fairness.

<sup>5</sup> Praise the LORD our God; worship before his throne! Holy is he!

<sup>6</sup> Moses and Aaron were his priests, and Samuel was one who prayed to him; they called to the LORD, and he answered them.

<sup>7</sup> He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud; they obeyed the laws and commands that he gave them.

<sup>8</sup> O LORD, our God, you answered your people; you showed them that you are a God who forgives, even though you punished them for their sins.

<sup>9</sup> Praise the LORD our God, and worship at his sacred hill! The LORD our God is holy.

**100**<sup>1</sup> Sing to the LORD, all the world!

<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with joy; come before him with happy songs!

<sup>3</sup> Acknowledge that the LORD is God. He made us, and we belong to him; we are his people, we are his flock.

<sup>4</sup> Enter the Temple gates with thanksgiving; go into its courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise him.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is good; his love is eternal and his faithfulness lasts forever.



**101** <sup>1</sup> My song is about loyalty and justice, and I sing it to you, O LORD.

<sup>2</sup> My conduct will be faultless. When will you come to me? I will live a pure life in my house

<sup>3</sup> and will never tolerate evil. I hate the actions of those who turn away from God; I will have nothing to do with them.

<sup>4</sup> I will not be dishonest and will have no dealings with evil.

<sup>5</sup> I will get rid of anyone who whispers evil things about someone else; I will not tolerate anyone who is proud and arrogant.

<sup>6</sup> I will approve of those who are faithful to God and will let them live in my palace. Those who are completely honest will be allowed to serve me.

<sup>7</sup> No liar will live in my palace; no hypocrite will remain in my presence.

<sup>8</sup> Day after day I will destroy the wicked in our land; I will expel all who are evil from the city of the LORD.

**102** <sup>1</sup> Listen to my prayer, O LORD, and hear my cry for help!

<sup>2</sup>When I am in trouble, don't turn away from me! Listen to me, and answer me quickly when I call!

<sup>3</sup>My life is disappearing like smoke; my body is burning like fire.

<sup>4</sup>I am beaten down like dry grass; I have lost my desire for food.

<sup>5</sup>I groan aloud; I am nothing but skin and bones.

<sup>6</sup>I am like a wild bird in the desert, like an owl in abandoned ruins.

<sup>7</sup>I lie awake; I am like a lonely bird on a housetop.

<sup>8</sup>All day long my enemies insult me; those who mock me use my name in cursing.

<sup>9</sup>Because of your anger and fury, ashes are my food, and my tears are mixed with my drink. You picked me up and threw me away.

<sup>10</sup>(102: 9)

<sup>11</sup>My life is like the evening shadows; I am like dry grass.

<sup>12</sup>But you, O LORD, are king forever; all generations will remember you.

<sup>13</sup>You will rise and take pity on Zion; the time has come to have mercy on her; this is the right time.

<sup>14</sup>Your servants love her, even though she is destroyed; they have pity on her, even though she is in ruins.

<sup>15</sup>The nations will fear the LORD; all the kings of the earth will fear his power.

<sup>16</sup>When the LORD rebuilds Zion, he will reveal his greatness.

<sup>17</sup>He will hear his forsaken people and listen to their prayer.

<sup>18</sup>Write down for the coming generation what the LORD has done, so that people not yet born will praise him.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD looked down from his holy place on high, he looked down from heaven to earth.

<sup>20</sup>He heard the groans of prisoners and set free those who were condemned to die.

<sup>21</sup>And so his name will be proclaimed in Zion, and he will be praised in Jerusalem

<sup>22</sup>when nations and kingdoms come together and worship the LORD.

<sup>23</sup>The LORD has made me weak while I am still young; he has shortened my life.

<sup>24</sup>O God, do not take me away now before I grow old. O LORD, you live forever;

<sup>25</sup> long ago you created the earth, and with your own hands you made the heavens.

<sup>26</sup> They will disappear, but you will remain; they will all wear out like clothes. You will discard them like clothes, and they will vanish.

<sup>27</sup> But you are always the same, and your life never ends.

<sup>28</sup> Our children will live in safety, and under your protection their descendants will be secure.

**103** <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD, my soul! All my being, praise his holy name!

<sup>2</sup> Praise the LORD, my soul, and do not forget how kind he is.

<sup>3</sup> He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

<sup>4</sup> He keeps me from the grave and blesses me with love and mercy.

<sup>5</sup> He fills my life with good things, so that I stay young and strong like an eagle.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD judges in favor of the oppressed and gives them their rights.

<sup>7</sup> He revealed his plans to Moses and let the people of Israel see his mighty deeds.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is merciful and loving, slow to become angry and full of constant love.

<sup>9</sup> He does not keep on rebuking; he is not angry forever.

<sup>10</sup> He does not punish us as we deserve or repay us according to our sins and wrongs.

<sup>11</sup> As high as the sky is above the earth, so great is his love for those who honor him.

<sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our sins from us.

<sup>13</sup> As a father is kind to his children, so the LORD is kind to those who honor him.

<sup>14</sup> He knows what we are made of; he remembers that we are dust.

<sup>15</sup> As for us, our life is like grass. We grow and flourish like a wild flower;

<sup>16</sup> then the wind blows on it, and it is gone -- no one sees it again.

<sup>17</sup> But for those who honor the LORD, his love lasts forever, and his goodness endures for all generations

<sup>18</sup> of those who are true to his covenant and who faithfully obey his commands.

<sup>19</sup> The LORD placed his throne in heaven; he is king over all.

<sup>20</sup> Praise the LORD, you strong and mighty angels, who obey his commands, who listen to what he says.

<sup>21</sup> Praise the LORD, all you heavenly powers, you servants of his, who do his will!

<sup>22</sup> Praise the LORD, all his creatures in all the places he rules. Praise the LORD, my soul! Praise the LORD, my soul!

**104** <sup>1</sup> O LORD, my God, how great you are! You are clothed with majesty and glory;

<sup>2</sup> you cover yourself with light. You have spread out the heavens like a tent

<sup>3</sup> and built your home on the waters above. You use the clouds as your chariot and ride on the wings of the wind.

<sup>4</sup> You use the winds as your messengers and flashes of lightning as your servants.

<sup>5</sup> You have set the earth firmly on its foundations, and it will never be moved.

<sup>6</sup> You placed the ocean over it like a robe, and the water covered the mountains.

<sup>7</sup>When you rebuked the waters, they fled; they rushed away when they heard your shout of command.

<sup>8</sup>They flowed over the mountains and into the valleys, to the place you had made for them.

<sup>9</sup>You set a boundary they can never pass, to keep them from covering the earth again.

<sup>10</sup>You make springs flow in the valleys, and rivers run between the hills.

<sup>11</sup>They provide water for the wild animals; there the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

<sup>12</sup>In the trees near by, the birds make their nests and sing.

<sup>13</sup>From the sky you send rain on the hills, and the earth is filled with your blessings.

<sup>14</sup>You make grass grow for the cattle and plants for us to use, so that we can grow our crops

<sup>15</sup>and produce wine to make us happy, olive oil to make us cheerful, and bread to give us strength.

<sup>16</sup>The cedars of Lebanon get plenty of rain -- the LORD's own trees, which he planted.

<sup>17</sup> There the birds build their nests; the storks nest in the fir trees.

<sup>18</sup> The wild goats live in the high mountains, and the rock badgers hide in the cliffs.

<sup>19</sup> You created the moon to mark the months; the sun knows the time to set.

<sup>20</sup> You made the night, and in the darkness all the wild animals come out.

<sup>21</sup> The young lions roar while they hunt, looking for the food that God provides.

<sup>22</sup> When the sun rises, they go back and lie down in their dens.

<sup>23</sup> Then people go out to do their work and keep working until evening.

<sup>24</sup> LORD, you have made so many things! How wisely you made them all! The earth is filled with your creatures.

<sup>25</sup> There is the ocean, large and wide, where countless creatures live, large and small alike.

<sup>26</sup> The ships sail on it, and in it plays Leviathan, that sea monster which you made.

<sup>27</sup> All of them depend on you to give them food when they need it.

<sup>28</sup> You give it to them, and they eat it; you provide food, and they are satisfied.



<sup>29</sup>When you turn away, they are afraid; when you take away your breath, they die and go back to the dust from which they came.

<sup>30</sup>But when you give them breath, they are created; you give new life to the earth.

<sup>31</sup>May the glory of the LORD last forever! May the LORD be happy with what he has made!

<sup>32</sup>He looks at the earth, and it trembles; he touches the mountains, and they pour out smoke.

<sup>33</sup>I will sing to the LORD all my life; as long as I live I will sing praises to my God.

<sup>34</sup>May he be pleased with my song, for my gladness comes from him.

<sup>35</sup>May sinners be destroyed from the earth; may the wicked be no more. Praise the LORD, my soul! Praise the LORD!

**105** <sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, proclaim his greatness; tell the nations what he has done.

<sup>2</sup>Sing praise to the LORD; tell the wonderful things he has done.

<sup>3</sup> Be glad that we belong to him; let all who worship him rejoice.

<sup>4</sup> Go to the LORD for help; and worship him continually.

<sup>5</sup> You descendants of Abraham, his servant; you descendants of Jacob, the man he chose: remember the miracles that God performed and the judgments that he gave.

<sup>6</sup> (105: 5)

<sup>7</sup> The LORD is our God; his commands are for all the world.

<sup>8</sup> He will keep his covenant forever, his promises for a thousand generations.

<sup>9</sup> He will keep the agreement he made with Abraham and his promise to Isaac.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD made a covenant with Jacob, one that will last forever.

<sup>11</sup> I will give you the land of Canaan, he said. It will be your own possession.

<sup>12</sup> God's people were few in number, strangers in the land of Canaan.

<sup>13</sup> They wandered from country to country, from one kingdom to another.

<sup>14</sup> But God let no one oppress them; to protect them, he warned the kings:

<sup>15</sup> Don't harm my chosen servants; do not touch my prophets.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD sent famine to their country and took away all their food.

<sup>17</sup>But he sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who had been sold as a slave.

<sup>18</sup>His feet were kept in chains, and an iron collar was around his neck,

<sup>19</sup>until what he had predicted came true. The word of the LORD proved him right.

<sup>20</sup>Then the king of Egypt had him released; the ruler of nations set him free.

<sup>21</sup>He put him in charge of his government and made him ruler over all the land,

<sup>22</sup>with power over the king's officials and authority to instruct his advisers.

<sup>23</sup>Then Jacob went to Egypt and settled in that country.

<sup>24</sup>The LORD gave many children to his people and made them stronger than their enemies.

<sup>25</sup>He made the Egyptians hate his people and treat his servants with deceit.

<sup>26</sup>Then he sent his servant Moses, and Aaron, whom he had chosen.

<sup>27</sup>They did God's mighty acts and performed miracles in Egypt.

<sup>28</sup> God sent darkness on the country,  
but the Egyptians did not obey his  
command.

<sup>29</sup> He turned their rivers into blood and  
killed all their fish.

<sup>30</sup> Their country was overrun with frogs;  
even the palace was filled with them.

<sup>31</sup> God commanded, and flies and gnats  
swarmed throughout the whole country.

<sup>32</sup> He sent hail and lightning on their  
land instead of rain;

<sup>33</sup> he destroyed their grapevines and fig  
trees and broke down all the trees.

<sup>34</sup> He commanded, and the locusts  
came, countless millions of them;

<sup>35</sup> they ate all the plants in the land;  
they ate all the crops.

<sup>36</sup> He killed the first-born sons of all the  
families of Egypt.

<sup>37</sup> Then he led the Israelites out; they  
carried silver and gold, and all of them  
were healthy and strong.

<sup>38</sup> The Egyptians were afraid of them  
and were glad when they left.

<sup>39</sup> God put a cloud over his people and  
a fire at night to give them light.

<sup>40</sup>They asked, and he sent quails; he gave them food from heaven to satisfy them.

<sup>41</sup>He opened a rock, and water gushed out, flowing through the desert like a river.

<sup>42</sup>He remembered his sacred promise to Abraham his servant.

<sup>43</sup>So he led his chosen people out, and they sang and shouted for joy.

<sup>44</sup>He gave them the lands of other peoples and let them take over their fields,

<sup>45</sup>so that his people would obey his laws and keep all his commands. Praise the LORD!

**106** <sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good; his love is eternal.

<sup>2</sup>Who can tell all the great things he has done? Who can praise him enough?

<sup>3</sup>Happy are those who obey his commands, who always do what is right.

<sup>4</sup>Remember me, LORD, when you help your people; include me when you save them.

<sup>5</sup>Let me see the prosperity of your people and share in the happiness of

your nation, in the glad pride of those who belong to you.

<sup>6</sup>We have sinned as our ancestors did; we have been wicked and evil.

<sup>7</sup>Our ancestors in Egypt did not understand God's wonderful acts; they forgot the many times he showed them his love, and they rebelled against the Almighty at the Red Sea.

<sup>8</sup>But he saved them, as he had promised, in order to show his great power.

<sup>9</sup>He gave a command to the Red Sea, and it dried up; he led his people across on dry land.

<sup>10</sup>He saved them from those who hated them; he rescued them from their enemies.

<sup>11</sup>But the water drowned their enemies; not one of them was left.

<sup>12</sup>Then his people believed his promises and sang praises to him.

<sup>13</sup>But they quickly forgot what he had done and acted without waiting for his advice.

<sup>14</sup>They were filled with craving in the desert and put God to the test;

<sup>15</sup>so he gave them what they asked for, but also sent a terrible disease among them.

<sup>16</sup>There in the desert they were jealous of Moses and of Aaron, the LORD's holy servant.

<sup>17</sup>Then the earth opened up and swallowed Dathan and buried Abiram and his family;

<sup>18</sup>fire came down on their followers and burned up those wicked people.

<sup>19</sup>They made a gold bull-calf at Sinai and worshiped that idol;

<sup>20</sup>they exchanged the glory of God for the image of an animal that eats grass.

<sup>21</sup>They forgot the God who had saved them by his mighty acts in Egypt.

<sup>22</sup>What wonderful things he did there! What amazing things at the Red Sea!

<sup>23</sup>When God said that he would destroy his people, his chosen servant, Moses, stood up against God and kept his anger from destroying them.

<sup>24</sup>Then they rejected the pleasant land, because they did not believe God's promise.

<sup>25</sup>They stayed in their tents and grumbled and would not listen to the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>So he gave them a solemn warning that he would make them die in the desert

<sup>27</sup>and scatter their descendants among the heathen, letting them die in foreign countries.

<sup>28</sup>Then at Peor, God's people joined in the worship of Baal and ate sacrifices offered to dead gods.

<sup>29</sup>They stirred up the LORD's anger by their actions, and a terrible disease broke out among them.

<sup>30</sup>But Phinehas stood up and punished the guilty, and the plague was stopped.

<sup>31</sup>This has been remembered in his favor ever since and will be for all time to come.

<sup>32</sup>At the springs of Meribah the people made the LORD angry, and Moses was in trouble on their account.

<sup>33</sup>They made him so bitter that he spoke without stopping to think.

<sup>34</sup>They did not kill the heathen, as the LORD had commanded them to do,



<sup>35</sup> but they intermarried with them and adopted their pagan ways.

<sup>36</sup> God's people worshiped idols, and this caused their destruction.

<sup>37</sup> They offered their own sons and daughters as sacrifices to the idols of Canaan.

<sup>38</sup> They killed those innocent children, and the land was defiled by those murders.

<sup>39</sup> They made themselves impure by their actions and were unfaithful to God.

<sup>40</sup> So the LORD was angry with his people; he was disgusted with them.

<sup>41</sup> He abandoned them to the power of the heathen, and their enemies ruled over them.

<sup>42</sup> They were oppressed by their enemies and were in complete subjection to them.

<sup>43</sup> Many times the LORD rescued his people, but they chose to rebel against him and sank deeper into sin.

<sup>44</sup> Yet the LORD heard them when they cried out, and he took notice of their distress.

<sup>45</sup>For their sake he remembered his covenant, and because of his great love he relented.

<sup>46</sup>He made all their oppressors feel sorry for them.

<sup>47</sup>Save us, O LORD our God, and bring us back from among the nations, so that we may be thankful and praise your holy name.

<sup>48</sup>Praise the LORD, the God of Israel; praise him now and forever! Let everyone say, Amen! Praise the LORD!

**107** <sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good; his love is eternal!

<sup>2</sup>Repeat these words in praise to the LORD, all you whom he has saved. He has rescued you from your enemies

<sup>3</sup>and has brought you back from foreign countries, from east and west, from north and south.

<sup>4</sup>Some wandered in the trackless desert and could not find their way to a city to live in.

<sup>5</sup>They were hungry and thirsty and had given up all hope.

<sup>6</sup>Then in their trouble they called to the LORD, and he saved them from their distress.

<sup>7</sup>He led them by a straight road to a city where they could live.

<sup>8</sup>They must thank the LORD for his constant love, for the wonderful things he did for them.

<sup>9</sup>He satisfies those who are thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

<sup>10</sup>Some were living in gloom and darkness, prisoners suffering in chains,

<sup>11</sup>because they had rebelled against the commands of Almighty God and had rejected his instructions.

<sup>12</sup>They were worn out from hard work; they would fall down, and no one would help.

<sup>13</sup>Then in their trouble they called to the LORD, and he saved them from their distress.

<sup>14</sup>He brought them out of their gloom and darkness and broke their chains in pieces.

<sup>15</sup>They must thank the LORD for his constant love, for the wonderful things he did for them.

<sup>16</sup>He breaks down doors of bronze and smashes iron bars.

<sup>17</sup>Some were fools, suffering because of their sins and because of their evil;

<sup>18</sup>they couldn't stand the sight of food and were close to death.

<sup>19</sup>Then in their trouble they called to the LORD, and he saved them from their distress.

<sup>20</sup>He healed them with his command and saved them from the grave.

<sup>21</sup>They must thank the LORD for his constant love, for the wonderful things he did for them.

<sup>22</sup>They must thank him with sacrifices, and with songs of joy must tell all that he has done.

<sup>23</sup>Some sailed over the ocean in ships, earning their living on the seas.

<sup>24</sup>They saw what the LORD can do, his wonderful acts on the seas.

<sup>25</sup>He commanded, and a mighty wind began to blow and stirred up the waves.

<sup>26</sup>The ships were lifted high in the air and plunged down into the depths. In such danger the sailors lost their courage;

<sup>27</sup> they stumbled and staggered like drunks -- all their skill was useless.

<sup>28</sup> Then in their trouble they called to the LORD, and he saved them from their distress.

<sup>29</sup> He calmed the raging storm, and the waves became quiet.

<sup>30</sup> They were glad because of the calm, and he brought them safe to the port they wanted.

<sup>31</sup> They must thank the LORD for his constant love, for the wonderful things he did for them.

<sup>32</sup> They must proclaim his greatness in the assembly of the people and praise him before the council of the leaders.

<sup>33</sup> The LORD made rivers dry up completely and stopped springs from flowing.

<sup>34</sup> He made rich soil become a salty wasteland because of the wickedness of those who lived there.

<sup>35</sup> He changed deserts into pools of water and dry land into flowing springs.

<sup>36</sup> He let hungry people settle there, and they built a city to live in.

<sup>37</sup> They sowed the fields and planted grapevines and reaped an abundant harvest.

<sup>38</sup> He blessed his people, and they had many children; he kept their herds of cattle from decreasing.

<sup>39</sup> When God's people were defeated and humiliated by cruel oppression and suffering,

<sup>40</sup> he showed contempt for their oppressors and made them wander in trackless deserts.

<sup>41</sup> But he rescued the needy from their misery and made their families increase like flocks.

<sup>42</sup> The righteous see this and are glad, but all the wicked are put to silence.

<sup>43</sup> May those who are wise think about these things; may they consider the LORD's constant love.

**108** <sup>1</sup> I have complete confidence, O God! I will sing and praise you! Wake up, my soul!

<sup>2</sup> Wake up, my harp and lyre! I will wake up the sun.

<sup>3</sup> I will thank you, O LORD, among the nations. I will praise you among the peoples.

<sup>4</sup>Your constant love reaches above the heavens; your faithfulness touches the skies.

<sup>5</sup>Show your greatness in the sky, O God, and your glory over all the earth.

<sup>6</sup>Save us by your might; answer my prayer, so that the people you love may be rescued.

<sup>7</sup>From his sanctuary God has said, In triumph I will divide Shechem and distribute Sukkoth Valley to my people.

<sup>8</sup>Gilead is mine, and Manasseh too; Ephraim is my helmet and Judah my royal scepter.

<sup>9</sup>But I will use Moab as my washbowl, and I will throw my sandals on Edom, as a sign that I own it. I will shout in triumph over the Philistines.

<sup>10</sup>Who, O God, will take me into the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom?

<sup>11</sup>Have you really rejected us? Aren't you going to march out with our armies?

<sup>12</sup>Help us against the enemy; human help is worthless.

<sup>13</sup>With God on our side we will win; he will defeat our enemies.

**109**<sup>1</sup> I praise you, God; don't remain silent!

<sup>2</sup>Wicked people and liars have attacked me. They tell lies about me,

<sup>3</sup>and they say evil things about me, attacking me for no reason.

<sup>4</sup>They oppose me, even though I love them and have prayed for them.

<sup>5</sup>They pay me back evil for good and hatred for love.

<sup>6</sup>Choose some corrupt judge to try my enemy, and let one of his own enemies accuse him.

<sup>7</sup>May he be tried and found guilty; may even his prayer be considered a crime!

<sup>8</sup>May his life soon be ended; may someone else take his job!

<sup>9</sup>May his children become orphans, and his wife a widow!

<sup>10</sup>May his children be homeless beggars; may they be driven from the ruins they live in!

<sup>11</sup>May his creditors take away all his property, and may strangers get everything he worked for.

<sup>12</sup>May no one ever be kind to him or care for the orphans he leaves behind.

<sup>13</sup>May all his descendants die, and may his name be forgotten in the next generation.



<sup>14</sup> May the LORD remember the evil of his ancestors and never forgive his mother's sins.

<sup>15</sup> May the LORD always remember their sins, but may they themselves be completely forgotten!

<sup>16</sup> That man never thought of being kind; he persecuted and killed the poor, the needy, and the helpless.

<sup>17</sup> He loved to curse -- may he be cursed! He hated to give blessings -- may no one bless him!

<sup>18</sup> He cursed as naturally as he dressed himself; may his own curses soak into his body like water and into his bones like oil!

<sup>19</sup> May they cover him like clothes and always be around him like a belt!

<sup>20</sup> LORD, punish my enemies in that way -- those who say such evil things against me!

<sup>21</sup> But my Sovereign LORD, help me as you have promised, and rescue me because of the goodness of your love.

<sup>22</sup> I am poor and needy; I am hurt to the depths of my heart.

<sup>23</sup> Like an evening shadow I am about to vanish; I am blown away like an insect.

<sup>24</sup> My knees are weak from lack of food; I am nothing but skin and bones.

<sup>25</sup> When people see me, they laugh at me; they shake their heads in scorn.

<sup>26</sup> Help me, O LORD my God; because of your constant love, save me!

<sup>27</sup> Make my enemies know that you are the one who saves me.

<sup>28</sup> They may curse me, but you will bless me. May my persecutors be defeated, and may I, your servant, be glad.

<sup>29</sup> May my enemies be covered with disgrace; may they wear their shame like a robe.

<sup>30</sup> I will give loud thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the assembly of the people,

<sup>31</sup> because he defends the poor and saves them from those who condemn them to death.

**110**<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to my lord, Sit here at my right side until I put your enemies under your feet.

<sup>2</sup> From Zion the LORD will extend your royal power. Rule over your enemies, he says.

<sup>3</sup> On the day you fight your enemies, your people will volunteer. Like the dew

of early morning your young men will come to you on the sacred hills.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD made a solemn promise and will not take it back: You will be a priest forever in the priestly order of Melchizedek.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord is at your right side; when he becomes angry, he will defeat kings.

<sup>6</sup>He will pass judgment on the nations and fill the battlefield with corpses; he will defeat kings all over the earth.

<sup>7</sup>The king will drink from the stream by the road, and strengthened, he will stand victorious.

**111** <sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! With all my heart I will thank the LORD in the assembly of his people.

<sup>2</sup>How wonderful are the things the LORD does! All who are delighted with them want to understand them.

<sup>3</sup>All he does is full of honor and majesty; his righteousness is eternal.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD does not let us forget his wonderful actions; he is kind and merciful.

<sup>5</sup>He provides food for those who honor him; he never forgets his covenant.

<sup>6</sup>He has shown his power to his people by giving them the lands of foreigners.

<sup>7</sup>In all he does he is faithful and just; all his commands are dependable.

<sup>8</sup>They last for all time; they were given in truth and righteousness.

<sup>9</sup>He set his people free and made an eternal covenant with them. Holy and mighty is he!

<sup>10</sup>The way to become wise is to honor the LORD; he gives sound judgment to all who obey his commands. He is to be praised forever.

**112**<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! Happy is the person who honors the LORD, who takes pleasure in obeying his commands.

<sup>2</sup>The good man's children will be powerful in the land; his descendants will be blessed.

<sup>3</sup>His family will be wealthy and rich, and he will be prosperous forever.

<sup>4</sup>Light shines in the darkness for good people, for those who are merciful, kind, and just.

<sup>5</sup>Happy is the person who is generous with his loans, who runs his business honestly.

<sup>6</sup>A good person will never fail; he will always be remembered.

<sup>7</sup>He is not afraid of receiving bad news; his faith is strong, and he trusts in the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>He is not worried or afraid; he is certain to see his enemies defeated.

<sup>9</sup>He gives generously to the needy, and his kindness never fails; he will be powerful and respected.

<sup>10</sup>The wicked see this and are angry; they glare in hate and disappear; their hopes are gone forever.

**113**<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! You servants of the LORD, praise his name!

<sup>2</sup>May his name be praised, now and forever.

<sup>3</sup>From the east to the west praise the name of the LORD!

<sup>4</sup>The LORD rules over all nations; his glory is above the heavens.

<sup>5</sup>There is no one like the LORD our God. He lives in the heights above,

<sup>6</sup>but he bends down to see the heavens and the earth.

<sup>7</sup>He raises the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from their misery

<sup>8</sup>and makes them companions of princes, the princes of his people.

<sup>9</sup>He honors the childless wife in her home; he makes her happy by giving her children. Praise the LORD!

**114**<sup>1</sup> When the people of Israel left Egypt, when Jacob's descendants left that foreign land,

<sup>2</sup>Judah became the Lord's holy people, Israel became his own possession.

<sup>3</sup>The Red Sea looked and ran away; the Jordan River stopped flowing.

<sup>4</sup>The mountains skipped like goats; the hills jumped around like lambs.

<sup>5</sup>What happened, Sea, to make you run away? And you, O Jordan, why did you stop flowing?

<sup>6</sup>You mountains, why did you skip like goats? You hills, why did you jump around like lambs?

<sup>7</sup>Tremble, earth, at the Lord's coming, at the presence of the God of Jacob,

<sup>8</sup>who changes rocks into pools of water and solid cliffs into flowing springs.

**115**<sup>1</sup> To you alone, O LORD, to you alone, and not to us, must glory be given because of your constant love and faithfulness.

<sup>2</sup>Why should the nations ask us, Where is your God?

<sup>3</sup>Our God is in heaven; he does whatever he wishes.

<sup>4</sup>Their gods are made of silver and gold, formed by human hands.

<sup>5</sup>They have mouths, but cannot speak, and eyes, but cannot see.

<sup>6</sup>They have ears, but cannot hear, and noses, but cannot smell.

<sup>7</sup>They have hands, but cannot feel, and feet, but cannot walk; they cannot make a sound.

<sup>8</sup>May all who made them and who trust in them become like the idols they have made.

<sup>9</sup>Trust in the LORD, you people of Israel. He helps you and protects you.

<sup>10</sup>Trust in the LORD, you priests of God. He helps you and protects you.

<sup>11</sup>Trust in the LORD, all you that worship him. He helps you and protects you.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD remembers us and will bless us; he will bless the people of Israel and all the priests of God.

<sup>13</sup>He will bless everyone who honors him, the great and the small alike.

<sup>14</sup> May the LORD give you children -- you and your descendants!

<sup>15</sup> May you be blessed by the LORD, who made heaven and earth!

<sup>16</sup> Heaven belongs to the LORD alone, but he gave the earth to us humans.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD is not praised by the dead, by any who go down to the land of silence.

<sup>18</sup> But we, the living, will give thanks to him now and forever. Praise the LORD!

**116** <sup>1</sup> I love the LORD, because he hears me; he listens to my prayers.

<sup>2</sup> He listens to me every time I call to him.

<sup>3</sup> The danger of death was all around me; the horrors of the grave closed in on me; I was filled with fear and anxiety.

<sup>4</sup> Then I called to the LORD, I beg you, LORD, save me!

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is merciful and good; our God is compassionate.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD protects the helpless; when I was in danger, he saved me.

<sup>7</sup> Be confident, my heart, because the LORD has been good to me.



<sup>8</sup>The LORD saved me from death; he stopped my tears and kept me from defeat.

<sup>9</sup>And so I walk in the presence of the LORD in the world of the living.

<sup>10</sup>I kept on believing, even when I said, I am completely crushed,

<sup>11</sup>even when I was afraid and said, No one can be trusted.

<sup>12</sup>What can I offer the LORD for all his goodness to me?

<sup>13</sup>I will bring a wine offering to the LORD, to thank him for saving me.

<sup>14</sup>In the assembly of all his people I will give him what I have promised.

<sup>15</sup>How painful it is to the LORD when one of his people dies!

<sup>16</sup>I am your servant, LORD; I serve you just as my mother did. You have saved me from death.

<sup>17</sup>I will give you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and offer my prayer to you.

<sup>18</sup>In the assembly of all your people, in the sanctuary of your Temple in Jerusalem, I will give you what I have promised. Praise the LORD!

<sup>19</sup>(116:18)

**117** <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD, all nations!  
Praise him, all peoples!

<sup>2</sup> His love for us is strong, and his faithfulness is eternal. Praise the LORD!

**118** <sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD,  
because he is good, and his love is eternal.

<sup>2</sup> Let the people of Israel say, His love is eternal.

<sup>3</sup> Let the priests of God say, His love is eternal.

<sup>4</sup> Let all who worship him say, His love is eternal.

<sup>5</sup> In my distress I called to the LORD;  
he answered me and set me free.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD is with me, I will not be afraid;  
what can anyone do to me?

<sup>7</sup> It is the LORD who helps me, and I will see my enemies defeated.

<sup>8</sup> It is better to trust in the LORD than to depend on people.

<sup>9</sup> It is better to trust in the LORD than to depend on human leaders.

<sup>10</sup> Many enemies were around me; but I destroyed them by the power of the LORD!

<sup>11</sup> They were around me on every side; but I destroyed them by the power of the LORD!

<sup>12</sup> They swarmed around me like bees, but they burned out as quickly as a brush fire; by the power of the LORD I destroyed them.

<sup>13</sup> I was fiercely attacked and was being defeated, but the LORD helped me.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD makes me powerful and strong; he has saved me.

<sup>15</sup> Listen to the glad shouts of victory in the tents of God's people: The LORD's mighty power has done it!

<sup>16</sup> His power has brought us victory -- his mighty power in battle!

<sup>17</sup> I will not die; instead, I will live and proclaim what the LORD has done.

<sup>18</sup> He has punished me severely, but he has not let me die.

<sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of the Temple; I will go in and give thanks to the LORD!

<sup>20</sup> This is the gate of the LORD; only the righteous can come in.

<sup>21</sup> I praise you, LORD, because you heard me, because you have given me victory.

<sup>22</sup>The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all.

<sup>23</sup>This was done by the LORD; what a wonderful sight it is!

<sup>24</sup>This is the day of the LORD's victory; let us be happy, let us celebrate!

<sup>25</sup>Save us, LORD, save us! Give us success, O LORD!

<sup>26</sup>May God bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD! From the Temple of the LORD we bless you.

<sup>27</sup>The LORD is God; he has been good to us. With branches in your hands, start the festival and march around the altar.

<sup>28</sup>You are my God, and I give you thanks; I will proclaim your greatness.

<sup>29</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good, and his love is eternal.

**119**<sup>1</sup>Happy are those whose lives are faultless, who live according to the law of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>Happy are those who follow his commands, who obey him with all their heart.

<sup>3</sup>They never do wrong; they walk in the LORD's ways.

<sup>4</sup> LORD, you have given us your laws and told us to obey them faithfully.

<sup>5</sup> How I hope that I shall be faithful in keeping your instructions!

<sup>6</sup> If I pay attention to all your commands, then I will not be put to shame.

<sup>7</sup> As I learn your righteous judgments, I will praise you with a pure heart.

<sup>8</sup> I will obey your laws; never abandon me!

<sup>9</sup> How can young people keep their lives pure? By obeying your commands.

<sup>10</sup> With all my heart I try to serve you; keep me from disobeying your commandments.

<sup>11</sup> I keep your law in my heart, so that I will not sin against you.

<sup>12</sup> I praise you, O LORD; teach me your ways.

<sup>13</sup> I will repeat aloud all the laws you have given.

<sup>14</sup> I delight in following your commands more than in having great wealth.

<sup>15</sup> I study your instructions; I examine your teachings.

<sup>16</sup> I take pleasure in your laws; your commands I will not forget.

<sup>17</sup> Be good to me, your servant, so that I may live and obey your teachings.

<sup>18</sup> Open my eyes, so that I may see the wonderful truths in your law.

<sup>19</sup> I am here on earth for just a little while; do not hide your commands from me.

<sup>20</sup> My heart aches with longing; I want to know your judgments at all times.

<sup>21</sup> You reprimand the proud; cursed are those who disobey your commands.

<sup>22</sup> Free me from their insults and scorn, because I have kept your laws.

<sup>23</sup> The rulers meet and plot against me, but I will study your teachings.

<sup>24</sup> Your instructions give me pleasure; they are my advisers.

<sup>25</sup> I lie defeated in the dust; revive me, as you have promised.

<sup>26</sup> I confessed all I have done, and you answered me; teach me your ways.

<sup>27</sup> Help me to understand your laws, and I will meditate on your wonderful teachings.

<sup>28</sup> I am overcome by sorrow; strengthen me, as you have promised.

<sup>29</sup> Keep me from going the wrong way, and in your goodness teach me your law.

<sup>30</sup>I have chosen to be obedient; I have paid attention to your judgments.

<sup>31</sup>I have followed your instructions, LORD; don't let me be put to shame.

<sup>32</sup>I will eagerly obey your commands, because you will give me more understanding.

<sup>33</sup>Teach me, LORD, the meaning of your laws, and I will obey them at all times.

<sup>34</sup>Explain your law to me, and I will obey it; I will keep it with all my heart.

<sup>35</sup>Keep me obedient to your commandments, because in them I find happiness.

<sup>36</sup>Give me the desire to obey your laws rather than to get rich.

<sup>37</sup>Keep me from paying attention to what is worthless; be good to me, as you have promised.

<sup>38</sup>Keep your promise to me, your servant -- the promise you make to those who obey you.

<sup>39</sup>Save me from the insults I fear; how wonderful are your judgments!

<sup>40</sup>I want to obey your commands; give me new life, for you are righteous.

<sup>41</sup> Show me how much you love me, LORD, and save me according to your promise.

<sup>42</sup> Then I can answer those who insult me because I trust in your word.

<sup>43</sup> Enable me to speak the truth at all times, because my hope is in your judgments.

<sup>44</sup> I will always obey your law, forever and ever.

<sup>45</sup> I will live in perfect freedom, because I try to obey your teachings.

<sup>46</sup> I will announce your commands to kings and I will not be ashamed.

<sup>47</sup> I find pleasure in obeying your commands, because I love them.

<sup>48</sup> I respect and love your commandments; I will meditate on your instructions.

<sup>49</sup> Remember your promise to me, your servant; it has given me hope.

<sup>50</sup> Even in my suffering I was comforted because your promise gave me life.

<sup>51</sup> The proud are always scornful of me, but I have not departed from your law.

<sup>52</sup> I remember your judgments of long ago, and they bring me comfort, O LORD.



<sup>53</sup>When I see the wicked breaking your law, I am filled with anger.

<sup>54</sup>During my brief earthly life I compose songs about your commands.

<sup>55</sup>In the night I remember you, LORD, and I think about your law.

<sup>56</sup>I find my happiness in obeying your commands.

<sup>57</sup>You are all I want, O LORD; I promise to obey your laws.

<sup>58</sup>I ask you with all my heart to have mercy on me, as you have promised!

<sup>59</sup>I have considered my conduct, and I promise to follow your instructions.

<sup>60</sup>Without delay I hurry to obey your commands.

<sup>61</sup>The wicked have laid a trap for me, but I do not forget your law.

<sup>62</sup>In the middle of the night I wake up to praise you for your righteous judgments.

<sup>63</sup>I am a friend of all who serve you, of all who obey your laws.

<sup>64</sup>LORD, the earth is full of your constant love; teach me your commandments.

<sup>65</sup>You have kept your promise, LORD, and you are good to me, your servant.

<sup>66</sup>Give me wisdom and knowledge,  
because I trust in your commands.

<sup>67</sup>Before you punished me, I used to go  
wrong, but now I obey your word.

<sup>68</sup>How good you are -- how kind! Teach  
me your commands.

<sup>69</sup>The proud have told lies about  
me, but with all my heart I obey your  
instructions.

<sup>70</sup>They have no understanding, but I  
find pleasure in your law.

<sup>71</sup>My punishment was good for  
me, because it made me learn your  
commands.

<sup>72</sup>The law that you gave means more  
to me than all the money in the world.

<sup>73</sup>You created me, and you keep me  
safe; give me understanding, so that I  
may learn your laws.

<sup>74</sup>Those who honor you will be glad  
when they see me, because I trust in  
your promise.

<sup>75</sup>I know that your judgments are  
righteous, LORD, and that you punished  
me because you are faithful.

<sup>76</sup>Let your constant love comfort me,  
as you have promised me, your servant.

<sup>77</sup> Have mercy on me, and I will live because I take pleasure in your law.

<sup>78</sup> May the proud be ashamed for falsely accusing me; as for me, I will meditate on your instructions.

<sup>79</sup> May those who honor you come to me -- all those who know your commands.

<sup>80</sup> May I perfectly obey your commandments and be spared the shame of defeat.

<sup>81</sup> I am worn out, LORD, waiting for you to save me; I place my trust in your word.

<sup>82</sup> My eyes are tired from watching for what you promised, while I ask, When will you help me?

<sup>83</sup> I am as useless as a discarded wineskin; yet I have not forgotten your commands.

<sup>84</sup> How much longer must I wait? When will you punish those who persecute me?

<sup>85</sup> The proud, who do not obey your law, have dug pits to trap me.

<sup>86</sup> Your commandments are all trustworthy; people persecute me with lies -- help me!

<sup>87</sup> They have almost succeeded in killing me, but I have not neglected your commands.

<sup>88</sup> Because of your constant love be good to me, so that I may obey your laws.

<sup>89</sup> Your word, O LORD, will last forever; it is eternal in heaven.

<sup>90</sup> Your faithfulness endures through all the ages; you have set the earth in place, and it remains.

<sup>91</sup> All things remain to this day because of your command, because they are all your servants.

<sup>92</sup> If your law had not been the source of my joy, I would have died from my sufferings.

<sup>93</sup> I will never neglect your instructions, because by them you have kept me alive.

<sup>94</sup> I am yours -- save me! I have tried to obey your commands.

<sup>95</sup> The wicked are waiting to kill me, but I will meditate on your laws.

<sup>96</sup> I have learned that everything has limits; but your commandment is perfect.

<sup>97</sup> How I love your law! I think about it all day long.

<sup>98</sup> Your commandment is with me all the time and makes me wiser than my enemies.

<sup>99</sup> I understand more than all my teachers, because I meditate on your instructions.

<sup>100</sup> I have greater wisdom than those who are old, because I obey your commands.

<sup>101</sup> I have avoided all evil conduct, because I want to obey your word.

<sup>102</sup> I have not neglected your instructions, because you yourself are my teacher.

<sup>103</sup> How sweet is the taste of your instructions -- sweeter even than honey!

<sup>104</sup> I gain wisdom from your laws, and so I hate all bad conduct.

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path.

<sup>106</sup> I will keep my solemn promise to obey your just instructions.

<sup>107</sup> My sufferings, LORD, are terrible indeed; keep me alive, as you have promised.

<sup>108</sup>Accept my prayer of thanks, O LORD, and teach me your commands.

<sup>109</sup>I am always ready to risk my life; I have not forgotten your law.

<sup>110</sup>The wicked lay a trap for me, but I have not disobeyed your commands.

<sup>111</sup>Your commandments are my eternal possession; they are the joy of my heart.

<sup>112</sup>I have decided to obey your laws until the day I die.

<sup>113</sup>I hate those who are not completely loyal to you, but I love your law.

<sup>114</sup>You are my defender and protector; I put my hope in your promise.

<sup>115</sup>Go away from me, you sinful people. I will obey the commands of my God.

<sup>116</sup>Give me strength, as you promised, and I shall live; don't let me be disappointed in my hope!

<sup>117</sup>Hold me, and I will be safe, and I will always pay attention to your commands.

<sup>118</sup>You reject everyone who disobeys your laws; their deceitful schemes are useless.

<sup>119</sup>You treat all the wicked like rubbish, and so I love your instructions.

<sup>120</sup>Because of you I am afraid; I am filled with fear because of your judgments.

<sup>121</sup>I have done what is right and good; don't abandon me to my enemies!

<sup>122</sup>Promise that you will help your servant; don't let the arrogant oppress me!

<sup>123</sup>My eyes are tired from watching for your saving help, for the deliverance you promised.

<sup>124</sup>Treat me according to your constant love, and teach me your commands.

<sup>125</sup>I am your servant; give me understanding, so that I may know your teachings.

<sup>126</sup>LORD, it is time for you to act, because people are disobeying your law.

<sup>127</sup>I love your commands more than gold, more than the finest gold.

<sup>128</sup>And so I follow all your instructions; I hate all wrong ways.

<sup>129</sup>Your teachings are wonderful; I obey them with all my heart.

<sup>130</sup>The explanation of your teachings gives light and brings wisdom to the ignorant.

<sup>131</sup> In my desire for your commands I pant with open mouth.

<sup>132</sup> Turn to me and have mercy on me as you do on all those who love you.

<sup>133</sup> As you have promised, keep me from falling; don't let me be overcome by evil.

<sup>134</sup> Save me from those who oppress me, so that I may obey your commands.

<sup>135</sup> Bless me with your presence and teach me your laws.

<sup>136</sup> My tears pour down like a river, because people do not obey your law.

<sup>137</sup> You are righteous, LORD, and your laws are just.

<sup>138</sup> The rules that you have given are completely fair and right.

<sup>139</sup> My anger burns in me like a fire, because my enemies disregard your commands.

<sup>140</sup> How certain your promise is! How I love it!

<sup>141</sup> I am unimportant and despised, but I do not neglect your teachings.

<sup>142</sup> Your righteousness will last forever, and your law is always true.

<sup>143</sup> I am filled with trouble and anxiety, but your commandments bring me joy.



<sup>144</sup>Your instructions are always just; give me understanding, and I shall live.

<sup>145</sup>With all my heart I call to you; answer me, LORD, and I will obey your commands!

<sup>146</sup>I call to you; save me, and I will keep your laws.

<sup>147</sup>Before sunrise I call to you for help; I place my hope in your promise.

<sup>148</sup>All night long I lie awake, to meditate on your instructions.

<sup>149</sup>Because your love is constant, hear me, O LORD; show your mercy, and preserve my life!

<sup>150</sup>My cruel persecutors are coming closer, people who never keep your law.

<sup>151</sup>But you are near to me, LORD, and all your commands are permanent.

<sup>152</sup>Long ago I learned about your instructions; you made them to last forever.

<sup>153</sup>Look at my suffering, and save me, because I have not neglected your law.

<sup>154</sup>Defend my cause, and set me free; save me, as you have promised.

<sup>155</sup>The wicked will not be saved, for they do not obey your laws.

<sup>156</sup>But your compassion, LORD, is great; show your mercy and save me!

<sup>157</sup>I have many enemies and oppressors, but I do not fail to obey your laws.

<sup>158</sup>When I look at those traitors, I am filled with disgust, because they do not keep your commands.

<sup>159</sup>See how I love your instructions, LORD. Your love never changes, so save me!

<sup>160</sup>The heart of your law is truth, and all your righteous judgments are eternal.

<sup>161</sup>Powerful people attack me unjustly, but I respect your law.

<sup>162</sup>How happy I am because of your promises -- as happy as someone who finds rich treasure.

<sup>163</sup>I hate and detest all lies, but I love your law.

<sup>164</sup>Seven times each day I thank you for your righteous judgments.

<sup>165</sup>Those who love your law have perfect security, and there is nothing that can make them fall.

<sup>166</sup>I wait for you to save me, LORD, and I do what you command.

<sup>167</sup> I obey your teachings; I love them with all my heart.

<sup>168</sup> I obey your commands and your instructions; you see everything I do.

<sup>169</sup> Let my cry for help reach you, LORD! Give me understanding, as you have promised.

<sup>170</sup> Listen to my prayer, and save me according to your promise!

<sup>171</sup> I will always praise you, because you teach me your laws.

<sup>172</sup> I will sing about your law, because your commands are just.

<sup>173</sup> Always be ready to help me, because I follow your commands.

<sup>174</sup> How I long for your saving help, O LORD! I find happiness in your law.

<sup>175</sup> Give me life, so that I may praise you; may your instructions help me.

<sup>176</sup> I wander about like a lost sheep; so come and look for me, your servant, because I have not neglected your laws.

**120**<sup>1</sup> When I was in trouble, I called to the LORD, and he answered me.

<sup>2</sup> Save me, LORD, from liars and deceivers.

<sup>3</sup>You liars, what will God do to you?  
How will he punish you?

<sup>4</sup>With a soldier's sharp arrows, with  
red-hot coals!

<sup>5</sup>Living among you is as bad as living in  
Meshech or among the people of Kedar.

<sup>6</sup>I have lived too long with people who  
hate peace!

<sup>7</sup>When I speak of peace, they are for  
war.

**121** <sup>1</sup>I look to the mountains;  
where will my help come from?

<sup>2</sup>My help will come from the LORD, who  
made heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup>He will not let you fall; your protector  
is always awake.

<sup>4</sup>The protector of Israel never dozes or  
sleeps.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD will guard you; he is by  
your side to protect you.

<sup>6</sup>The sun will not hurt you during the  
day, nor the moon during the night.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD will protect you from all  
danger; he will keep you safe.

<sup>8</sup>He will protect you as you come and  
go now and forever.

**122** <sup>1</sup>I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the LORD's house.

<sup>2</sup>And now we are here, standing inside the gates of Jerusalem!

<sup>3</sup>Jerusalem is a city restored in beautiful order and harmony.

<sup>4</sup>This is where the tribes come, the tribes of Israel, to give thanks to the LORD according to his command.

<sup>5</sup>Here the kings of Israel sat to judge their people.

<sup>6</sup>Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May those who love you prosper.

<sup>7</sup>May there be peace inside your walls and safety in your palaces.

<sup>8</sup>For the sake of my relatives and friends I say to Jerusalem, Peace be with you!

<sup>9</sup>For the sake of the house of the LORD our God I pray for your prosperity.

**123** <sup>1</sup>LORD, I look up to you, up to heaven, where you rule.

<sup>2</sup>As a servant depends on his master, as a maid depends on her mistress, so we will keep looking to you, O LORD our God, until you have mercy on us.

<sup>3</sup> Be merciful to us, LORD, be merciful; we have been treated with so much contempt.

<sup>4</sup> We have been mocked too long by the rich and scorned by proud oppressors.

**124** <sup>1</sup> What if the LORD had not been on our side? Answer, O Israel!

<sup>2</sup> If the LORD had not been on our side when our enemies attacked us,

<sup>3</sup> then they would have swallowed us alive in their furious anger against us;

<sup>4</sup> then the flood would have carried us away, the water would have covered us,

<sup>5</sup> the raging torrent would have drowned us.

<sup>6</sup> Let us thank the LORD, who has not let our enemies destroy us.

<sup>7</sup> We have escaped like a bird from a hunter's trap; the trap is broken, and we are free!

<sup>8</sup> Our help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

**125** <sup>1</sup> Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which can never be shaken, never be moved.

<sup>2</sup>As the mountains surround Jerusalem,  
so the LORD surrounds his people, now  
and forever.

<sup>3</sup>The wicked will not always rule over  
the land of the righteous; if they did, the  
righteous themselves might do evil.

<sup>4</sup>LORD, do good to those who are good,  
to those who obey your commands.

<sup>5</sup>But when you punish the wicked,  
punish also those who abandon your  
ways. Peace be with Israel!

**126** <sup>1</sup>When the LORD brought us  
back to Jerusalem, it was like  
a dream!

<sup>2</sup>How we laughed, how we sang for joy!  
Then the other nations said about us,  
The LORD did great things for them.

<sup>3</sup>Indeed he did great things for us; how  
happy we were!

<sup>4</sup>LORD, make us prosperous again, just  
as the rain brings water back to dry  
riverbeds.

<sup>5</sup>Let those who wept as they planted  
their crops, gather the harvest with joy!

<sup>6</sup>Those who wept as they went out  
carrying the seed will come back singing  
for joy, as they bring in the harvest.

**127** <sup>1</sup>If the LORD does not build the house, the work of the builders is useless; if the LORD does not protect the city, it does no good for the sentries to stand guard.

<sup>2</sup>It is useless to work so hard for a living, getting up early and going to bed late. For the LORD provides for those he loves, while they are asleep.

<sup>3</sup>Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a real blessing.

<sup>4</sup>The sons a man has when he is young are like arrows in a soldier's hand.

<sup>5</sup>Happy is the man who has many such arrows. He will never be defeated when he meets his enemies in the place of judgment.

**128** <sup>1</sup>Happy are those who obey the LORD, who live by his commands.

<sup>2</sup>Your work will provide for your needs; you will be happy and prosperous.

<sup>3</sup>Your wife will be like a fruitful vine in your home, and your children will be like young olive trees around your table.

<sup>4</sup>A man who obeys the LORD will surely be blessed like this.



<sup>5</sup> May the LORD bless you from Zion!  
May you see Jerusalem prosper all the  
days of your life!

<sup>6</sup> May you live to see your grandchildren!  
Peace be with Israel!

**129** <sup>1</sup> Israel, tell us how your  
enemies have persecuted you  
ever since you were young.

<sup>2</sup> Ever since I was young, my enemies  
have persecuted me cruelly, but they  
have not overcome me.

<sup>3</sup> They cut deep wounds in my back and  
made it like a plowed field.

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD, the righteous one, has  
freed me from slavery.

<sup>5</sup> May everyone who hates Zion be  
defeated and driven back.

<sup>6</sup> May they all be like grass growing on  
the housetops, which dries up before it  
can grow;

<sup>7</sup> no one gathers it up or carries it away  
in bundles.

<sup>8</sup> No one who passes by will say, May  
the LORD bless you! We bless you in the  
name of the LORD.

**130** <sup>1</sup> From the depths of my  
despair I call to you, LORD.

<sup>2</sup>Hear my cry, O Lord; listen to my call for help!

<sup>3</sup>If you kept a record of our sins, who could escape being condemned?

<sup>4</sup>But you forgive us, so that we should stand in awe of you.

<sup>5</sup>I wait eagerly for the LORD's help, and in his word I trust.

<sup>6</sup>I wait for the Lord more eagerly than sentries wait for the dawn -- than sentries wait for the dawn.

<sup>7</sup>Israel, trust in the LORD, because his love is constant and he is always willing to save.

<sup>8</sup>He will save his people Israel from all their sins.

**131** <sup>1</sup>LORD, I have given up my pride and turned away from my arrogance. I am not concerned with great matters or with subjects too difficult for me.

<sup>2</sup>Instead, I am content and at peace. As a child lies quietly in its mother's arms, so my heart is quiet within me.

<sup>3</sup>Israel, trust in the LORD now and forever!

**132**<sup>1</sup> LORD, do not forget David and all the hardships he endured.

<sup>2</sup> Remember, LORD, what he promised, the vow he made to you, the Mighty God of Jacob:

<sup>3</sup> I will not go home or go to bed;

<sup>4</sup> I will not rest or sleep,

<sup>5</sup> until I provide a place for the LORD, a home for the Mighty God of Jacob.

<sup>6</sup> In Bethlehem we heard about the Covenant Box, and we found it in the fields of Jearim.

<sup>7</sup> We said, Let us go to the LORD's house; let us worship before his throne.

<sup>8</sup> Come to the Temple, LORD, with the Covenant Box, the symbol of your power, and stay here forever.

<sup>9</sup> May your priests do always what is right; may your people shout for joy!

<sup>10</sup> You made a promise to your servant David; do not reject your chosen king, LORD.

<sup>11</sup> You made a solemn promise to David -- a promise you will not take back: I will make one of your sons king, and he will rule after you.

<sup>12</sup>If your sons are true to my covenant and to the commands I give them, their sons, also, will succeed you for all time as kings.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD has chosen Zion; he wants to make it his home:

<sup>14</sup>This is where I will live forever; this is where I want to rule.

<sup>15</sup>I will richly provide Zion with all she needs; I will satisfy her poor with food.

<sup>16</sup>I will bless her priests in all they do, and her people will sing and shout for joy.

<sup>17</sup>Here I will make one of David's descendants a great king; here I will preserve the rule of my chosen king.

<sup>18</sup>I will cover his enemies with shame, but his kingdom will prosper and flourish.

**133**<sup>1</sup>How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for God's people to live together in harmony!

<sup>2</sup>It is like the precious anointing oil running down from Aaron's head and beard, down to the collar of his robes.

<sup>3</sup>It is like the dew on Mount Hermon, falling on the hills of Zion. That is where the LORD has promised his blessing -- life that never ends.

**134** <sup>1</sup> Come, praise the LORD, all his servants, all who serve in his Temple at night.

<sup>2</sup> Raise your hands in prayer in the Temple, and praise the LORD!

<sup>3</sup> May the LORD, who made heaven and earth, bless you from Zion!

**135** <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise his name, you servants of the LORD,

<sup>2</sup> who stand in the LORD's house, in the Temple of our God.

<sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, because he is good; sing praises to his name, because he is kind.

<sup>4</sup> He chose Jacob for himself, the people of Israel for his own.

<sup>5</sup> I know that our LORD is great, greater than all the gods.

<sup>6</sup> He does whatever he wishes in heaven and on earth, in the seas and in the depths below.

<sup>7</sup> He brings storm clouds from the ends of the earth; he makes lightning for the storms, and he brings out the wind from his storeroom.

<sup>8</sup> In Egypt he killed all the first-born of people and animals alike.

<sup>9</sup>There he performed miracles and wonders to punish the king and all his officials.

<sup>10</sup>He destroyed many nations and killed powerful kings:

<sup>11</sup>Sihon, king of the Amorites, Og, king of Bashan, and all the kings in Canaan.

<sup>12</sup>He gave their lands to his people; he gave them to Israel.

<sup>13</sup>LORD, you will always be proclaimed as God; all generations will remember you.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD will defend his people; he will take pity on his servants.

<sup>15</sup>The gods of the nations are made of silver and gold; they are formed by human hands.

<sup>16</sup>They have mouths, but cannot speak, and eyes, but cannot see.

<sup>17</sup>They have ears, but cannot hear; they are not even able to breathe.

<sup>18</sup>May all who made them and who trust in them become like the idols they have made!

<sup>19</sup>Praise the LORD, people of Israel; praise him, you priests of God!

<sup>20</sup>Praise the LORD, you Levites; praise him, all you that worship him!

<sup>21</sup> Praise the LORD in Zion, in Jerusalem,  
his home. Praise the LORD!

**136** <sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD,  
because he is good; his love is  
eternal.

<sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the greatest of all  
gods; his love is eternal.

<sup>3</sup> Give thanks to the mightiest of all  
lords; his love is eternal.

<sup>4</sup> He alone performs great miracles; his  
love is eternal.

<sup>5</sup> By his wisdom he made the heavens;  
his love is eternal;

<sup>6</sup> he built the earth on the deep waters;  
his love is eternal.

<sup>7</sup> He made the sun and the moon; his  
love is eternal;

<sup>8</sup> the sun to rule over the day; his love  
is eternal;

<sup>9</sup> the moon and the stars to rule over  
the night; his love is eternal.

<sup>10</sup> He killed the first-born sons of the  
Egyptians; his love is eternal.

<sup>11</sup> He led the people of Israel out of  
Egypt; his love is eternal;

<sup>12</sup> with his strong hand, his powerful  
arm; his love is eternal.

<sup>13</sup> He divided the Red Sea; his love is eternal;

<sup>14</sup> he led his people through it; his love is eternal;

<sup>15</sup> but he drowned the king of Egypt and his army; his love is eternal.

<sup>16</sup> He led his people through the desert; his love is eternal.

<sup>17</sup> He killed powerful kings; his love is eternal;

<sup>18</sup> he killed famous kings; his love is eternal;

<sup>19</sup> Sihon, king of the Amorites; his love is eternal;

<sup>20</sup> and Og, king of Bashan; his love is eternal.

<sup>21</sup> He gave their lands to his people; his love is eternal;

<sup>22</sup> he gave them to Israel, his servant; his love is eternal.

<sup>23</sup> He did not forget us when we were defeated; his love is eternal;

<sup>24</sup> he freed us from our enemies; his love is eternal.

<sup>25</sup> He gives food to every living creature; his love is eternal.

<sup>26</sup> Give thanks to the God of heaven; his love is eternal.



**137** <sup>1</sup>By the rivers of Babylon we sat down; there we wept when we remembered Zion.

<sup>2</sup>On the willows near by we hung up our harps.

<sup>3</sup>Those who captured us told us to sing; they told us to entertain them: Sing us a song about Zion.

<sup>4</sup>How can we sing a song to the LORD in a foreign land?

<sup>5</sup>May I never be able to play the harp again if I forget you, Jerusalem!

<sup>6</sup>May I never be able to sing again if I do not remember you, if I do not think of you as my greatest joy!

<sup>7</sup>Remember, LORD, what the Edomites did the day Jerusalem was captured. Remember how they kept saying, Tear it down to the ground!

<sup>8</sup>Babylon, you will be destroyed. Happy are those who pay you back for what you have done to us --

<sup>9</sup>who take your babies and smash them against a rock.

**138** <sup>1</sup>I thank you, LORD, with all my heart; I sing praise to you before the gods.

<sup>2</sup>I face your holy Temple, bow down, and praise your name because of your constant love and faithfulness, because you have shown that your name and your commands are supreme.

<sup>3</sup>You answered me when I called to you; with your strength you strengthened me.

<sup>4</sup>All the kings in the world will praise you, LORD, because they have heard your promises.

<sup>5</sup>They will sing about what you have done and about your great glory.

<sup>6</sup>Even though you are so high above, you care for the lowly, and the proud cannot hide from you.

<sup>7</sup>When I am surrounded by troubles, you keep me safe. You oppose my angry enemies and save me by your power.

<sup>8</sup>You will do everything you have promised; LORD, your love is eternal. Complete the work that you have begun.

**139** <sup>1</sup>LORD, you have examined me and you know me.

<sup>2</sup>You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts.

<sup>3</sup>You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions.

<sup>4</sup>Even before I speak, you already know what I will say.

<sup>5</sup>You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power.

<sup>6</sup>Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding.

<sup>7</sup>Where could I go to escape from you? Where could I get away from your presence?

<sup>8</sup>If I went up to heaven, you would be there; if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there.

<sup>9</sup>If I flew away beyond the east or lived in the farthest place in the west,

<sup>10</sup>you would be there to lead me, you would be there to help me.

<sup>11</sup>I could ask the darkness to hide me or the light around me to turn into night,

<sup>12</sup>but even darkness is not dark for you, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

<sup>13</sup>You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>I praise you because you are to be feared; all you do is strange and wonderful. I know it with all my heart.

<sup>15</sup>When my bones were being formed, carefully put together in my mother's womb, when I was growing there in secret, you knew that I was there --

<sup>16</sup>you saw me before I was born. The days allotted to me had all been recorded in your book, before any of them ever began.

<sup>17</sup>O God, how difficult I find your thoughts; how many of them there are!

<sup>18</sup>If I counted them, they would be more than the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

<sup>19</sup>O God, how I wish you would kill the wicked! How I wish violent people would leave me alone!

<sup>20</sup>They say wicked things about you; they speak evil things against your name.

<sup>21</sup>O LORD, how I hate those who hate you! How I despise those who rebel against you!

<sup>22</sup>I hate them with a total hatred; I regard them as my enemies.

<sup>23</sup>Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts.

<sup>24</sup> Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way.

**140** <sup>1</sup> Save me, LORD, from evildoers; keep me safe from violent people.

<sup>2</sup> They are always plotting evil, always stirring up quarrels.

<sup>3</sup> Their tongues are like deadly snakes; their words are like a cobra's poison.

<sup>4</sup> Protect me, LORD, from the power of the wicked; keep me safe from violent people who plot my downfall.

<sup>5</sup> The proud have set a trap for me; they have laid their snares, and along the path they have set traps to catch me.

<sup>6</sup> I say to the LORD, You are my God. Hear my cry for help, LORD!

<sup>7</sup> My Sovereign LORD, my strong defender, you have protected me in battle.

<sup>8</sup> LORD, don't give the wicked what they want; don't let their plots succeed.

<sup>9</sup> Don't let my enemies be victorious; make their threats against me fall back on them.

<sup>10</sup> May red-hot coals fall on them; may they be thrown into a pit and never get out.

<sup>11</sup> May those who accuse others falsely not succeed; may evil overtake violent people and destroy them.

<sup>12</sup> LORD, I know that you defend the cause of the poor and the rights of the needy.

<sup>13</sup> The righteous will praise you indeed; they will live in your presence.

**141** <sup>1</sup> I call to you, LORD; help me now! Listen to me when I call to you.

<sup>2</sup> Receive my prayer as incense, my uplifted hands as an evening sacrifice.

<sup>3</sup> LORD, place a guard at my mouth, a sentry at the door of my lips.

<sup>4</sup> Keep me from wanting to do wrong and from joining evil people in their wickedness. May I never take part in their feasts.

<sup>5</sup> Good people may punish me and rebuke me in kindness, but I will never accept honor from evil people, because I am always praying against their evil deeds.

<sup>6</sup> When their rulers are thrown down from rocky cliffs, the people will admit that my words were true.

<sup>7</sup> Like wood that is split and chopped into bits, so their bones are scattered at the edge of the grave.

<sup>8</sup> But I keep trusting in you, my Sovereign LORD. I seek your protection; don't let me die!

<sup>9</sup> Protect me from the traps they have set for me, from the snares of those evildoers.

<sup>10</sup> May the wicked fall into their own traps while I go by unharmed.

**142** <sup>1</sup> I call to the LORD for help; I plead with him.

<sup>2</sup> I bring him all my complaints; I tell him all my troubles.

<sup>3</sup> When I am ready to give up, he knows what I should do. In the path where I walk, my enemies have hidden a trap for me.

<sup>4</sup> When I look beside me, I see that there is no one to help me, no one to protect me. No one cares for me.

<sup>5</sup> LORD, I cry to you for help; you, LORD, are my protector; you are all I want in this life.

<sup>6</sup> Listen to my cry for help, for I am sunk in despair. Save me from my enemies; they are too strong for me.

<sup>7</sup> Set me free from my distress; then in the assembly of your people I will praise you because of your goodness to me.

**143** <sup>1</sup> LORD, hear my prayer! In your righteousness listen to my plea; answer me in your faithfulness!

<sup>2</sup> Don't put me, your servant, on trial; no one is innocent in your sight.

<sup>3</sup> My enemies have hunted me down and completely defeated me. They have put me in a dark prison, and I am like those who died long ago.

<sup>4</sup> So I am ready to give up; I am in deep despair.

<sup>5</sup> I remember the days gone by; I think about all that you have done, I bring to mind all your deeds.

<sup>6</sup> I lift up my hands to you in prayer; like dry ground my soul is thirsty for you.

<sup>7</sup> Answer me now, LORD! I have lost all hope. Don't hide yourself from me, or I will be among those who go down to the world of the dead.

<sup>8</sup> Remind me each morning of your constant love, for I put my trust in you. My prayers go up to you; show me the way I should go.



<sup>9</sup>I go to you for protection, LORD;  
rescue me from my enemies.

<sup>10</sup>You are my God; teach me to do your  
will. Be good to me, and guide me on a  
safe path.

<sup>11</sup>Rescue me, LORD, as you have  
promised; in your goodness save me  
from my troubles!

<sup>12</sup>Because of your love for me, kill my  
enemies and destroy all my oppressors,  
for I am your servant.

**144**<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD, my  
protector! He trains me for  
battle and prepares me for war.

<sup>2</sup>He is my protector and defender, my  
shelter and savior, in whom I trust for  
safety. He subdues the nations under  
me.

<sup>3</sup>LORD, what are mortals, that you  
notice them; mere mortals, that you pay  
attention to us?

<sup>4</sup>We are like a puff of wind; our days  
are like a passing shadow.

<sup>5</sup>O LORD, tear the sky open and come  
down; touch the mountains, and they  
will pour out smoke.

<sup>6</sup>Send flashes of lightning and scatter your enemies; shoot your arrows and send them running.

<sup>7</sup>Reach down from above, pull me out of the deep water, and rescue me; save me from the power of foreigners,

<sup>8</sup>who never tell the truth and lie even under oath.

<sup>9</sup>I will sing you a new song, O God; I will play the harp and sing to you.

<sup>10</sup>You give victory to kings and rescue your servant David.

<sup>11</sup>Save me from my cruel enemies; rescue me from the power of foreigners, who never tell the truth and lie even under oath.

<sup>12</sup>May our sons in their youth be like plants that grow up strong. May our daughters be like stately columns which adorn the corners of a palace.

<sup>13</sup>May our barns be filled with crops of every kind. May the sheep in our fields bear young by the tens of thousands.

<sup>14</sup>May our cattle reproduce plentifully without miscarriage or loss. May there be no cries of distress in our streets.

<sup>15</sup>Happy is the nation of whom this is true; happy are the people whose God is the LORD!

**145**<sup>1</sup> I will proclaim your greatness, my God and king; I will thank you forever and ever.

<sup>2</sup>Every day I will thank you; I will praise you forever and ever.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD is great and is to be highly praised; his greatness is beyond understanding.

<sup>4</sup>What you have done will be praised from one generation to the next; they will proclaim your mighty acts.

<sup>5</sup>They will speak of your glory and majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful deeds.

<sup>6</sup>People will speak of your mighty deeds, and I will proclaim your greatness.

<sup>7</sup>They will tell about all your goodness and sing about your kindness.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD is loving and merciful, slow to become angry and full of constant love.

<sup>9</sup>He is good to everyone and has compassion on all he made.

<sup>10</sup>All your creatures, LORD, will praise you, and all your people will give you thanks.

<sup>11</sup>They will speak of the glory of your royal power and tell of your might,

<sup>12</sup>so that everyone will know your mighty deeds and the glorious majesty of your kingdom.

<sup>13</sup>Your rule is eternal, and you are king forever. The LORD is faithful to his promises; he is merciful in all his acts.

<sup>14</sup>He helps those who are in trouble; he lifts those who have fallen.

<sup>15</sup>All living things look hopefully to you, and you give them food when they need it.

<sup>16</sup>You give them enough and satisfy the needs of all.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD is righteous in all he does, merciful in all his acts.

<sup>18</sup>He is near to those who call to him, who call to him with sincerity.

<sup>19</sup>He supplies the needs of those who honor him; he hears their cries and saves them.

<sup>20</sup>He protects everyone who loves him, but he will destroy the wicked.

<sup>21</sup> I will always praise the LORD; let all his creatures praise his holy name forever.

**146** <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, my soul!

<sup>2</sup> I will praise him as long as I live; I will sing to my God all my life.

<sup>3</sup> Don't put your trust in human leaders; no human being can save you.

<sup>4</sup> When they die, they return to the dust; on that day all their plans come to an end.

<sup>5</sup> Happy are those who have the God of Jacob to help them and who depend on the LORD their God,

<sup>6</sup> the Creator of heaven, earth, and sea, and all that is in them. He always keeps his promises;

<sup>7</sup> he judges in favor of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free

<sup>8</sup> and gives sight to the blind. He lifts those who have fallen; he loves his righteous people.

<sup>9</sup> He protects the strangers who live in our land; he helps widows and orphans, but takes the wicked to their ruin.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD is king forever. Your God, O Zion, will reign for all time. Praise the LORD!

**147** <sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! It is good to sing praise to our God; it is pleasant and right to praise him.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD is restoring Jerusalem; he is bringing back the exiles.

<sup>3</sup>He heals the broken-hearted and bandages their wounds.

<sup>4</sup>He has decided the number of the stars and calls each one by name.

<sup>5</sup>Great and mighty is our Lord; his wisdom cannot be measured.

<sup>6</sup>He raises the humble, but crushes the wicked to the ground.

<sup>7</sup>Sing hymns of praise to the LORD; play music on the harp to our God.

<sup>8</sup>He spreads clouds over the sky; he provides rain for the earth and makes grass grow on the hills.

<sup>9</sup>He gives animals their food and feeds the young ravens when they call.

<sup>10</sup>His pleasure is not in strong horses, nor his delight in brave soldiers;

<sup>11</sup>but he takes pleasure in those who honor him, in those who trust in his constant love.

<sup>12</sup>Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!

<sup>13</sup>He keeps your gates strong; he blesses your people.

<sup>14</sup>He keeps your borders safe and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

<sup>15</sup>He gives a command to the earth, and what he says is quickly done.

<sup>16</sup>He spreads snow like a blanket and scatters frost like dust.

<sup>17</sup>He sends hail like gravel; no one can endure the cold he sends!

<sup>18</sup>Then he gives a command, and the ice melts; he sends the wind, and the water flows.

<sup>19</sup>He gives his message to his people, his instructions and laws to Israel.

<sup>20</sup>He has not done this for other nations; they do not know his laws.  
Praise the LORD!

**148**<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from heaven, you that live in the heights above.

<sup>2</sup>Praise him, all his angels, all his heavenly armies.

<sup>3</sup>Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, shining stars.

<sup>4</sup> Praise him, highest heavens, and the waters above the sky.

<sup>5</sup> Let them all praise the name of the LORD! He commanded, and they were created;

<sup>6</sup> by his command they were fixed in their places forever, and they cannot disobey.

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth, sea monsters and all ocean depths;

<sup>8</sup> lightning and hail, snow and clouds, strong winds that obey his command.

<sup>9</sup> Praise him, hills and mountains, fruit trees and forests;

<sup>10</sup> all animals, tame and wild, reptiles and birds.

<sup>11</sup> Praise him, kings and all peoples, princes and all other rulers;

<sup>12</sup> young women and young men, old people and children too.

<sup>13</sup> Let them all praise the name of the LORD! His name is greater than all others; his glory is above earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> He made his nation strong, so that all his people praise him -- the people of Israel, so dear to him. Praise the LORD!



**149**<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Sing a new song to the LORD; praise him in the assembly of his faithful people!

<sup>2</sup> Be glad, Israel, because of your Creator; rejoice, people of Zion, because of your king!

<sup>3</sup> Praise his name with dancing; play drums and harps in praise of him.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD takes pleasure in his people; he honors the humble with victory.

<sup>5</sup> Let God's people rejoice in their triumph and sing joyfully all night long.

<sup>6</sup> Let them shout aloud as they praise God, with their sharp swords in their hands

<sup>7</sup> to defeat the nations and to punish the peoples;

<sup>8</sup> to bind their kings in chains, their leaders in chains of iron;

<sup>9</sup> to punish the nations as God has commanded. This is the victory of God's people. Praise the LORD!

**150**<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise God in his Temple! Praise his strength in heaven!

<sup>2</sup> Praise him for the mighty things he has done. Praise his supreme greatness.

<sup>3</sup> Praise him with trumpets. Praise him with harps and lyres.

<sup>4</sup> Praise him with drums and dancing. Praise him with harps and flutes.

<sup>5</sup> Praise him with cymbals. Praise him with loud cymbals.

<sup>6</sup> Praise the LORD, all living creatures! Praise the LORD!

# Proverbs

**1** <sup>1</sup> The proverbs of Solomon, son of David and king of Israel.

<sup>2</sup> Here are proverbs that will help you recognize wisdom and good advice, and understand sayings with deep meaning.

<sup>3</sup> They can teach you how to live intelligently and how to be honest, just, and fair.

<sup>4</sup> They can make an inexperienced person clever and teach young people how to be resourceful.

<sup>5</sup> These proverbs can even add to the knowledge of the wise and give guidance to the educated,

<sup>6</sup> so that they can understand the hidden meanings of proverbs and the problems that the wise raise.

<sup>7</sup> To have knowledge, you must first have reverence for the LORD. Stupid people have no respect for wisdom and refuse to learn.

<sup>8</sup> My child, pay attention to what your father and mother tell you.

<sup>9</sup>Their teaching will improve your character as a handsome turban or a necklace improves your appearance.

<sup>10</sup>My child, when sinners tempt you, don't give in.

<sup>11</sup>Suppose they say, Come on; let's find someone to kill! Let's attack some innocent people for the fun of it!

<sup>12</sup>They may be alive and well when we find them, but they'll be dead when we're through with them!

<sup>13</sup>We'll find all kinds of riches and fill our houses with loot!

<sup>14</sup>Come and join us, and we'll all share what we steal.

<sup>15</sup>My child, don't go with people like that. Stay away from them.

<sup>16</sup>They can't wait to do something bad. They're always ready to kill.

<sup>17</sup>It does no good to spread a net when the bird you want to catch is watching,

<sup>18</sup>but people like that are setting a trap for themselves, a trap in which they will die.

<sup>19</sup>Robbery always claims the life of the robber -- this is what happens to anyone who lives by violence.

<sup>20</sup> Listen! Wisdom is calling out in the streets and marketplaces,

<sup>21</sup> calling loudly at the city gates and wherever people come together:

<sup>22</sup> Foolish people! How long do you want to be foolish? How long will you enjoy making fun of knowledge? Will you never learn?

<sup>23</sup> Listen when I reprimand you; I will give you good advice and share my knowledge with you.

<sup>24</sup> I have been calling you, inviting you to come, but you would not listen. You paid no attention to me.

<sup>25</sup> You have ignored all my advice and have not been willing to let me correct you.

<sup>26</sup> So when you get into trouble, I will laugh at you. I will make fun of you when terror strikes --

<sup>27</sup> when it comes on you like a storm, bringing fierce winds of trouble, and you are in pain and misery.

<sup>28</sup> Then you will call for wisdom, but I will not answer. You may look for me everywhere, but you will not find me.

<sup>29</sup>You have never had any use for knowledge and have always refused to obey the LORD.

<sup>30</sup>You have never wanted my advice or paid any attention when I corrected you.

<sup>31</sup>So then, you will get what you deserve, and your own actions will make you sick.

<sup>32</sup>Inexperienced people die because they reject wisdom. Stupid people are destroyed by their own lack of concern.

<sup>33</sup>But whoever listens to me will have security. He will be safe, with no reason to be afraid.

**2**<sup>1</sup> My child, learn what I teach you and never forget what I tell you to do.

<sup>2</sup> Listen to what is wise and try to understand it.

<sup>3</sup> Yes, beg for knowledge; plead for insight.

<sup>4</sup> Look for it as hard as you would for silver or some hidden treasure.

<sup>5</sup> If you do, you will know what it means to fear the LORD and you will succeed in learning about God.

<sup>6</sup> It is the LORD who gives wisdom; from him come knowledge and understanding.

<sup>7</sup> He provides help and protection for those who are righteous and honest.

<sup>8</sup> He protects those who treat others fairly, and guards those who are devoted to him.

<sup>9</sup> If you listen to me, you will know what is right, just, and fair. You will know what you should do.

<sup>10</sup> You will become wise, and your knowledge will give you pleasure.

<sup>11</sup> Your insight and understanding will protect you

<sup>12</sup> and prevent you from doing the wrong thing. They will keep you away from people who stir up trouble by what they say --

<sup>13</sup> those who have abandoned a righteous life to live in the darkness of sin,

<sup>14</sup> those who find pleasure in doing wrong and who enjoy senseless evil,

<sup>15</sup> unreliable people who cannot be trusted.

<sup>16</sup> You will be able to resist any immoral woman who tries to seduce you with her smooth talk,

<sup>17</sup> who is faithless to her own husband and forgets her sacred vows.

<sup>18</sup>If you go to her house, you are traveling the road to death. To go there is to approach the world of the dead.

<sup>19</sup>No one who visits her ever comes back. He never returns to the road to life.

<sup>20</sup>So you must follow the example of good people and live a righteous life.

<sup>21</sup>Righteous people -- people of integrity -- will live in this land of ours.

<sup>22</sup>But God will snatch the wicked from the land and pull sinners out of it like plants from the ground.

**3**<sup>1</sup> My child, don't forget what I teach you. Always remember what I tell you to do.

<sup>2</sup>My teaching will give you a long and prosperous life.

<sup>3</sup>Never let go of loyalty and faithfulness. Tie them around your neck; write them on your heart.

<sup>4</sup>If you do this, both God and people will be pleased with you.

<sup>5</sup>Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know.

<sup>6</sup>Remember the LORD in everything you do, and he will show you the right way.



<sup>7</sup> Never let yourself think that you are wiser than you are; simply obey the LORD and refuse to do wrong.

<sup>8</sup> If you do, it will be like good medicine, healing your wounds and easing your pains.

<sup>9</sup> Honor the LORD by making him an offering from the best of all that your land produces.

<sup>10</sup> If you do, your barns will be filled with grain, and you will have too much wine to store it all.

<sup>11</sup> My child, when the LORD corrects you, pay close attention and take it as a warning.

<sup>12</sup> The LORD corrects those he loves, as parents correct a child of whom they are proud.

<sup>13</sup> Happy is anyone who becomes wise -- who comes to have understanding.

<sup>14</sup> There is more profit in it than there is in silver; it is worth more to you than gold.

<sup>15</sup> Wisdom is more valuable than jewels; nothing you could want can compare with it.

<sup>16</sup> Wisdom offers you long life, as well as wealth and honor.

<sup>17</sup>Wisdom can make your life pleasant and lead you safely through it.

<sup>18</sup>Those who become wise are happy; wisdom will give them life.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD created the earth by his wisdom; by his knowledge he set the sky in place.

<sup>20</sup>His wisdom caused the rivers to flow and the clouds to give rain to the earth.

<sup>21</sup>My child, hold on to your wisdom and insight. Never let them get away from you.

<sup>22</sup>They will provide you with life -- a pleasant and happy life.

<sup>23</sup>You can go safely on your way and never even stumble.

<sup>24</sup>You will not be afraid when you go to bed, and you will sleep soundly through the night.

<sup>25</sup>You will not have to worry about sudden disasters, such as come on the wicked like a storm.

<sup>26</sup>The LORD will keep you safe. He will not let you fall into a trap.

<sup>27</sup>Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it.

<sup>28</sup>Never tell your neighbors to wait until tomorrow if you can help them now.

<sup>29</sup> Don't plan anything that will hurt your neighbors; they live beside you, trusting you.

<sup>30</sup> Don't argue with others for no reason when they have never done you any harm.

<sup>31</sup> Don't be jealous of violent people or decide to act as they do,

<sup>32</sup> because the LORD hates people who do evil, but he takes righteous people into his confidence.

<sup>33</sup> The LORD puts a curse on the homes of the wicked, but blesses the homes of the righteous.

<sup>34</sup> He has no use for conceited people, but shows favor to those who are humble.

<sup>35</sup> Wise people will gain an honorable reputation, but stupid people will only add to their own disgrace.

**4**<sup>1</sup> My children, listen to what your father teaches you. Pay attention, and you will have understanding.

<sup>2</sup> What I am teaching you is good, so remember it all.

<sup>3</sup> When I was only a little boy, my parents' only son,

<sup>4</sup> my father would teach me. He would say, Remember what I say and never forget it. Do as I tell you, and you will live.

<sup>5</sup> Get wisdom and insight! Do not forget or ignore what I say.

<sup>6</sup> Do not abandon wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will keep you safe.

<sup>7</sup> Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do. Whatever else you get, get insight.

<sup>8</sup> Love wisdom, and she will make you great. Embrace her, and she will bring you honor.

<sup>9</sup> She will be your crowning glory.

<sup>10</sup> Listen to me, my child. Take seriously what I am telling you, and you will live a long life.

<sup>11</sup> I have taught you wisdom and the right way to live.

<sup>12</sup> Nothing will stand in your way if you walk wisely, and you will not stumble when you run.

<sup>13</sup> Always remember what you have learned. Your education is your life -- guard it well.

<sup>14</sup> Do not go where evil people go. Do not follow the example of the wicked.

<sup>15</sup> Don't do it! Keep away from evil! Refuse it and go on your way.

<sup>16</sup> Wicked people cannot sleep unless they have done something wrong. They lie awake unless they have hurt someone.

<sup>17</sup> Wickedness and violence are like food and drink to them.

<sup>18</sup> The road the righteous travel is like the sunrise, getting brighter and brighter until daylight has come.

<sup>19</sup> The road of the wicked, however, is dark as night. They fall, but cannot see what they have stumbled over.

<sup>20</sup> My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen to my words.

<sup>21</sup> Never let them get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your heart.

<sup>22</sup> They will give life and health to anyone who understands them.

<sup>23</sup> Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.

<sup>24</sup> Never say anything that isn't true. Have nothing to do with lies and misleading words.

<sup>25</sup> Look straight ahead with honest confidence; don't hang your head in shame.

<sup>26</sup> Plan carefully what you do, and whatever you do will turn out right.

<sup>27</sup> Avoid evil and walk straight ahead. Don't go one step off the right way.

**5**<sup>1</sup> My child, pay attention and listen to my wisdom and insight.

<sup>2</sup> Then you will know how to behave properly, and your words will show that you have knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> The lips of another man's wife may be as sweet as honey and her kisses as smooth as olive oil,

<sup>4</sup> but when it is all over, she leaves you nothing but bitterness and pain.

<sup>5</sup> She will take you down to the world of the dead; the road she walks is the road to death.

<sup>6</sup> She does not stay on the road to life; but wanders off, and does not realize what is happening.

<sup>7</sup> Now listen to me, sons, and never forget what I am saying.

<sup>8</sup> Keep away from such a woman! Don't even go near her door!

<sup>9</sup>If you do, others will gain the respect that you once had, and you will die young at the hands of merciless people.

<sup>10</sup>Yes, strangers will take all your wealth, and what you have worked for will belong to someone else.

<sup>11</sup>You will lie groaning on your deathbed, your flesh and muscles being eaten away,

<sup>12</sup>and you will say, Why would I never learn? Why would I never let anyone correct me?

<sup>13</sup>I wouldn't listen to my teachers. I paid no attention to them.

<sup>14</sup>And suddenly I found myself publicly disgraced.

<sup>15</sup>Be faithful to your own wife and give your love to her alone.

<sup>16</sup>Children that you have by other women will do you no good.

<sup>17</sup>Your children should grow up to help you, not strangers.

<sup>18</sup>So be happy with your wife and find your joy with the woman you married --

<sup>19</sup>pretty and graceful as a deer. Let her charms keep you happy; let her surround you with her love.

<sup>20</sup> Son, why should you give your love to another woman? Why should you prefer the charms of another man's wife?

<sup>21</sup> The LORD sees everything you do. Wherever you go, he is watching.

<sup>22</sup> The sins of the wicked are a trap. They get caught in the net of their own sin.

<sup>23</sup> They die because they have no self-control. Their utter stupidity will send them to their graves.

**6**<sup>1</sup> My child, have you promised to be responsible for someone else's debts?

<sup>2</sup> Have you been caught by your own words, trapped by your own promises?

<sup>3</sup> Well then, my child, you are in that person's power, but this is how to get out of it: hurry to him, and beg him to release you.

<sup>4</sup> Don't let yourself go to sleep or even stop to rest.

<sup>5</sup> Get out of the trap like a bird or a deer escaping from a hunter.

<sup>6</sup> Lazy people should learn a lesson from the way ants live.

<sup>7</sup> They have no leader, chief, or ruler,



<sup>8</sup> but they store up their food during the summer, getting ready for winter.

<sup>9</sup> How long is the lazy man going to lie around? When is he ever going to get up?

<sup>10</sup> I'll just take a short nap, he says; I'll fold my hands and rest a while.

<sup>11</sup> But while he sleeps, poverty will attack him like an armed robber.

<sup>12</sup> Worthless, wicked people go around telling lies.

<sup>13</sup> They wink and make gestures to deceive you,

<sup>14</sup> all the while planning evil in their perverted minds, stirring up trouble everywhere.

<sup>15</sup> Because of this, disaster will strike them without warning, and they will be fatally wounded.

<sup>16</sup> There are seven things that the LORD hates and cannot tolerate: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that kill innocent people, a mind that thinks up wicked plans, feet that hurry off to do evil, a witness who tells one lie after another, and someone who stirs up trouble among friends.

<sup>17</sup> (6: 16)

<sup>18</sup> (6:16)

<sup>19</sup> (6:16)

<sup>20</sup> Son, do what your father tells you and never forget what your mother taught you.

<sup>21</sup> Keep their words with you always, locked in your heart.

<sup>22</sup> Their teaching will lead you when you travel, protect you at night, and advise you during the day.

<sup>23</sup> Their instructions are a shining light; their correction can teach you how to live.

<sup>24</sup> It can keep you away from bad women, from the seductive words of other men's wives.

<sup>25</sup> Don't be tempted by their beauty; don't be trapped by their flirting eyes.

<sup>26</sup> A man can hire a prostitute for the price of a loaf of bread, but adultery will cost him all he has.

<sup>27</sup> Can you carry fire against your chest without burning your clothes?

<sup>28</sup> Can you walk on hot coals without burning your feet?

<sup>29</sup> It is just as dangerous to sleep with another man's wife. Whoever does it will suffer.

<sup>30</sup> People don't despise a thief if he steals food when he is hungry;

<sup>31</sup> yet if he is caught, he must pay back seven times more -- he must give up everything he has.

<sup>32</sup> But a man who commits adultery doesn't have any sense. He is just destroying himself.

<sup>33</sup> He will be dishonored and beaten up; he will be permanently disgraced.

<sup>34</sup> A husband is never angrier than when he is jealous; his revenge knows no limits.

<sup>35</sup> He will not accept any payment; no amount of gifts will satisfy his anger.

**7** <sup>1</sup> My child, remember what I say and never forget what I tell you to do.

<sup>2</sup> Do what I say, and you will live. Be as careful to follow my teaching as you are to protect your eyes.

<sup>3</sup> Keep my teaching with you all the time; write it on your heart.

<sup>4</sup> Treat wisdom as your sister, and insight as your closest friend.

<sup>5</sup> They will keep you away from other men's wives, from women with seductive words.

<sup>6</sup>Once I was looking out the window of my house,

<sup>7</sup>and I saw many inexperienced young men, but noticed one foolish fellow in particular.

<sup>8</sup>He was walking along the street near the corner where a certain woman lived. He was passing near her house

<sup>9</sup>in the evening after it was dark.

<sup>10</sup>And then she met him; she was dressed like a prostitute and was making plans.

<sup>11</sup>She was a bold and shameless woman who always walked the streets

<sup>12</sup>or stood waiting at a corner, sometimes in the streets, sometimes in the marketplace.

<sup>13</sup>She threw her arms around the young man, kissed him, looked him straight in the eye, and said,

<sup>14</sup>I made my offerings today and have the meat from the sacrifices.

<sup>15</sup>So I came out looking for you. I wanted to find you, and here you are!

<sup>16</sup>I've covered my bed with sheets of colored linen from Egypt.

<sup>17</sup>I've perfumed it with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

<sup>18</sup> Come on! Let's make love all night long. We'll be happy in each other's arms.

<sup>19</sup> My husband isn't at home. He's on a long trip.

<sup>20</sup> He took plenty of money with him and won't be back for two weeks.

<sup>21</sup> So she tempted him with her charms, and he gave in to her smooth talk.

<sup>22</sup> Suddenly he was going with her like an ox on the way to be slaughtered, like a deer prancing into a trap

<sup>23</sup> where an arrow would pierce its heart. He was like a bird going into a net -- he did not know that his life was in danger.

<sup>24</sup> Now then, sons, listen to me. Pay attention to what I say.

<sup>25</sup> Do not let such a woman win your heart; don't go wandering after her.

<sup>26</sup> She has been the ruin of many men and caused the death of too many to count.

<sup>27</sup> If you go to her house, you are on the way to the world of the dead. It is a shortcut to death.

**8**<sup>1</sup> Listen! Wisdom is calling out.  
Reason is making herself heard.

<sup>2</sup>On the hilltops near the road and at the crossroads she stands.

<sup>3</sup>At the entrance to the city, beside the gates, she calls:

<sup>4</sup>I appeal to all of you; I call to everyone on earth.

<sup>5</sup>Are you immature? Learn to be mature. Are you foolish? Learn to have sense.

<sup>6</sup>Listen to my excellent words; all I tell you is right.

<sup>7</sup>What I say is the truth; lies are hateful to me.

<sup>8</sup>Everything I say is true; nothing is false or misleading.

<sup>9</sup>To those with insight, it is all clear; to the well-informed, it is all plain.

<sup>10</sup>Choose my instruction instead of silver; choose knowledge rather than the finest gold.

<sup>11</sup>I am Wisdom, I am better than jewels; nothing you want can compare with me.

<sup>12</sup>I am Wisdom, and I have insight; I have knowledge and sound judgment.

<sup>13</sup>To honor the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil ways and false words.

<sup>14</sup>I make plans and carry them out. I have understanding, and I am strong.

<sup>15</sup>I help kings to govern and rulers to make good laws.

<sup>16</sup>Every ruler on earth governs with my help, officials and nobles alike.

<sup>17</sup>I love those who love me; whoever looks for me can find me.

<sup>18</sup>I have riches and honor to give, prosperity and success.

<sup>19</sup>What you get from me is better than the finest gold, better than the purest silver.

<sup>20</sup>I walk the way of righteousness; I follow the paths of justice,

<sup>21</sup>giving wealth to those who love me, filling their houses with treasures.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD created me first of all, the first of his works, long ago.

<sup>23</sup>I was made in the very beginning, at the first, before the world began.

<sup>24</sup>I was born before the oceans, when there were no springs of water.

<sup>25</sup>I was born before the mountains, before the hills were set in place,

<sup>26</sup>before God made the earth and its fields or even the first handful of soil.

<sup>27</sup> I was there when he set the sky in place, when he stretched the horizon across the ocean,

<sup>28</sup> when he placed the clouds in the sky, when he opened the springs of the ocean

<sup>29</sup> and ordered the waters of the sea to rise no further than he said. I was there when he laid the earth's foundations.

<sup>30</sup> I was beside him like an architect, I was his daily source of joy, always happy in his presence --

<sup>31</sup> happy with the world and pleased with the human race.

<sup>32</sup> Now, young people, listen to me. Do as I say, and you will be happy.

<sup>33</sup> Listen to what you are taught. Be wise; do not neglect it.

<sup>34</sup> Those who listen to me will be happy -- those who stay at my door every day, waiting at the entrance to my home.

<sup>35</sup> Those who find me find life, and the LORD will be pleased with them.

<sup>36</sup> Those who do not find me hurt themselves; anyone who hates me loves death.

**9**<sup>1</sup> Wisdom has built her house and made seven columns for it.



<sup>2</sup>She has had an animal killed for a feast, mixed spices in the wine, and set the table.

<sup>3</sup>She has sent her servant women to call out from the highest place in town:

<sup>4</sup>Come in, ignorant people! And to the foolish she says,

<sup>5</sup>Come, eat my food and drink the wine that I have mixed.

<sup>6</sup>Leave the company of ignorant people, and live. Follow the way of knowledge.

<sup>7</sup>If you correct conceited people, you will only be insulted. If you reprimand evil people, you will only get hurt.

<sup>8</sup>Never correct conceited people; they will hate you for it. But if you correct the wise, they will respect you.

<sup>9</sup>Anything you say to the wise will make them wiser. Whatever you tell the righteous will add to their knowledge.

<sup>10</sup>To be wise you must first have reverence for the LORD. If you know the Holy One, you have understanding.

<sup>11</sup>Wisdom will add years to your life.

<sup>12</sup>You are the one who will profit if you have wisdom, and if you reject it, you are the one who will suffer.

<sup>13</sup> Stupidity is like a loud, ignorant, shameless woman.

<sup>14</sup> She sits at the door of her house or on a seat in the highest part of town,

<sup>15</sup> and calls out to people passing by, who are minding their own business:

<sup>16</sup> Come in, ignorant people! To the foolish she says,

<sup>17</sup> Stolen water is sweeter. Stolen bread tastes better.

<sup>18</sup> Her victims do not know that the people die who go to her house, that those who have already entered are now deep in the world of the dead.

**10**<sup>1</sup> These are Solomon's proverbs: Wise children make their fathers proud of them; foolish ones bring their mothers grief.

<sup>2</sup> Wealth you get by dishonesty will do you no good, but honesty can save your life.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD will not let good people go hungry, but he will keep the wicked from getting what they want.

<sup>4</sup> Being lazy will make you poor, but hard work will make you rich.

<sup>5</sup>A sensible person gathers the crops when they are ready; it is a disgrace to sleep through the time of harvest.

<sup>6</sup>Good people will receive blessings. The words of the wicked hide a violent nature.

<sup>7</sup>Good people will be remembered as a blessing, but the wicked will soon be forgotten.

<sup>8</sup>Sensible people accept good advice. People who talk foolishly will come to ruin.

<sup>9</sup>Honest people are safe and secure, but the dishonest will be caught.

<sup>10</sup>Someone who holds back the truth causes trouble, but one who openly criticizes works for peace.

<sup>11</sup>A good person's words are a fountain of life, but a wicked person's words hide a violent nature.

<sup>12</sup>Hate stirs up trouble, but love forgives all offenses.

<sup>13</sup>Intelligent people talk sense, but stupid people need to be punished.

<sup>14</sup>The wise get all the knowledge they can, but when fools speak, trouble is not far off.

<sup>15</sup>Wealth protects the rich; poverty destroys the poor.

<sup>16</sup>The reward for doing good is life, but sin leads only to more sin.

<sup>17</sup>People who listen when they are corrected will live, but those who will not admit that they are wrong are in danger.

<sup>18</sup>Anyone who hides hatred is a liar. Anyone who spreads gossip is a fool.

<sup>19</sup>The more you talk, the more likely you are to sin. If you are wise, you will keep quiet.

<sup>20</sup>A good person's words are like pure silver; a wicked person's ideas are worthless.

<sup>21</sup>A good person's words will benefit many people, but you can kill yourself with stupidity.

<sup>22</sup>It is the LORD's blessing that makes you wealthy. Hard work can make you no richer.

<sup>23</sup>It is foolish to enjoy doing wrong. Intelligent people take pleasure in wisdom.

<sup>24</sup>The righteous get what they want, but the wicked will get what they fear most.

<sup>25</sup> Storms come, and the wicked are blown away, but honest people are always safe.

<sup>26</sup> Never get a lazy person to do something for you; he will be as irritating as vinegar on your teeth or smoke in your eyes.

<sup>27</sup> Obey the LORD, and you will live longer. The wicked die before their time.

<sup>28</sup> The hopes of good people lead to joy, but wicked people can look forward to nothing.

<sup>29</sup> The LORD protects honest people, but destroys those who do wrong.

<sup>30</sup> Righteous people will always have security, but the wicked will not survive in the land.

<sup>31</sup> Righteous people speak wisdom, but the tongue that speaks evil will be stopped.

<sup>32</sup> Righteous people know the kind thing to say, but the wicked are always saying things that hurt.

**11** <sup>1</sup> The LORD hates people who use dishonest scales. He is happy with honest weights.

<sup>2</sup> People who are proud will soon be disgraced. It is wiser to be modest.

<sup>3</sup>If you are good, you are guided by honesty. People who can't be trusted are destroyed by their own dishonesty.

<sup>4</sup>Riches will do you no good on the day you face death, but honesty can save your life.

<sup>5</sup>Honesty makes a good person's life easier, but the wicked will cause their own downfall.

<sup>6</sup>Righteousness rescues those who are honest, but those who can't be trusted are trapped by their own greed.

<sup>7</sup>When the wicked die, their hope dies with them. Confidence placed in riches comes to nothing.

<sup>8</sup>The righteous are protected from trouble; it comes to the wicked instead.

<sup>9</sup>You can be ruined by the talk of godless people, but the wisdom of the righteous can save you.

<sup>10</sup>A city is happy when honest people have good fortune, and there are joyful shouts when the wicked die.

<sup>11</sup>A city becomes great when the righteous give it their blessing; but a city is brought to ruin by the words of the wicked.

<sup>12</sup>It is foolish to speak scornfully of others. If you are smart, you will keep quiet.

<sup>13</sup>No one who gossips can be trusted with a secret, but you can put confidence in someone who is trustworthy.

<sup>14</sup>A nation will fall if it has no guidance. Many advisers mean security.

<sup>15</sup>If you promise to pay a stranger's debt, you will regret it. You are better off if you don't get involved.

<sup>16</sup>A gracious woman is respected, but a woman without virtue is a disgrace. Lazy people will never have money, but aggressive people will get rich.

<sup>17</sup>You do yourself a favor when you are kind. If you are cruel, you only hurt yourself.

<sup>18</sup>Wicked people do not really gain anything, but if you do what is right, you are certain to be rewarded.

<sup>19</sup>Anyone who is determined to do right will live, but anyone who insists on doing wrong will die.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD hates evil-minded people, but loves those who do right.

<sup>21</sup> You can be sure that evil people will be punished, but the righteous will escape.

<sup>22</sup> Beauty in a woman without good judgment is like a gold ring in a pig's snout.

<sup>23</sup> What good people want always results in good; when the wicked get what they want, everyone is angry.

<sup>24</sup> Some people spend their money freely and still grow richer. Others are cautious, and yet grow poorer.

<sup>25</sup> Be generous, and you will be prosperous. Help others, and you will be helped.

<sup>26</sup> People curse someone who hoards grain, waiting for a higher price, but they praise the one who puts it up for sale.

<sup>27</sup> If your goals are good, you will be respected, but if you are looking for trouble, that is what you will get.

<sup>28</sup> Those who depend on their wealth will fall like the leaves of autumn, but the righteous will prosper like the leaves of summer.

<sup>29</sup> Those who bring trouble on their families will have nothing at the end.



Foolish people will always be servants to the wise.

<sup>30</sup> Righteousness gives life, but violence takes it away.

<sup>31</sup> Those who are good are rewarded here on earth, so you can be sure that wicked and sinful people will be punished.

**12**<sup>1</sup> Any who love knowledge want to be told when they are wrong. It is stupid to hate being corrected.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD is pleased with good people, but condemns those who plan evil.

<sup>3</sup> Wickedness does not give security, but righteous people stand firm.

<sup>4</sup> A good wife is her husband's pride and joy; but a wife who brings shame on her husband is like a cancer in his bones.

<sup>5</sup> Honest people will treat you fairly; the wicked only want to deceive you.

<sup>6</sup> The words of the wicked are murderous, but the words of the righteous rescue those who are threatened.

<sup>7</sup> The wicked meet their downfall and leave no descendants, but the families of the righteous live on.

<sup>8</sup>If you are intelligent, you will be praised; if you are stupid, people will look down on you.

<sup>9</sup>It is better to be an ordinary person working for a living than to play the part of someone great but go hungry.

<sup>10</sup>Good people take care of their animals, but wicked people are cruel to theirs.

<sup>11</sup>A hard-working farmer has plenty to eat, but it is stupid to waste time on useless projects.

<sup>12</sup>All that wicked people want is to find evil things to do, but the righteous stand firm.

<sup>13</sup>The wicked are trapped by their own words, but honest people get themselves out of trouble.

<sup>14</sup>Your reward depends on what you say and what you do; you will get what you deserve.

<sup>15</sup>Stupid people always think they are right. Wise people listen to advice.

<sup>16</sup>When a fool is annoyed, he quickly lets it be known. Smart people will ignore an insult.

<sup>17</sup>When you tell the truth, justice is done, but lies lead to injustice.

<sup>18</sup>Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but wisely spoken words can heal.

<sup>19</sup>A lie has a short life, but truth lives on forever.

<sup>20</sup>Those who plan evil are in for a rude surprise, but those who work for good will find happiness.

<sup>21</sup>Nothing bad happens to righteous people, but the wicked have nothing but trouble.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD hates liars, but is pleased with those who keep their word.

<sup>23</sup>Smart people keep quiet about what they know, but stupid people advertise their ignorance.

<sup>24</sup>Hard work will give you power; being lazy will make you a slave.

<sup>25</sup>Worry can rob you of happiness, but kind words will cheer you up.

<sup>26</sup>The righteous person is a guide to his friend, but the path of the wicked leads them astray.

<sup>27</sup>If you are lazy, you will never get what you are after, but if you work hard, you will get a fortune.

<sup>28</sup>Righteousness is the road to life; wickedness is the road to death.

**13**<sup>1</sup> Wise children pay attention when their parents correct them, but arrogant people never admit they are wrong.

<sup>2</sup> Good people will be rewarded for what they say, but those who are deceitful are hungry for violence.

<sup>3</sup> Be careful what you say and protect your life. A careless talker destroys himself.

<sup>4</sup> No matter how much a lazy person may want something, he will never get it. A hard worker will get everything he wants.

<sup>5</sup> Honest people hate lies, but the words of wicked people are shameful and disgraceful.

<sup>6</sup> Righteousness protects the innocent; wickedness is the downfall of sinners.

<sup>7</sup> Some people pretend to be rich, but have nothing. Others pretend to be poor, but own a fortune.

<sup>8</sup> The rich have to use their money to save their lives, but no one threatens the poor.

<sup>9</sup> The righteous are like a light shining brightly; the wicked are like a lamp flickering out.

<sup>10</sup>Arrogance causes nothing but trouble. It is wiser to ask for advice.

<sup>11</sup>The more easily you get your wealth, the sooner you will lose it. The harder it is to earn, the more you will have.

<sup>12</sup>When hope is crushed, the heart is crushed, but a wish come true fills you with joy.

<sup>13</sup>If you refuse good advice, you are asking for trouble; follow it and you are safe.

<sup>14</sup>The teachings of the wise are a fountain of life; they will help you escape when your life is in danger.

<sup>15</sup>Intelligence wins respect, but those who can't be trusted are on the road to ruin.

<sup>16</sup>Sensible people always think before they act, but stupid people advertise their ignorance.

<sup>17</sup>Unreliable messengers cause trouble, but those who can be trusted bring peace.

<sup>18</sup>Someone who will not learn will be poor and disgraced. Anyone who listens to correction is respected.

<sup>19</sup>How good it is to get what you want! Stupid people refuse to turn away from evil.

<sup>20</sup>Keep company with the wise and you will become wise. If you make friends with stupid people, you will be ruined.

<sup>21</sup>Trouble follows sinners everywhere, but righteous people will be rewarded with good things.

<sup>22</sup>Good people will have wealth to leave to their grandchildren, but the wealth of sinners will go to the righteous.

<sup>23</sup>Unused fields could yield plenty of food for the poor, but unjust people keep them from being farmed.

<sup>24</sup>If you don't punish your children, you don't love them. If you do love them, you will correct them.

<sup>25</sup>The righteous have enough to eat, but the wicked are always hungry.

**14**<sup>1</sup>Homes are made by the wisdom of women, but are destroyed by foolishness.

<sup>2</sup>Be honest and you show that you have reverence for the LORD; be dishonest and you show that you do not.

<sup>3</sup>Proud fools talk too much; the words of the wise protect them.

<sup>4</sup> Without any oxen to pull the plow your barn will be empty, but with them it will be full of grain.

<sup>5</sup> A reliable witness always tells the truth, but an unreliable one tells nothing but lies.

<sup>6</sup> Conceited people can never become wise, but intelligent people learn easily.

<sup>7</sup> Stay away from foolish people; they have nothing to teach you.

<sup>8</sup> Why is a clever person wise? Because he knows what to do. Why is a stupid person foolish? Because he only thinks he knows.

<sup>9</sup> Foolish people don't care if they sin, but good people want to be forgiven.

<sup>10</sup> Your joy is your own; your bitterness is your own. No one can share them with you.

<sup>11</sup> A good person's house will still be standing after an evildoer's house has been destroyed.

<sup>12</sup> What you think is the right road may lead to death.

<sup>13</sup> Laughter may hide sadness. When happiness is gone, sorrow is always there.

<sup>14</sup>Bad people will get what they deserve. Good people will be rewarded for their deeds.

<sup>15</sup>A fool will believe anything; smart people watch their step.

<sup>16</sup>Sensible people are careful to stay out of trouble, but stupid people are careless and act too quickly.

<sup>17</sup>People with a hot temper do foolish things; wiser people remain calm.

<sup>18</sup>Ignorant people get what their foolishness deserves, but the clever are rewarded with knowledge.

<sup>19</sup>Evil people will have to bow down to the righteous and humbly beg their favor.

<sup>20</sup>No one likes the poor, not even their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.

<sup>21</sup>If you want to be happy, be kind to the poor; it is a sin to despise anyone.

<sup>22</sup>You will earn the trust and respect of others if you work for good; if you work for evil, you are making a mistake.

<sup>23</sup>Work and you will earn a living; if you sit around talking you will be poor.



<sup>24</sup> Wise people are rewarded with wealth, but fools are known by their foolishness.

<sup>25</sup> A witness saves lives when he tells the truth; when he tells lies, he betrays people.

<sup>26</sup> Reverence for the LORD gives confidence and security to a man and his family.

<sup>27</sup> Do you want to avoid death? Reverence for the LORD is a fountain of life.

<sup>28</sup> A king's greatness depends on how many people he rules; without them he is nothing.

<sup>29</sup> If you stay calm, you are wise, but if you have a hot temper, you only show how stupid you are.

<sup>30</sup> Peace of mind makes the body healthy, but jealousy is like a cancer.

<sup>31</sup> If you oppress poor people, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to the poor is an act of worship.

<sup>32</sup> Wicked people bring about their own downfall by their evil deeds, but good people are protected by their integrity.

<sup>33</sup>Wisdom is in every thought of intelligent people; fools know nothing about wisdom.

<sup>34</sup>Righteousness makes a nation great; sin is a disgrace to any nation.

<sup>35</sup>Kings are pleased with competent officials, but they punish those who fail them.

**15**<sup>1</sup> A gentle answer quiets anger, but a harsh one stirs it up.

<sup>2</sup>When wise people speak, they make knowledge attractive, but stupid people spout nonsense.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD sees what happens everywhere; he is watching us, whether we do good or evil.

<sup>4</sup>Kind words bring life, but cruel words crush your spirit.

<sup>5</sup>It is foolish to ignore what your parents taught you; it is wise to accept their correction.

<sup>6</sup>Righteous people keep their wealth, but the wicked lose theirs when hard times come.

<sup>7</sup>Knowledge is spread by people who are wise, not by fools.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD is pleased when good people pray, but hates the sacrifices that the wicked bring him.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD hates the ways of evil people, but loves those who do what is right.

<sup>10</sup>If you do what is wrong, you will be severely punished; you will die if you do not let yourself be corrected.

<sup>11</sup>Not even the world of the dead can keep the LORD from knowing what is there; how then can we hide our thoughts from God?

<sup>12</sup>Conceited people do not like to be corrected; they never ask for advice from those who are wiser.

<sup>13</sup>When people are happy, they smile, but when they are sad, they look depressed.

<sup>14</sup>Intelligent people want to learn, but stupid people are satisfied with ignorance.

<sup>15</sup>The life of the poor is a constant struggle, but happy people always enjoy life.

<sup>16</sup>Better to be poor and fear the LORD than to be rich and in trouble.

<sup>17</sup> Better to eat vegetables with people you love than to eat the finest meat where there is hate.

<sup>18</sup> Hot tempers cause arguments, but patience brings peace.

<sup>19</sup> If you are lazy, you will meet difficulty everywhere, but if you are honest, you will have no trouble.

<sup>20</sup> Wise children make their fathers happy. Only fools despise their mothers.

<sup>21</sup> Stupid people are happy with their foolishness, but the wise will do what is right.

<sup>22</sup> Get all the advice you can, and you will succeed; without it you will fail.

<sup>23</sup> What a joy it is to find just the right word for the right occasion!

<sup>24</sup> Wise people walk the road that leads upward to life, not the road that leads downward to death.

<sup>25</sup> The LORD will destroy the homes of arrogant men, but he will protect a widow's property.

<sup>26</sup> The LORD hates evil thoughts, but he is pleased with friendly words.

<sup>27</sup> Try to make a profit dishonestly, and you get your family in trouble. Don't take bribes and you will live longer.

<sup>28</sup> Good people think before they answer. Evil people have a quick reply, but it causes trouble.

<sup>29</sup> When good people pray, the LORD listens, but he ignores those who are evil.

<sup>30</sup> Smiling faces make you happy, and good news makes you feel better.

<sup>31</sup> If you pay attention when you are corrected, you are wise.

<sup>32</sup> If you refuse to learn, you are hurting yourself. If you accept correction, you will become wiser.

<sup>33</sup> Reverence for the LORD is an education in itself. You must be humble before you can ever receive honors.

**16** <sup>1</sup> We may make our plans, but God has the last word.

<sup>2</sup> You may think everything you do is right, but the LORD judges your motives.

<sup>3</sup> Ask the LORD to bless your plans, and you will be successful in carrying them out.

<sup>4</sup> Everything the LORD has made has its destiny; and the destiny of the wicked is destruction.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD hates everyone who is arrogant; he will never let them escape punishment.

<sup>6</sup>Be loyal and faithful, and God will forgive your sin. Obey the LORD and nothing evil will happen to you.

<sup>7</sup>When you please the LORD, you can make your enemies into friends.

<sup>8</sup>It is better to have a little, honestly earned, than to have a large income, dishonestly gained.

<sup>9</sup>You may make your plans, but God directs your actions.

<sup>10</sup>The king speaks with divine authority; his decisions are always right.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD wants weights and measures to be honest and every sale to be fair.

<sup>12</sup>Kings cannot tolerate evil, because justice is what makes a government strong.

<sup>13</sup>A king wants to hear the truth and will favor those who speak it.

<sup>14</sup>A wise person will try to keep the king happy; if the king becomes angry, someone may die.

<sup>15</sup>The king's favor is like the clouds that bring rain in the springtime -- life is there.

<sup>16</sup>It is better -- much better -- to have wisdom and knowledge than gold and silver.

<sup>17</sup>Those who are good travel a road that avoids evil; so watch where you are going -- it may save your life.

<sup>18</sup>Pride leads to destruction, and arrogance to downfall.

<sup>19</sup>It is better to be humble and stay poor than to be one of the arrogant and get a share of their loot.

<sup>20</sup>Pay attention to what you are taught, and you will be successful; trust in the LORD and you will be happy.

<sup>21</sup>A wise, mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words, the more persuasive he is.

<sup>22</sup>Wisdom is a fountain of life to the wise, but trying to educate stupid people is a waste of time.

<sup>23</sup>Intelligent people think before they speak; what they say is then more persuasive.

<sup>24</sup>Kind words are like honey -- sweet to the taste and good for your health.

<sup>25</sup>What you think is the right road may lead to death.

<sup>26</sup>A laborer's appetite makes him work harder, because he wants to satisfy his hunger.

<sup>27</sup>Evil people look for ways to harm others; even their words burn with evil.

<sup>28</sup>Gossip is spread by wicked people; they stir up trouble and break up friendships.

<sup>29</sup>Violent people deceive their friends and lead them to disaster.

<sup>30</sup>Watch out for people who grin and wink at you; they have thought of something evil.

<sup>31</sup>Long life is the reward of the righteous; gray hair is a glorious crown.

<sup>32</sup>It is better to be patient than powerful. It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities.

<sup>33</sup>People cast lots to learn God's will, but God himself determines the answer.

**17** <sup>1</sup>Better to eat a dry crust of bread with peace of mind than have a banquet in a house full of trouble.

<sup>2</sup>A shrewd servant will gain authority over a master's worthless son and receive a part of the inheritance.



<sup>3</sup>Gold and silver are tested by fire, and a person's heart is tested by the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>Evil people listen to evil ideas, and liars listen to lies.

<sup>5</sup>If you make fun of poor people, you insult the God who made them. You will be punished if you take pleasure in someone's misfortune.

<sup>6</sup>Grandparents are proud of their grandchildren, just as children are proud of their parents.

<sup>7</sup>Respected people do not tell lies, and fools have nothing worthwhile to say.

<sup>8</sup>Some people think a bribe works like magic; they believe it can do anything.

<sup>9</sup>If you want people to like you, forgive them when they wrong you. Remembering wrongs can break up a friendship.

<sup>10</sup>An intelligent person learns more from one rebuke than a fool learns from being beaten a hundred times.

<sup>11</sup>Death will come like a cruel messenger to wicked people who are always stirring up trouble.

<sup>12</sup>It is better to meet a mother bear robbed of her cubs than to meet some fool busy with a stupid project.

<sup>13</sup>If you repay good with evil, you will never get evil out of your house.

<sup>14</sup>The start of an argument is like the first break in a dam; stop it before it goes any further.

<sup>15</sup>Condemning the innocent or letting the wicked go -- both are hateful to the LORD.

<sup>16</sup>It does a fool no good to spend money on an education, because he has no common sense.

<sup>17</sup>Friends always show their love. What are relatives for if not to share trouble?

<sup>18</sup>Only someone with no sense would promise to be responsible for someone else's debts.

<sup>19</sup>To like sin is to like making trouble. If you brag all the time, you are asking for trouble.

<sup>20</sup>Anyone who thinks and speaks evil can expect to find nothing good -- only disaster.

<sup>21</sup>There is nothing but sadness and sorrow for parents whose children do foolish things.

<sup>22</sup>Being cheerful keeps you healthy. It is slow death to be gloomy all the time.

<sup>23</sup> Corrupt judges accept secret bribes, and then justice is not done.

<sup>24</sup> An intelligent person aims at wise action, but a fool starts off in many directions.

<sup>25</sup> Foolish children bring grief to their fathers and bitter regrets to their mothers.

<sup>26</sup> It is not right to make an innocent person pay a fine; justice is perverted when good people are punished.

<sup>27</sup> Those who are sure of themselves do not talk all the time. People who stay calm have real insight.

<sup>28</sup> After all, even fools may be thought wise and intelligent if they stay quiet and keep their mouths shut.

**18**<sup>1</sup> People who do not get along with others are interested only in themselves; they will disagree with what everyone else knows is right.

<sup>2</sup> A fool does not care whether he understands a thing or not; all he wants to do is show how smart he is.

<sup>3</sup> Sin and shame go together. Lose your honor, and you will get scorn in its place.

<sup>4</sup> A person's words can be a source of wisdom, deep as the ocean, fresh as a flowing stream.

<sup>5</sup> It is not right to favor the guilty and keep the innocent from receiving justice.

<sup>6</sup> When some fool starts an argument, he is asking for a beating.

<sup>7</sup> When a fool speaks, he is ruining himself; he gets caught in the trap of his own words.

<sup>8</sup> Gossip is so tasty -- how we love to swallow it!

<sup>9</sup> A lazy person is as bad as someone who is destructive.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD is like a strong tower, where the righteous can go and be safe.

<sup>11</sup> Rich people, however, imagine that their wealth protects them like high, strong walls around a city.

<sup>12</sup> No one is respected unless he is humble; arrogant people are on the way to ruin.

<sup>13</sup> Listen before you answer. If you don't, you are being stupid and insulting.

<sup>14</sup> Your will to live can sustain you when you are sick, but if you lose it, your last hope is gone.

<sup>15</sup> Intelligent people are always eager and ready to learn.

<sup>16</sup> Do you want to meet an important person? Take a gift and it will be easy.

<sup>17</sup> The first person to speak in court always seems right until his opponent begins to question him.

<sup>18</sup> If two powerful people are opposing each other in court, casting lots can settle the issue.

<sup>19</sup> Help your relatives and they will protect you like a strong city wall, but if you quarrel with them, they will close their doors to you.

<sup>20</sup> You will have to live with the consequences of everything you say.

<sup>21</sup> What you say can preserve life or destroy it; so you must accept the consequences of your words.

<sup>22</sup> Find a wife and you find a good thing; it shows that the LORD is good to you.

<sup>23</sup> When the poor speak, they have to be polite, but when the rich answer, they are rude.

<sup>24</sup> Some friendships do not last, but some friends are more loyal than brothers.

**19**<sup>1</sup> It is better to be poor but honest than to be a lying fool.

<sup>2</sup> Enthusiasm without knowledge is not good; impatience will get you into trouble.

<sup>3</sup> Some people ruin themselves by their own stupid actions and then blame the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> Rich people are always finding new friends, but the poor cannot keep the few they have.

<sup>5</sup> If you tell lies in court, you will be punished -- there will be no escape.

<sup>6</sup> Everyone tries to gain the favor of important people; everyone claims the friendship of those who give out favors.

<sup>7</sup> Even the relatives of a poor person have no use for him; no wonder he has no friends. No matter how hard he tries, he cannot win any.

<sup>8</sup> Do yourself a favor and learn all you can; then remember what you learn and you will prosper.

<sup>9</sup> No one who tells lies in court can escape punishment; he is doomed.

<sup>10</sup> Fools should not live in luxury, and slaves should not rule over noblemen.

<sup>11</sup> If you are sensible, you will control your temper. When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it.

<sup>12</sup> The king's anger is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like welcome rain.

<sup>13</sup> Stupid children can bring their parents to ruin. A nagging wife is like water going drip-drip-drip.

<sup>14</sup> A man can inherit a house and money from his parents, but only the LORD can give him a sensible wife.

<sup>15</sup> Go ahead and be lazy; sleep on, but you will go hungry.

<sup>16</sup> Keep God's laws and you will live longer; if you ignore them, you will die.

<sup>17</sup> When you give to the poor, it is like lending to the LORD, and the LORD will pay you back.

<sup>18</sup> Discipline your children while they are young enough to learn. If you don't, you are helping them destroy themselves.

<sup>19</sup> If someone has a hot temper, let him take the consequences. If you get him out of trouble once, you will have to do it again.

<sup>20</sup> If you listen to advice and are willing to learn, one day you will be wise.

<sup>21</sup> People may plan all kinds of things, but the LORD's will is going to be done.

<sup>22</sup> It is a disgrace to be greedy; poor people are better off than liars.

<sup>23</sup> Obey the LORD and you will live a long life, content and safe from harm.

<sup>24</sup> Some people are too lazy to put food in their own mouths.

<sup>25</sup> Arrogance should be punished, so that people who don't know any better can learn a lesson. If you are wise, you will learn when you are corrected.

<sup>26</sup> Only a shameful, disgraceful person would mistreat his father or turn his mother away from his home.

<sup>27</sup> My child, when you stop learning, you will soon neglect what you already know.

<sup>28</sup> There is no justice where a witness is determined to hurt someone. Wicked people love the taste of evil.

<sup>29</sup> A conceited fool is sure to get a beating.

**20**<sup>1</sup> Drinking too much makes you loud and foolish. It's stupid to get drunk.

<sup>2</sup> Fear an angry king as you would a growling lion; making him angry is suicide.



<sup>3</sup> Any fool can start arguments; the honorable thing is to stay out of them.

<sup>4</sup> A farmer too lazy to plow his fields at the right time will have nothing to harvest.

<sup>5</sup> A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out.

<sup>6</sup> Everyone talks about how loyal and faithful he is, but just try to find someone who really is!

<sup>7</sup> Children are fortunate if they have a father who is honest and does what is right.

<sup>8</sup> The king sits in judgment and knows evil when he sees it.

<sup>9</sup> Can anyone really say that his conscience is clear, that he has gotten rid of his sin?

<sup>10</sup> The LORD hates people who use dishonest weights and measures.

<sup>11</sup> Even children show what they are by what they do; you can tell if they are honest and good.

<sup>12</sup> The LORD has given us eyes to see with and ears to listen with.

<sup>13</sup>If you spend your time sleeping, you will be poor. Keep busy and you will have plenty to eat.

<sup>14</sup>The customer always complains that the price is too high, but then he goes off and brags about the bargain he got.

<sup>15</sup>If you know what you are talking about, you have something more valuable than gold or jewels.

<sup>16</sup>Anyone stupid enough to promise to be responsible for a stranger's debts ought to have their own property held to guarantee payment.

<sup>17</sup>What you get by dishonesty you may enjoy like the finest food, but sooner or later it will be like a mouthful of sand.

<sup>18</sup>Get good advice and you will succeed; don't go charging into battle without a plan.

<sup>19</sup>A gossip can never keep a secret. Stay away from people who talk too much.

<sup>20</sup>If you curse your parents, your life will end like a lamp that goes out in the dark.

<sup>21</sup>The more easily you get your wealth, the less good it will do you.

<sup>22</sup> Don't take it on yourself to repay a wrong. Trust the LORD and he will make it right.

<sup>23</sup> The LORD hates people who use dishonest scales and weights.

<sup>24</sup> The LORD has determined our path; how then can anyone understand the direction his own life is taking?

<sup>25</sup> Think carefully before you promise an offering to God. You might regret it later.

<sup>26</sup> A wise king will find out who is doing wrong, and will punish him without pity.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD gave us mind and conscience; we cannot hide from ourselves.

<sup>28</sup> A king will remain in power as long as his rule is honest, just, and fair.

<sup>29</sup> We admire the strength of youth and respect the gray hair of age.

<sup>30</sup> Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.

**21** <sup>1</sup> The LORD controls the mind of a king as easily as he directs the course of a stream.

<sup>2</sup> You may think that everything you do is right, but remember that the LORD judges your motives.

<sup>3</sup> Do what is right and fair; that pleases the LORD more than bringing him sacrifices.

<sup>4</sup> Wicked people are controlled by their conceit and arrogance, and this is sinful.

<sup>5</sup> Plan carefully and you will have plenty; if you act too quickly, you will never have enough.

<sup>6</sup> The riches you get by dishonesty soon disappear, but not before they lead you into the jaws of death.

<sup>7</sup> The wicked are doomed by their own violence; they refuse to do what is right.

<sup>8</sup> Guilty people walk a crooked path; the innocent do what is right.

<sup>9</sup> Better to live on the roof than share the house with a nagging wife.

<sup>10</sup> Wicked people are always hungry for evil; they have no mercy on anyone.

<sup>11</sup> When someone who is conceited gets his punishment, even an unthinking person learns a lesson. One who is wise will learn from what he is taught.

<sup>12</sup> God, the righteous one, knows what goes on in the homes of the wicked, and he will bring the wicked down to ruin.

<sup>13</sup>If you refuse to listen to the cry of the poor, your own cry for help will not be heard.

<sup>14</sup>If someone is angry with you, a gift given secretly will calm him down.

<sup>15</sup>When justice is done, good people are happy, but evil people are brought to despair.

<sup>16</sup>Death is waiting for anyone who wanders away from good sense.

<sup>17</sup>Indulging in luxuries, wine, and rich food will never make you wealthy.

<sup>18</sup>The wicked bring on themselves the suffering they try to cause good people.

<sup>19</sup>Better to live out in the desert than with a nagging, complaining wife.

<sup>20</sup>Wise people live in wealth and luxury, but stupid people spend their money as fast as they get it.

<sup>21</sup>Be kind and honest and you will live a long life; others will respect you and treat you fairly.

<sup>22</sup>A shrewd general can take a city defended by strong men, and destroy the walls they relied on.

<sup>23</sup>If you want to stay out of trouble, be careful what you say.

<sup>24</sup>Show me a conceited person and I will show you someone who is arrogant, proud, and inconsiderate.

<sup>25</sup>Lazy people who refuse to work are only killing themselves;

<sup>26</sup>all they do is think about what they would like to have. The righteous, however, can give, and give generously.

<sup>27</sup>The LORD hates it when wicked people offer him sacrifices, especially if they do it from evil motives.

<sup>28</sup>The testimony of a liar is not believed, but the word of someone who thinks matters through is accepted.

<sup>29</sup>Righteous people are sure of themselves; the wicked have to pretend as best they can.

<sup>30</sup>Human wisdom, brilliance, insight -- they are of no help if the LORD is against you.

<sup>31</sup>You can get horses ready for battle, but it is the LORD who gives victory.

**22**<sup>1</sup>If you have to choose between a good reputation and great wealth, choose a good reputation.

<sup>2</sup>The rich and the poor have this in common: the LORD made them both.

<sup>3</sup>Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later.

<sup>4</sup>Obey the LORD, be humble, and you will get riches, honor, and a long life.

<sup>5</sup>If you love your life, stay away from the traps that catch the wicked along the way.

<sup>6</sup>Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their life.

<sup>7</sup>Poor people are slaves of the rich. Borrow money and you are the lender's slave.

<sup>8</sup>If you plant the seeds of injustice, disaster will spring up, and your oppression of others will end.

<sup>9</sup>Be generous and share your food with the poor. You will be blessed for it.

<sup>10</sup>Get rid of a conceited person, and then there will be no more arguments, quarreling, or name-calling.

<sup>11</sup>If you love purity of heart and graciousness of speech, the king will be your friend.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD sees to it that truth is kept safe by disproving the words of liars.

<sup>13</sup> Lazy people stay at home; they say a lion might get them if they go outside.

<sup>14</sup> Adultery is a trap -- it catches those with whom the LORD is angry.

<sup>15</sup> Children just naturally do silly, careless things, but a good spanking will teach them how to behave.

<sup>16</sup> If you make gifts to rich people or oppress the poor to get rich, you will become poor yourself.

<sup>17</sup> Listen, and I will teach you what the wise have said. Study their teachings,

<sup>18</sup> and you will be glad if you remember them and can quote them.

<sup>19</sup> I want you to put your trust in the LORD; that is why I am going to tell them to you now.

<sup>20</sup> I have written down thirty sayings for you. They contain knowledge and good advice,

<sup>21</sup> and will teach you what the truth really is. Then when you are sent to find it out, you will bring back the right answer.

<sup>22</sup> Don't take advantage of the poor just because you can; don't take advantage of those who stand helpless in court.



<sup>23</sup>The LORD will argue their case for them and threaten the life of anyone who threatens theirs.

<sup>24</sup>Don't make friends with people who have hot, violent tempers.

<sup>25</sup>You might learn their habits and not be able to change.

<sup>26</sup>Don't promise to be responsible for someone else's debts.

<sup>27</sup>If you should be unable to pay, they will take away even your bed.

<sup>28</sup>Never move an old property line that your ancestors established.

<sup>29</sup>Show me someone who does a good job, and I will show you someone who is better than most and worthy of the company of kings.

**23**<sup>1</sup>When you sit down to eat with someone important, keep in mind who he is.

<sup>2</sup>If you have a big appetite, restrain yourself.

<sup>3</sup>Don't be greedy for the fine food he serves; he may be trying to trick you.

<sup>4</sup>Be wise enough not to wear yourself out trying to get rich.

<sup>5</sup>Your money can be gone in a flash, as if it had grown wings and flown away like an eagle.

<sup>6</sup>Don't eat at the table of a stingy person or be greedy for the fine food he serves.

<sup>7</sup>Come on and have some more, he says, but he doesn't mean it. What he thinks is what he really is.

<sup>8</sup>You will vomit up what you have eaten, and all your flattery will be wasted.

<sup>9</sup>Don't try to talk sense to a fool; he can't appreciate it.

<sup>10</sup>Never move an old property line or take over land owned by orphans.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD is their powerful defender, and he will argue their case against you.

<sup>12</sup>Pay attention to your teacher and learn all you can.

<sup>13</sup>Don't hesitate to discipline children. A good spanking won't kill them.

<sup>14</sup>As a matter of fact, it may save their lives.

<sup>15</sup>My child, if you become wise, I will be very happy.

<sup>16</sup>I will be proud when I hear you speaking words of wisdom.

<sup>17</sup> Don't be envious of sinful people; let reverence for the LORD be the concern of your life.

<sup>18</sup> If it is, you have a bright future.

<sup>19</sup> Listen, my child, be wise and give serious thought to the way you live.

<sup>20</sup> Don't associate with people who drink too much wine or stuff themselves with food.

<sup>21</sup> Drunkards and gluttons will be reduced to poverty. If all you do is eat and sleep, you will soon be wearing rags.

<sup>22</sup> Listen to your father; without him you would not exist. When your mother is old, show her your appreciation.

<sup>23</sup> Truth, wisdom, learning, and good sense -- these are worth paying for, but too valuable for you to sell.

<sup>24</sup> A righteous person's parents have good reason to be happy. You can take pride in a wise child.

<sup>25</sup> Let your father and mother be proud of you; give your mother that happiness.

<sup>26</sup> Pay close attention, son, and let my life be your example.

<sup>27</sup> Prostitutes and immoral women are a deadly trap.

<sup>28</sup>They wait for you like robbers and cause many men to be unfaithful.

<sup>29</sup>Show me people who drink too much, who have to try out fancy drinks, and I will show you people who are miserable and sorry for themselves, always causing trouble and always complaining. Their eyes are bloodshot, and they have bruises that could have been avoided.

<sup>30</sup> (23: 29)

<sup>31</sup>Don't let wine tempt you, even though it is rich red, and it sparkles in the cup, and it goes down smoothly.

<sup>32</sup>The next morning you will feel as if you had been bitten by a poisonous snake.

<sup>33</sup>Weird sights will appear before your eyes, and you will not be able to think or speak clearly.

<sup>34</sup>You will feel as if you were out on the ocean, seasick, swinging high up in the rigging of a tossing ship.

<sup>35</sup>I must have been hit, you will say; I must have been beaten up, but I don't remember it. Why can't I wake up? I need another drink.

**24**<sup>1</sup> Don't be envious of evil people, and don't try to make friends with them.

<sup>2</sup>Causing trouble is all they ever think about; every time they open their mouth someone is going to be hurt.

<sup>3</sup>Homes are built on the foundation of wisdom and understanding.

<sup>4</sup>Where there is knowledge, the rooms are furnished with valuable, beautiful things.

<sup>5</sup>Being wise is better than being strong; yes, knowledge is more important than strength.

<sup>6</sup>After all, you must make careful plans before you fight a battle, and the more good advice you get, the more likely you are to win.

<sup>7</sup>Wise sayings are too deep for stupid people to understand. They have nothing to say when important matters are being discussed.

<sup>8</sup>If you are always planning evil, you will earn a reputation as a troublemaker.

<sup>9</sup>Any scheme a fool thinks up is sinful. People hate a person who has nothing but scorn for others.

<sup>10</sup>If you are weak in a crisis, you are weak indeed.

<sup>11</sup>Don't hesitate to rescue someone who is about to be executed unjustly.

<sup>12</sup>You may say that it is none of your business, but God knows and judges your motives. He keeps watch on you; he knows. And he will reward you according to what you do.

<sup>13</sup>My child, eat honey; it is good. And just as honey from the comb is sweet on your tongue,

<sup>14</sup>you may be sure that wisdom is good for the soul. Get wisdom and you have a bright future.

<sup>15</sup>Don't be like the wicked who scheme to rob honest people or to take away their homes.

<sup>16</sup>No matter how often honest people fall, they always get up again; but disaster destroys the wicked.

<sup>17</sup>Don't be glad when your enemies meet disaster, and don't rejoice when they stumble.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD will know if you are gloating, and he will not like it; and then maybe he won't punish them.

<sup>19</sup> Don't let evil people worry you; don't be envious of them.

<sup>20</sup> A wicked person has no future -- nothing to look forward to.

<sup>21</sup> Have reverence for the LORD, my child, and honor the king. Have nothing to do with people who rebel against them;

<sup>22</sup> such people could be ruined in a moment. Do you realize the disaster that God or the king can cause?

<sup>23</sup> The wise have also said these things: It is wrong for judges to be prejudiced.

<sup>24</sup> If they pronounce a guilty person innocent, they will be cursed and hated by everyone.

<sup>25</sup> Judges who punish the guilty, however, will be prosperous and enjoy a good reputation.

<sup>26</sup> An honest answer is a sign of true friendship.

<sup>27</sup> Don't build your house and establish a home until your fields are ready, and you are sure that you can earn a living.

<sup>28</sup> Don't give evidence against others without good reason, or say misleading things about them.

<sup>29</sup> Don't say, I'll do to them just what they did to me! I'll get even with them!

<sup>30</sup> I walked through the fields and vineyards of a lazy, stupid person.

<sup>31</sup> They were full of thorn bushes and overgrown with weeds. The stone wall around them had fallen down.

<sup>32</sup> I looked at this, thought about it, and learned a lesson from it:

<sup>33</sup> Go ahead and take your nap; go ahead and sleep. Fold your hands and rest awhile,

<sup>34</sup> but while you are asleep, poverty will attack you like an armed robber.

**25** <sup>1</sup> Here are more of Solomon's proverbs, copied by scribes at the court of King Hezekiah of Judah.

<sup>2</sup> We honor God for what he conceals; we honor kings for what they explain.

<sup>3</sup> You never know what a king is thinking; his thoughts are beyond us, like the heights of the sky or the depths of the ocean.

<sup>4</sup> Take the impurities out of silver and the artist can produce a thing of beauty.

<sup>5</sup> Keep evil advisers away from the king and his government will be known for its justice.



<sup>6</sup>When you stand before the king, don't try to impress him and pretend to be important.

<sup>7</sup>It is better to be asked to take a higher position than to be told to give your place to someone more important.

<sup>8</sup>Don't be too quick to go to court about something you have seen. If another witness later proves you wrong, what will you do then?

<sup>9</sup>If you and your neighbor have a difference of opinion, settle it between yourselves and do not reveal any secrets.

<sup>10</sup>Otherwise everyone will learn that you can't keep a secret, and you will never live down the shame.

<sup>11</sup>An idea well-expressed is like a design of gold, set in silver.

<sup>12</sup>A warning given by an experienced person to someone willing to listen is more valuable than gold rings or jewelry made of the finest gold.

<sup>13</sup>A reliable messenger is refreshing to the one who sends him, like cold water in the heat of harvest time.

<sup>14</sup>People who promise things that they never give are like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

<sup>15</sup> Patient persuasion can break down the strongest resistance and can even convince rulers.

<sup>16</sup> Never eat more honey than you need; too much may make you vomit.

<sup>17</sup> Don't visit your neighbors too often; they may get tired of you and come to hate you.

<sup>18</sup> A false accusation is as deadly as a sword, a club, or a sharp arrow.

<sup>19</sup> Depending on an unreliable person in a crisis is like trying to chew with a loose tooth or walk with a crippled foot.

<sup>20</sup> Singing to a person who is depressed is like taking off a person's clothes on a cold day or like rubbing salt in a wound.

<sup>21</sup> If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink.

<sup>22</sup> You will make them burn with shame, and the LORD will reward you.

<sup>23</sup> Gossip brings anger just as surely as the north wind brings rain.

<sup>24</sup> Better to live on the roof than share the house with a nagging wife.

<sup>25</sup> Finally hearing good news from a distant land is like a drink of cold water when you are dry and thirsty.

<sup>26</sup>A good person who gives in to someone who is evil reminds you of a polluted spring or a poisoned well.

<sup>27</sup>Too much honey is bad for you, and so is trying to win too much praise.

<sup>28</sup>If you cannot control your anger, you are as helpless as a city without walls, open to attack.

**26**<sup>1</sup> Praise for a fool is out of place, like snow in summer or rain at harvest time.

<sup>2</sup>Curses cannot hurt you unless you deserve them. They are like birds that fly by and never light.

<sup>3</sup>You have to whip a horse, you have to bridle a donkey, and you have to beat a fool.

<sup>4</sup>If you answer a silly question, you are just as silly as the person who asked it.

<sup>5</sup>Give a silly answer to a silly question, and the one who asked it will realize that he's not as smart as he thinks.

<sup>6</sup>If you let a fool deliver a message, you might as well cut off your own feet; you are asking for trouble.

<sup>7</sup>A fool can use a proverb about as well as crippled people can use their legs.

<sup>8</sup> Praising someone who is stupid makes as much sense as tying a stone in a sling.

<sup>9</sup> A fool quoting a wise saying reminds you of a drunk trying to pick a thorn out of his hand.

<sup>10</sup> An employer who hires any fool that comes along is only hurting everybody concerned.

<sup>11</sup> A fool doing some stupid thing a second time is like a dog going back to its vomit.

<sup>12</sup> The most stupid fool is better off than those who think they are wise when they are not.

<sup>13</sup> Why don't lazy people ever get out of the house? What are they afraid of? Lions?

<sup>14</sup> Lazy people turn over in bed. They get no farther than a door swinging on its hinges.

<sup>15</sup> Some people are too lazy to put food in their own mouths.

<sup>16</sup> A lazy person will think he is smarter than seven men who can give good reasons for their opinions.

<sup>17</sup> Getting involved in an argument that is none of your business is like going

down the street and grabbing a dog by the ears.

<sup>18</sup>Someone who tricks someone else and then claims that he was only joking is like a crazy person playing with a deadly weapon.

<sup>19</sup>(26: 18)

<sup>20</sup>Without wood, a fire goes out; without gossip, quarreling stops.

<sup>21</sup>Charcoal keeps the embers glowing, wood keeps the fire burning, and troublemakers keep arguments alive.

<sup>22</sup>Gossip is so tasty! How we love to swallow it!

<sup>23</sup>Insincere talk that hides what you are really thinking is like a fine glaze on a cheap clay pot.

<sup>24</sup>A hypocrite hides hate behind flattering words.

<sup>25</sup>They may sound fine, but don't believe him, because his heart is filled to the brim with hate.

<sup>26</sup>He may disguise his hatred, but everyone will see the evil things he does.

<sup>27</sup>People who set traps for others get caught themselves. People who start landslides get crushed.

<sup>28</sup>You have to hate someone to want to hurt him with lies. Insincere talk brings nothing but ruin.

**27** <sup>1</sup>Never boast about tomorrow. You don't know what will happen between now and then.

<sup>2</sup>Let other people praise you -- even strangers; never do it yourself.

<sup>3</sup>The weight of stone and sand is nothing compared to the trouble that stupidity can cause.

<sup>4</sup>Anger is cruel and destructive, but it is nothing compared to jealousy.

<sup>5</sup>Better to correct someone openly than to let him think you don't care for him at all.

<sup>6</sup>Friends mean well, even when they hurt you. But when an enemy puts his arm around your shoulder -- watch out!

<sup>7</sup>When you are full, you will refuse honey, but when you are hungry, even bitter food tastes sweet.

<sup>8</sup>Anyone away from home is like a bird away from its nest.

<sup>9</sup>Perfume and fragrant oils make you feel happier, but trouble shatters your peace of mind.

<sup>10</sup>Do not forget your friends or your father's friends. If you are in trouble, don't ask a relative for help; a nearby neighbor can help you more than relatives who are far away.

<sup>11</sup>Be wise, my child, and I will be happy; I will have an answer for anyone who criticizes me.

<sup>12</sup>Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later.

<sup>13</sup>Any people stupid enough to promise to be responsible for a stranger's debts deserve to have their own property held to guarantee payment.

<sup>14</sup>You might as well curse your friends as wake them up early in the morning with a loud greeting.

<sup>15</sup>A nagging wife is like water going drip-drip-drip on a rainy day.

<sup>16</sup>How can you keep her quiet? Have you ever tried to stop the wind or ever tried to hold a handful of oil?

<sup>17</sup>People learn from one another, just as iron sharpens iron.

<sup>18</sup>Take care of a fig tree and you will have figs to eat. Servants who take care of their master will be honored.

<sup>19</sup>It is your own face that you see reflected in the water and it is your own self that you see in your heart.

<sup>20</sup>Human desires are like the world of the dead -- there is always room for more.

<sup>21</sup>Fire tests gold and silver; a person's reputation can also be tested.

<sup>22</sup>Even if you beat fools half to death, you still can't beat their foolishness out of them.

<sup>23</sup>Look after your sheep and cattle as carefully as you can,

<sup>24</sup>because wealth is not permanent. Not even nations last forever.

<sup>25</sup>You cut the hay and then cut the grass on the hillsides while the next crop of hay is growing.

<sup>26</sup>You can make clothes from the wool of your sheep and buy land with the money you get from selling some of your goats.

<sup>27</sup>The rest of the goats will provide milk for you and your family, and for your servant women as well.



**28**<sup>1</sup> The wicked run when no one is chasing them, but an honest person is as brave as a lion.

<sup>2</sup> When a nation sins, it will have one ruler after another. But a nation will be strong and endure when it has intelligent, sensible leaders.

<sup>3</sup> Someone in authority who oppresses poor people is like a driving rain that destroys the crops.

<sup>4</sup> If you have no regard for the law, you are on the side of the wicked; but if you obey it, you are against them.

<sup>5</sup> Evil people do not know what justice is, but those who worship the LORD understand it well.

<sup>6</sup> Better to be poor and honest than rich and dishonest.

<sup>7</sup> Young people who obey the law are intelligent. Those who make friends with good-for-nothings are a disgrace to their parents.

<sup>8</sup> If you get rich by charging interest and taking advantage of people, your wealth will go to someone who is kind to the poor.

<sup>9</sup> If you do not obey the law, God will find your prayers too hateful to hear.

<sup>10</sup>If you trick an honest person into doing evil, you will fall into your own trap. The innocent will be well rewarded.

<sup>11</sup>Rich people always think they are wise, but a poor person who has insight into character knows better.

<sup>12</sup>When good people come to power, everybody celebrates, but when bad people rule, people stay in hiding.

<sup>13</sup>You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you.

<sup>14</sup>Always obey the LORD and you will be happy. If you are stubborn, you will be ruined.

<sup>15</sup>Poor people are helpless against a wicked ruler; he is as dangerous as a growling lion or a prowling bear.

<sup>16</sup>A ruler without good sense will be a cruel tyrant. One who hates dishonesty will rule a long time.

<sup>17</sup>Someone guilty of murder is digging his own grave as fast as he can. Don't try to stop him.

<sup>18</sup>Be honest and you will be safe. If you are dishonest, you will suddenly fall.

<sup>19</sup>A hard-working farmer has plenty to eat. People who waste time will always be poor.

<sup>20</sup>Honest people will lead a full, happy life. But if you are in a hurry to get rich, you are going to be punished.

<sup>21</sup>Prejudice is wrong. But some judges will do wrong to get even the smallest bribe.

<sup>22</sup>Selfish people are in such a hurry to get rich that they do not know when poverty is about to strike.

<sup>23</sup>Correct someone, and afterward he will appreciate it more than flattery.

<sup>24</sup>Anyone who thinks it isn't wrong to steal from his parents is no better than a common thief.

<sup>25</sup>Selfishness only causes trouble. You are much better off to trust the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>It is foolish to follow your own opinions. Be safe, and follow the teachings of wiser people.

<sup>27</sup>Give to the poor and you will never be in need. If you close your eyes to the poor, many people will curse you.

<sup>28</sup>People stay in hiding when the wicked come to power. But when they fall from power, the righteous will rule again.

**29**<sup>1</sup> If you get more stubborn every time you are corrected, one day you will be crushed and never recover.

<sup>2</sup> Show me a righteous ruler and I will show you a happy people. Show me a wicked ruler and I will show you a miserable people.

<sup>3</sup> If you appreciate wisdom, your parents will be proud of you. It is a foolish waste to spend money on prostitutes.

<sup>4</sup> When the king is concerned with justice, the nation will be strong, but when he is only concerned with money, he will ruin his country.

<sup>5</sup> If you flatter your friends, you set a trap for yourself.

<sup>6</sup> Evil people are trapped in their own sins, while honest people are happy and free.

<sup>7</sup> A good person knows the rights of the poor, but wicked people cannot understand such things.

<sup>8</sup> People with no regard for others can throw whole cities into turmoil. Those who are wise keep things calm.

<sup>9</sup>When an intelligent person brings a lawsuit against a fool, the fool only laughs and becomes loud and abusive.

<sup>10</sup>Bloodthirsty people hate anyone who's honest, but righteous people will protect the life of such a person.

<sup>11</sup>Stupid people express their anger openly, but sensible people are patient and hold it back.

<sup>12</sup>If a ruler pays attention to false information, all his officials will be liars.

<sup>13</sup>A poor person and his oppressor have this in common -- the LORD gave eyes to both of them.

<sup>14</sup>If a king defends the rights of the poor, he will rule for a long time.

<sup>15</sup>Correction and discipline are good for children. If they have their own way, they will make their mothers ashamed of them.

<sup>16</sup>When evil people are in power, crime increases. But the righteous will live to see the downfall of such people.

<sup>17</sup>Discipline your children and you can always be proud of them. They will never give you reason to be ashamed.

<sup>18</sup>A nation without God's guidance is a nation without order. Happy are those who keep God's law!

<sup>19</sup>You cannot correct servants just by talking to them. They may understand you, but they will pay no attention.

<sup>20</sup>There is more hope for a stupid fool than for someone who speaks without thinking.

<sup>21</sup>If you give your servants everything they want from childhood on, some day they will take over everything you own.

<sup>22</sup>People with quick tempers cause a lot of quarreling and trouble.

<sup>23</sup>Arrogance will bring your downfall, but if you are humble, you will be respected.

<sup>24</sup>A thief 's partner is his own worst enemy. He will be punished if he tells the truth in court, and God will curse him if he doesn't.

<sup>25</sup>It is dangerous to be concerned with what others think of you, but if you trust the LORD, you are safe.

<sup>26</sup>Everybody wants the good will of the ruler, but only from the LORD can you get justice.

<sup>27</sup> The righteous hate the wicked, and the wicked hate the righteous.

**30**<sup>1</sup> These are the solemn words of Agur son of Jakeh: God is not with me, God is not with me, and I am helpless.

<sup>2</sup> I am more like an animal than a human being; I do not have the sense we humans should have.

<sup>3</sup> I have never learned any wisdom, and I know nothing at all about God.

<sup>4</sup> Have any ever mastered heavenly knowledge? Have any ever caught the wind in their hands? Or wrapped up water in a piece of cloth? Or fixed the boundaries of the earth? Who are they, if you know? Who are their children?

<sup>5</sup> God keeps every promise he makes. He is like a shield for all who seek his protection.

<sup>6</sup> If you claim that he said something that he never said, he will reprimand you and show that you are a liar.

<sup>7</sup> I ask you, God, to let me have two things before I die:

<sup>8</sup> keep me from lying, and let me be neither rich nor poor. So give me only as much food as I need.

<sup>9</sup>If I have more, I might say that I do not need you. But if I am poor, I might steal and bring disgrace on my God.

<sup>10</sup>Never criticize servants to their master. You will be cursed and suffer for it.

<sup>11</sup>There are people who curse their fathers and do not show their appreciation for their mothers.

<sup>12</sup>There are people who think they are pure when they are as filthy as they can be.

<sup>13</sup>There are people who think they are so good -- oh, how good they think they are!

<sup>14</sup>There are people who take cruel advantage of the poor and needy; that is the way they make their living.

<sup>15</sup>A leech has two daughters, and both are named Give me! There are four things that are never satisfied:

<sup>16</sup>the world of the dead, a woman without children, dry ground that needs rain, and a fire burning out of control.

<sup>17</sup>If you make fun of your father or despise your mother in her old age, you ought to be eaten by vultures or have your eyes picked out by wild ravens.



<sup>18</sup>There are four things that are too mysterious for me to understand:

<sup>19</sup>an eagle flying in the sky, a snake moving on a rock, a ship finding its way over the sea, and a man and a woman falling in love.

<sup>20</sup>This is how an unfaithful wife acts: she commits adultery, takes a bath, and says, But I haven't done anything wrong!

<sup>21</sup>There are four things that the earth itself cannot tolerate:

<sup>22</sup>a slave who becomes a king, a fool who has all he wants to eat,

<sup>23</sup>a hateful woman who gets married, and a servant woman who takes the place of her mistress.

<sup>24</sup>There are four animals in the world that are small, but very, very clever:

<sup>25</sup>Ants: they are weak, but they store up their food in the summer.

<sup>26</sup>Rock badgers: they are not strong either, but they make their homes among the rocks.

<sup>27</sup>Locusts: they have no king, but they move in formation.

<sup>28</sup>Lizards: you can hold one in your hand, but you can find them in palaces.

<sup>29</sup> There are four things that are impressive to watch as they walk:

<sup>30</sup> lions, strongest of all animals and afraid of none;

<sup>31</sup> goats, strutting roosters, and kings in front of their people.

<sup>32</sup> If you have been foolish enough to be arrogant and plan evil, stop and think!

<sup>33</sup> If you churn milk, you get butter. If you hit someone's nose, it bleeds. If you stir up anger, you get into trouble.

**31** <sup>1</sup> These are the solemn words which King Lemuel's mother said to him:

<sup>2</sup> You are my own dear son, the answer to my prayers. What shall I tell you?

<sup>3</sup> Don't spend all your energy on sex and all your money on women; they have destroyed kings.

<sup>4</sup> Listen, Lemuel. Kings should not drink wine or have a craving for alcohol.

<sup>5</sup> When they drink, they forget the laws and ignore the rights of people in need.

<sup>6</sup> Alcohol is for people who are dying, for those who are in misery.

<sup>7</sup> Let them drink and forget their poverty and unhappiness.

<sup>8</sup>Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless.

<sup>9</sup>Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.

<sup>10</sup>How hard it is to find a capable wife! She is worth far more than jewels!

<sup>11</sup>Her husband puts his confidence in her, and he will never be poor.

<sup>12</sup>As long as she lives, she does him good and never harm.

<sup>13</sup>She keeps herself busy making wool and linen cloth.

<sup>14</sup>She brings home food from out-of-the-way places, as merchant ships do.

<sup>15</sup>She gets up before daylight to prepare food for her family and to tell her servant women what to do.

<sup>16</sup>She looks at land and buys it, and with money she has earned she plants a vineyard.

<sup>17</sup>She is a hard worker, strong and industrious.

<sup>18</sup>She knows the value of everything she makes, and works late into the night.

<sup>19</sup> She spins her own thread and weaves her own cloth.

<sup>20</sup> She is generous to the poor and needy.

<sup>21</sup> She doesn't worry when it snows, because her family has warm clothing.

<sup>22</sup> She makes bedspreads and wears clothes of fine purple linen.

<sup>23</sup> Her husband is well known, one of the leading citizens.

<sup>24</sup> She makes clothes and belts, and sells them to merchants.

<sup>25</sup> She is strong and respected and not afraid of the future.

<sup>26</sup> She speaks with a gentle wisdom.

<sup>27</sup> She is always busy and looks after her family's needs.

<sup>28</sup> Her children show their appreciation, and her husband praises her.

<sup>29</sup> He says, Many women are good wives, but you are the best of them all.

<sup>30</sup> Charm is deceptive and beauty disappears, but a woman who honors the LORD should be praised.

<sup>31</sup> Give her credit for all she does. She deserves the respect of everyone.

# Ecclesiastes

**1** <sup>1</sup> These are the words of the Philosopher, David's son, who was king in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> It is useless, useless, said the Philosopher. Life is useless, all useless.

<sup>3</sup> You spend your life working, laboring, and what do you have to show for it?

<sup>4</sup> Generations come and generations go, but the world stays just the same.

<sup>5</sup> The sun still rises, and it still goes down, going wearily back to where it must start all over again.

<sup>6</sup> The wind blows south, the wind blows north -- round and round and back again.

<sup>7</sup> Every river flows into the sea, but the sea is not yet full. The water returns to where the rivers began, and starts all over again.

<sup>8</sup> Everything leads to weariness -- a weariness too great for words. Our eyes can never see enough to be satisfied; our ears can never hear enough.

<sup>9</sup>What has happened before will happen again. What has been done before will be done again. There is nothing new in the whole world.

<sup>10</sup>Look, they say, here is something new! But no, it has all happened before, long before we were born.

<sup>11</sup>No one remembers what has happened in the past, and no one in days to come will remember what happens between now and then.

<sup>12</sup>I, the Philosopher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup>I determined that I would examine and study all the things that are done in this world. God has laid a miserable fate upon us.

<sup>14</sup>I have seen everything done in this world, and I tell you, it is all useless. It is like chasing the wind.

<sup>15</sup>You can't straighten out what is crooked; you can't count things that aren't there.

<sup>16</sup>I told myself, I have become a great man, far wiser than anyone who ruled Jerusalem before me. I know what wisdom and knowledge really are.

<sup>17</sup>I was determined to learn the difference between knowledge and foolishness, wisdom and madness. But I found out that I might as well be chasing the wind.

<sup>18</sup>The wiser you are, the more worries you have; the more you know, the more it hurts.

**2**<sup>1</sup> I decided to enjoy myself and find out what happiness is. But I found that this is useless, too.

<sup>2</sup>I discovered that laughter is foolish, that pleasure does you no good.

<sup>3</sup>Driven on by my desire for wisdom, I decided to cheer myself up with wine and have a good time. I thought that this might be the best way people can spend their short lives on earth.

<sup>4</sup>I accomplished great things. I built myself houses and planted vineyards.

<sup>5</sup>I planted gardens and orchards, with all kinds of fruit trees in them;

<sup>6</sup>I dug ponds to irrigate them.

<sup>7</sup>I bought many slaves, and there were slaves born in my household. I owned more livestock than anyone else who had ever lived in Jerusalem.

<sup>8</sup>I also piled up silver and gold from the royal treasuries of the lands I ruled. Men and women sang to entertain me, and I had all the women a man could want.

<sup>9</sup>Yes, I was great, greater than anyone else who had ever lived in Jerusalem, and my wisdom never failed me.

<sup>10</sup>Anything I wanted, I got. I did not deny myself any pleasure. I was proud of everything I had worked for, and all this was my reward.

<sup>11</sup>Then I thought about all that I had done and how hard I had worked doing it, and I realized that it didn't mean a thing. It was like chasing the wind -- of no use at all.

<sup>12</sup>After all, a king can only do what previous kings have done. So I started thinking about what it meant to be wise or reckless or foolish.

<sup>13</sup>Oh, I know, Wisdom is better than foolishness, just as light is better than darkness.

<sup>14</sup>The wise can see where they are going, and fools cannot. But I also know that the same fate is waiting for us all.

<sup>15</sup>I thought to myself, What happens to fools is going to happen to me, too. So



what have I gained from being so wise? Nothing, I answered, not a thing.

<sup>16</sup>No one remembers the wise, and no one remembers fools. In days to come, we will all be forgotten. We must all die -- wise and foolish alike.

<sup>17</sup>So life came to mean nothing to me, because everything in it had brought me nothing but trouble. It had all been useless; I had been chasing the wind.

<sup>18</sup>Nothing that I had worked for and earned meant a thing to me, because I knew that I would have to leave it to my successor,

<sup>19</sup>and he might be wise, or he might be foolish -- who knows? Yet he will own everything I have worked for, everything my wisdom has earned for me in this world. It is all useless.

<sup>20</sup>So I came to regret that I had worked so hard.

<sup>21</sup>You work for something with all your wisdom, knowledge, and skill, and then you have to leave it all to someone who hasn't had to work for it. It is useless, and it isn't right!

<sup>22</sup>You work and worry your way through life, and what do you have to show for it?

<sup>23</sup>As long as you live, everything you do brings nothing but worry and heartache. Even at night your mind can't rest. It is all useless.

<sup>24</sup>The best thing we can do is eat and drink and enjoy what we have earned. And yet, I realized that even this comes from God.

<sup>25</sup>How else could you have anything to eat or enjoy yourself at all?

<sup>26</sup>God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness to those who please him, but he makes sinners work, earning and saving, so that what they get can be given to those who please him. It is all useless. It is like chasing the wind.

**3**<sup>1</sup> Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses.

<sup>2</sup> He sets the time for birth and the time for death, the time for planting and the time for pulling up,

<sup>3</sup> the time for killing and the time for healing, the time for tearing down and the time for building.

<sup>4</sup> He sets the time for sorrow and the time for joy, the time for mourning and the time for dancing,

<sup>5</sup> the time for making love and the time for not making love, the time for kissing and the time for not kissing.

<sup>6</sup> He sets the time for finding and the time for losing, the time for saving and the time for throwing away,

<sup>7</sup> the time for tearing and the time for mending, the time for silence and the time for talk.

<sup>8</sup> He sets the time for love and the time for hate, the time for war and the time for peace.

<sup>9</sup> What do we gain from all our work?

<sup>10</sup> I know the heavy burdens that God has laid on us.

<sup>11</sup> He has set the right time for everything. He has given us a desire to know the future, but never gives us the satisfaction of fully understanding what he does.

<sup>12</sup> So I realized that all we can do is be happy and do the best we can while we are still alive.

<sup>13</sup>All of us should eat and drink and enjoy what we have worked for. It is God's gift.

<sup>14</sup>I know that everything God does will last forever. You can't add anything to it or take anything away from it. And one thing God does is to make us stand in awe of him.

<sup>15</sup>Whatever happens or can happen has already happened before. God makes the same thing happen again and again.

<sup>16</sup>In addition, I have also noticed that in this world you find wickedness where justice and right ought to be.

<sup>17</sup>I told myself, God is going to judge the righteous and the evil alike, because every thing, every action, will happen at its own set time.

<sup>18</sup>I decided that God is testing us, to show us that we are no better than animals.

<sup>19</sup>After all, the same fate awaits human beings and animals alike. One dies just like the other. They are the same kind of creature. A human being is no better off than an animal, because life has no meaning for either.

<sup>20</sup>They are both going to the same place -- the dust. They both came from it; they will both go back to it.

<sup>21</sup>How can anyone be sure that the human spirit goes upward while an animal's spirit goes down into the ground?

<sup>22</sup>So I realized then that the best thing we can do is enjoy what we have worked for. There is nothing else we can do. There is no way for us to know what will happen after we die.

**4**<sup>1</sup>Then I looked again at all the injustice that goes on in this world. The oppressed were crying, and no one would help them. No one would help them, because their oppressors had power on their side.

<sup>2</sup>I envy those who are dead and gone; they are better off than those who are still alive.

<sup>3</sup>But better off than either are those who have never been born, who have never seen the injustice that goes on in this world.

<sup>4</sup>I have also learned why people work so hard to succeed: it is because they envy the things their neighbors have.

But it is useless. It is like chasing the wind.

<sup>5</sup>They say that we would be fools to fold our hands and let ourselves starve to death.

<sup>6</sup>Maybe so, but it is better to have only a little, with peace of mind, than be busy all the time with both hands, trying to catch the wind.

<sup>7</sup>I have noticed something else in life that is useless.

<sup>8</sup>Here is someone who lives alone. He has no son, no brother, yet he is always working, never satisfied with the wealth he has. For whom is he working so hard and denying himself any pleasure? This is useless, too -- and a miserable way to live.

<sup>9</sup>Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively.

<sup>10</sup>If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him.

<sup>11</sup>If it is cold, two can sleep together and stay warm, but how can you keep warm by yourself?

<sup>12</sup>Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break.

<sup>13</sup>Someone may rise from poverty to become king of his country, or go from prison to the throne, but if in his old age he is too foolish to take advice, he is not as well off as a young man who is poor but intelligent.

<sup>14</sup>(4:13)

<sup>15</sup>I thought about all the people who live in this world, and I realized that somewhere among them there is a young man who will take the king's place.

<sup>16</sup>There may be no limit to the number of people a king rules; when he is gone, no one will be grateful for what he has done. It is useless. It is like chasing the wind.

**5**<sup>1</sup>Be careful about going to the Temple. It is better to go there to learn than to offer sacrifices like foolish people who don't know right from wrong.

<sup>2</sup>Think before you speak, and don't make any rash promises to God. He is in heaven and you are on earth, so don't say any more than you have to.

<sup>3</sup>The more you worry, the more likely you are to have bad dreams, and the more you talk, the more likely you are to say something foolish.

<sup>4</sup>So when you make a promise to God, keep it as quickly as possible. He has no use for a fool. Do what you promise to do.

<sup>5</sup>Better not to promise at all than to make a promise and not keep it.

<sup>6</sup>Don't let your own words lead you into sin, so that you have to tell God's priest that you didn't mean it. Why make God angry with you? Why let him destroy what you have worked for?

<sup>7</sup>No matter how much you dream, how much useless work you do, or how much you talk, you must still stand in awe of God.

<sup>8</sup>Don't be surprised when you see that the government oppresses the poor and denies them justice and their rights. Every official is protected by someone higher, and both are protected by still higher officials.

<sup>9</sup>Even a king depends on the harvest.



<sup>10</sup>If you love money, you will never be satisfied; if you long to be rich, you will never get all you want. It is useless.

<sup>11</sup>The richer you are, the more mouths you have to feed. All you gain is the knowledge that you are rich.

<sup>12</sup>Workers may or may not have enough to eat, but at least they can get a good night's sleep. The rich, however, have so much that they stay awake worrying.

<sup>13</sup>Here is a terrible thing that I have seen in this world: people save up their money for a time when they may need it,

<sup>14</sup>and then lose it all in some bad deal and end up with nothing left to pass on to their children.

<sup>15</sup>We leave this world just as we entered it -- with nothing. In spite of all our work there is nothing we can take with us.

<sup>16</sup>It isn't right! We go just as we came. We labor, trying to catch the wind, and what do we get?

<sup>17</sup>We get to live our lives in darkness and grief, worried, angry, and sick.

<sup>18</sup>Here is what I have found out: the best thing we can do is eat and drink and

enjoy what we have worked for during the short life that God has given us; this is our fate.

<sup>19</sup>If God gives us wealth and property and lets us enjoy them, we should be grateful and enjoy what we have worked for. It is a gift from God.

<sup>20</sup>Since God has allowed us to be happy, we will not worry too much about how short life is.

**6**<sup>1</sup> I have noticed that in this world a serious injustice is done.

<sup>2</sup>God will give us wealth, honor, and property, yes, everything we want, but then will not let us enjoy it. Some stranger will enjoy it instead. It is useless, and it just isn't right.

<sup>3</sup>We may have a hundred children and live a long time, but no matter how long we live, if we do not get our share of happiness and do not receive a decent burial, then I say that a baby born dead is better off.

<sup>4</sup>It does that baby no good to be born; it disappears into darkness, where it is forgotten.

<sup>5</sup> It never sees the light of day or knows what life is like, but at least it has found rest --

<sup>6</sup> more so than the man who never enjoys life, though he may live two thousand years. After all, both of them are going to the same place.

<sup>7</sup> We do all our work just to get something to eat, but we never have enough.

<sup>8</sup> How are the wise better off than fools? What good does it do the poor to know how to face life?

<sup>9</sup> It is useless; it is like chasing the wind. It is better to be satisfied with what you have than to be always wanting something else.

<sup>10</sup> Everything that happens was already determined long ago, and we all know that you cannot argue with someone who is stronger than you.

<sup>11</sup> The longer you argue, the more useless it is, and you are no better off.

<sup>12</sup> How can anyone know what is best for us in this short, useless life of ours -- a life that passes like a shadow? How can we know what will happen in the world after we die?

**7**<sup>1</sup> A good reputation is better than expensive perfume; and the day you die is better than the day you are born.

<sup>2</sup> It is better to go to a home where there is mourning than to one where there is a party, because the living should always remind themselves that death is waiting for us all.

<sup>3</sup> Sorrow is better than laughter; it may sadden your face, but it sharpens your understanding.

<sup>4</sup> Someone who is always thinking about happiness is a fool. A wise person thinks about death.

<sup>5</sup> It is better to have wise people reprimand you than to have stupid people sing your praises.

<sup>6</sup> When a fool laughs, it is like thorns crackling in a fire. It doesn't mean a thing.

<sup>7</sup> You may be wise, but if you cheat someone, you are acting like a fool. If you take a bribe, you ruin your character.

<sup>8</sup> The end of something is better than its beginning. Patience is better than pride.

<sup>9</sup> Keep your temper under control; it is foolish to harbor a grudge.

<sup>10</sup>Never ask, Oh, why were things so much better in the old days? It's not an intelligent question.

<sup>11</sup>Everyone who lives ought to be wise; it is as good as receiving an inheritance

<sup>12</sup>and will give you as much security as money can. Wisdom keeps you safe -- this is the advantage of knowledge.

<sup>13</sup>Think about what God has done. How can anyone straighten out what God has made crooked?

<sup>14</sup>When things are going well for you, be glad, and when trouble comes, just remember: God sends both happiness and trouble; you never know what is going to happen next.

<sup>15</sup>My life has been useless, but in it I have seen everything. Some good people may die while others live on, even though they are evil.

<sup>16</sup>So don't be too good or too wise -- why kill yourself?

<sup>17</sup>But don't be too wicked or too foolish, either -- why die before you have to?

<sup>18</sup>Avoid both extremes. If you have reverence for God, you will be successful anyway.

<sup>19</sup>Wisdom does more for a person than ten rulers can do for a city.

<sup>20</sup>There is no one on earth who does what is right all the time and never makes a mistake.

<sup>21</sup>Don't pay attention to everything people say -- you may hear your servant insulting you,

<sup>22</sup>and you know yourself that you have insulted other people many times.

<sup>23</sup>I used my wisdom to test all of this. I was determined to be wise, but it was beyond me.

<sup>24</sup>How can anyone discover what life means? It is too deep for us, too hard to understand.

<sup>25</sup>But I devoted myself to knowledge and study; I was determined to find wisdom and the answers to my questions, and to learn how wicked and foolish stupidity is.

<sup>26</sup>I found something more bitter than death -- the woman who is like a trap. The love she offers you will catch you like a net, and her arms around you will hold you like a chain. A man who pleases God can get away, but she will catch the sinner.

<sup>27</sup> Yes, said the Philosopher, I found this out little by little while I was looking for answers.

<sup>28</sup> I have looked for other answers but have found none. I found one man in a thousand that I could respect, but not one woman.

<sup>29</sup> This is all that I have learned: God made us plain and simple, but we have made ourselves very complicated.

**8**<sup>1</sup> Only the wise know what things really mean. Wisdom makes them smile and makes their frowns disappear.

<sup>2</sup> Do what the king says, and don't make any rash promises to God.

<sup>3</sup> The king can do anything he likes, so depart from his presence; don't stay in such a dangerous place.

<sup>4</sup> The king acts with authority, and no one can challenge what he does.

<sup>5</sup> As long as you obey his commands, you are safe, and a wise person knows how and when to do it.

<sup>6</sup> There is a right time and a right way to do everything, but we know so little!

<sup>7</sup> None of us knows what is going to happen, and there is no one to tell us.

<sup>8</sup>No one can keep from dying or put off the day of death. That is a battle we cannot escape; we cannot cheat our way out.

<sup>9</sup>I saw all this when I thought about the things that are done in this world, a world where some people have power and others have to suffer under them.

<sup>10</sup>Yes, I have seen the wicked buried and in their graves, but on the way back from the cemetery people praise them in the very city where they did their evil. It is useless.

<sup>11</sup>Why do people commit crimes so readily? Because crime is not punished quickly enough.

<sup>12</sup>A sinner may commit a hundred crimes and still live. Oh yes, I know what they say: If you obey God, everything will be all right,

<sup>13</sup>but it will not go well for the wicked. Their life is like a shadow and they will die young, because they do not obey God.

<sup>14</sup>But this is nonsense. Look at what happens in the world: sometimes the righteous get the punishment of the



wicked, and the wicked get the reward of the righteous. I say it is useless.

<sup>15</sup> So I am convinced that we should enjoy ourselves, because the only pleasure we have in this life is eating and drinking and enjoying ourselves. We can at least do this as we labor during the life that God has given us in this world.

<sup>16</sup> Whenever I tried to become wise and learn what goes on in the world, I realized that you could stay awake night and day

<sup>17</sup> and never be able to understand what God is doing. However hard you try, you will never find out. The wise may claim to know, but they don't.

**9**<sup>1</sup> I thought long and hard about all this and saw that God controls the actions of wise and righteous people, even their love and their hate. No one knows anything about what lies ahead.

<sup>2</sup> It makes no difference. The same fate comes to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the bad, to those who are religious and those who are not, to those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. A good person is no better off

than a sinner; one who takes an oath is no better off than one who does not.

<sup>3</sup>One fate comes to all alike, and this is as wrong as anything that happens in this world. As long as people live, their minds are full of evil and madness, and suddenly they die.

<sup>4</sup>But anyone who is alive in the world of the living has some hope; a live dog is better off than a dead lion.

<sup>5</sup>Yes, the living know they are going to die, but the dead know nothing. They have no further reward; they are completely forgotten.

<sup>6</sup>Their loves, their hates, their passions, all died with them. They will never again take part in anything that happens in this world.

<sup>7</sup>Go ahead -- eat your food and be happy; drink your wine and be cheerful. It's all right with God.

<sup>8</sup>Always look happy and cheerful.

<sup>9</sup>Enjoy life with the one you love, as long as you live the useless life that God has given you in this world. Enjoy every useless day of it, because that is all you will get for all your trouble.

<sup>10</sup>Work hard at whatever you do, because there will be no action, no thought, no knowledge, no wisdom in the world of the dead -- and that is where you are going.

<sup>11</sup>I realized another thing, that in this world fast runners do not always win the races, and the brave do not always win the battles. The wise do not always earn a living, intelligent people do not always get rich, and capable people do not always rise to high positions. Bad luck happens to everyone.

<sup>12</sup>You never know when your time is coming. Like birds suddenly caught in a trap, like fish caught in a net, we are trapped at some evil moment when we least expect it.

<sup>13</sup>There is something else I saw, a good example of how wisdom is regarded in this world.

<sup>14</sup>There was a little town without many people in it. A powerful king attacked it. He surrounded it and prepared to break through the walls.

<sup>15</sup>Someone lived there who was poor, but so clever that he could have saved the town. But no one thought about him.

<sup>16</sup>I have always said that wisdom is better than strength, but no one thinks of the poor as wise or pays any attention to what they say.

<sup>17</sup>It is better to listen to the quiet words of someone wise than to the shouts of a ruler at a council of fools.

<sup>18</sup>Wisdom does more good than weapons, but one sinner can undo a lot of good.

**10**<sup>1</sup> Dead flies can make a whole bottle of perfume stink, and a little stupidity can cancel out the greatest wisdom.

<sup>2</sup>It is natural for the wise to do the right thing and for fools to do the wrong thing.

<sup>3</sup>Their stupidity will be evident even to strangers they meet along the way; they let everyone know that they are fools.

<sup>4</sup>If your ruler becomes angry with you, do not hand in your resignation; serious wrongs may be pardoned if you keep calm.

<sup>5</sup>Here is an injustice I have seen in the world -- an injustice caused by rulers.

<sup>6</sup>Stupid people are given positions of authority while the rich are ignored.

<sup>7</sup>I have seen slaves on horseback while noblemen go on foot like slaves.

<sup>8</sup>If you dig a pit, you fall in it; if you break through a wall, a snake bites you.

<sup>9</sup>If you work in a stone quarry, you get hurt by stones. If you split wood, you get hurt doing it.

<sup>10</sup>If your ax is dull and you don't sharpen it, you have to work harder to use it. It is smarter to plan ahead.

<sup>11</sup>Knowing how to charm a snake is of no use if you let the snake bite first.

<sup>12</sup>What the wise say brings them honor, but fools are destroyed by their own words.

<sup>13</sup>They start out with silly talk and end up with pure madness.

<sup>14</sup>A fool talks on and on. No one knows what is going to happen next, and no one can tell us what will happen after we die.

<sup>15</sup>Only someone too stupid to find his way home would wear himself out with work.

<sup>16</sup>A country is in trouble when its king is a youth and its leaders feast all night long.

<sup>17</sup> But a country is fortunate to have a king who makes his own decisions and leaders who eat at the proper time, who control themselves and don't get drunk.

<sup>18</sup> When you are too lazy to repair your roof, it will leak, and the house will fall in.

<sup>19</sup> Feasting makes you happy and wine cheers you up, but you can't have either without money.

<sup>20</sup> Don't criticize the king, even silently, and don't criticize the rich, even in the privacy of your bedroom. A bird might carry the message and tell them what you said.

**11** <sup>1</sup> Invest your money in foreign trade, and one of these days you will make a profit.

<sup>2</sup> Put your investments in several places -- many places even -- because you never know what kind of bad luck you are going to have in this world.

<sup>3</sup> No matter which direction a tree falls, it will lie where it fell. When the clouds are full, it rains.

<sup>4</sup> If you wait until the wind and the weather are just right, you will never

plant anything and never harvest anything.

<sup>5</sup>God made everything, and you can no more understand what he does than you understand how new life begins in the womb of a pregnant woman.

<sup>6</sup>Do your planting in the morning and in the evening, too. You never know whether it will all grow well or whether one planting will do better than the other.

<sup>7</sup>It is good to be able to enjoy the pleasant light of day.

<sup>8</sup>Be grateful for every year you live. No matter how long you live, remember that you will be dead much longer. There is nothing at all to look forward to.

<sup>9</sup>Young people, enjoy your youth. Be happy while you are still young. Do what you want to do, and follow your heart's desire. But remember that God is going to judge you for whatever you do.

<sup>10</sup>Don't let anything worry you or cause you pain. You aren't going to be young very long.

**12**<sup>1</sup> So remember your Creator while you are still young, before those

dismal days and years come when you will say, I don't enjoy life.

<sup>2</sup>That is when the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars will grow dim for you, and the rain clouds will never pass away.

<sup>3</sup>Then your arms, that have protected you, will tremble, and your legs, now strong, will grow weak. Your teeth will be too few to chew your food, and your eyes too dim to see clearly.

<sup>4</sup>Your ears will be deaf to the noise of the street. You will barely be able to hear the mill as it grinds or music as it plays, but even the song of a bird will wake you from sleep.

<sup>5</sup>You will be afraid of high places, and walking will be dangerous. Your hair will turn white; you will hardly be able to drag yourself along, and all desire will be gone. We are going to our final resting place, and then there will be mourning in the streets.

<sup>6</sup>The silver chain will snap, and the golden lamp will fall and break; the rope at the well will break, and the water jar will be shattered.



<sup>7</sup> Our bodies will return to the dust of the earth, and the breath of life will go back to God, who gave it to us.

<sup>8</sup> Useless, useless, said the Philosopher. It is all useless.

<sup>9</sup> But because the Philosopher was wise, he kept on teaching the people what he knew. He studied proverbs and honestly tested their truth.

<sup>10</sup> The Philosopher tried to find comforting words, but the words he wrote were honest.

<sup>11</sup> The sayings of the wise are like the sharp sticks that shepherds use to guide sheep, and collected proverbs are as lasting as firmly driven nails. They have been given by God, the one Shepherd of us all.

<sup>12</sup> My child, there is something else to watch out for. There is no end to the writing of books, and too much study will wear you out.

<sup>13</sup> After all this, there is only one thing to say: Have reverence for God, and obey his commands, because this is all that we were created for.

<sup>14</sup> God is going to judge everything we do, whether good or bad, even things done in secret.

# The Song of Songs

**1** <sup>1</sup>The most beautiful of songs, by Solomon.

<sup>2</sup>The Woman Your lips cover me with kisses; your love is better than wine.

<sup>3</sup>There is a fragrance about you; the sound of your name recalls it. No woman could keep from loving you.

<sup>4</sup>Take me with you, and we'll run away; be my king and take me to your room. We will be happy together, drink deep, and lose ourselves in love. No wonder all women love you!

<sup>5</sup>Women of Jerusalem, I am dark but beautiful, dark as the desert tents of Kedar, but beautiful as the draperies in Solomon's palace.

<sup>6</sup>Don't look down on me because of my color, because the sun has tanned me. My brothers were angry with me and made me work in the vineyard. I had no time to care for myself.

<sup>7</sup>Tell me, my love, Where will you lead your flock to graze? Where will they rest from the noonday sun? Why should I

need to look for you among the flocks of the other shepherds?

<sup>8</sup>The Man Don't you know the place, loveliest of women? Go and follow the flock; find pasture for your goats near the tents of the shepherds.

<sup>9</sup>You, my love, excite men as a mare excites the stallions of Pharaoh's chariots.

<sup>10</sup>Your hair is beautiful upon your cheeks and falls along your neck like jewels.

<sup>11</sup>But we will make for you a chain of gold with ornaments of silver.

<sup>12</sup>The Woman My king was lying on his couch, and my perfume filled the air with fragrance.

<sup>13</sup>My lover has the scent of myrrh as he lies upon my breasts.

<sup>14</sup>My lover is like the wild flowers that bloom in the vineyards at Engedi.

<sup>15</sup>The Man How beautiful you are, my love; how your eyes shine with love!

<sup>16</sup>The Woman How handsome you are, my dearest; how you delight me! The green grass will be our bed;

<sup>17</sup>the cedars will be the beams of our house, and the cypress trees the ceiling.

**2**<sup>1</sup> I am only a wild flower in Sharon,  
a lily in a mountain valley.

<sup>2</sup>The Man Like a lily among thorns is  
my darling among women.

<sup>3</sup>The Woman Like an apple tree among  
the trees of the forest, so is my dearest  
compared to other men. I love to sit in  
its shadow, and its fruit is sweet to my  
taste.

<sup>4</sup>He brought me to his banquet hall and  
raised the banner of love over me.

<sup>5</sup>Restore my strength with raisins and  
refresh me with apples! I am weak from  
passion.

<sup>6</sup>His left hand is under my head, and  
his right hand caresses me.

<sup>7</sup>Promise me, women of Jerusalem;  
swear by the swift deer and the gazelles  
that you will not interrupt our love.

<sup>8</sup>The Woman I hear my lover's voice.  
He comes running over the mountains,  
racing across the hills to me.

<sup>9</sup>My lover is like a gazelle, like a young  
stag. There he stands beside the wall. He  
looks in through the window and glances  
through the lattice.

<sup>10</sup>My lover speaks to me. The Man  
Come then, my love; my darling, come  
with me.

<sup>11</sup>The winter is over; the rains have  
stopped;

<sup>12</sup>in the countryside the flowers are in  
bloom. This is the time for singing; the  
song of doves is heard in the fields.

<sup>13</sup>Figs are beginning to ripen; the air  
is fragrant with blossoming vines. Come  
then, my love; my darling, come with  
me.

<sup>14</sup>You are like a dove that hides in the  
crevice of a rock. Let me see your lovely  
face and hear your enchanting voice.

<sup>15</sup>Catch the foxes, the little foxes,  
before they ruin our vineyard in bloom.

<sup>16</sup>The Woman My lover is mine, and  
I am his. He feeds his flock among the  
lilies

<sup>17</sup>until the morning breezes blow and  
the darkness disappears. Return, my  
darling, like a gazelle, like a stag on the  
mountains of Bether.

**3**<sup>1</sup>Asleep on my bed, night after night  
I dreamed of the one I love; I was  
looking for him, but couldn't find him.

<sup>2</sup>I went wandering through the city, through its streets and alleys. I looked for the one I love. I looked, but couldn't find him.

<sup>3</sup>The sentries patrolling the city saw me. I asked them, Have you found my lover?

<sup>4</sup>As soon as I left them, I found him. I held him and wouldn't let him go until I took him to my mother's house, to the room where I was born.

<sup>5</sup>Promise me, women of Jerusalem; swear by the swift deer and the gazelles that you will not interrupt our love.

<sup>6</sup>The Woman What is this coming from the desert like a column of smoke, fragrant with incense and myrrh, the incense sold by the traders?

<sup>7</sup>Solomon is coming, carried on his throne; sixty soldiers form the bodyguard, the finest soldiers in Israel.

<sup>8</sup>All of them are skillful with the sword; they are battle-hardened veterans. Each of them is armed with a sword, on guard against a night attack.

<sup>9</sup>King Solomon is carried on a throne made of the finest wood.

<sup>10</sup> Its posts are covered with silver; over it is cloth embroidered with gold. Its cushions are covered with purple cloth, lovingly woven by the women of Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup> Women of Zion, come and see King Solomon. He is wearing the crown that his mother placed on his head on his wedding day, on the day of his gladness and joy.

**4**<sup>1</sup> The Man How beautiful you are, my love! How your eyes shine with love behind your veil. Your hair dances like a flock of goats bounding down the hills of Gilead.

<sup>2</sup> Your teeth are as white as sheep that have just been shorn and washed. Not one of them is missing; they are all perfectly matched.

<sup>3</sup> Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; how lovely they are when you speak. Your cheeks glow behind your veil.

<sup>4</sup> Your neck is like the tower of David, round and smooth, with a necklace like a thousand shields hung around it.

<sup>5</sup> Your breasts are like gazelles, twin deer feeding among lilies.



<sup>6</sup>I will stay on the hill of myrrh, the hill of incense, until the morning breezes blow and the darkness disappears.

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful you are, my love; how perfect you are!

<sup>8</sup>Come with me from the Lebanon Mountains, my bride; come with me from Lebanon. Come down from the top of Mount Amana, from Mount Senir and Mount Hermon, where the lions and leopards live.

<sup>9</sup>The look in your eyes, my sweetheart and bride, and the necklace you are wearing have stolen my heart.

<sup>10</sup>Your love delights me, my sweetheart and bride. Your love is better than wine; your perfume more fragrant than any spice.

<sup>11</sup>The taste of honey is on your lips, my darling; your tongue is milk and honey for me. Your clothing has all the fragrance of Lebanon.

<sup>12</sup>My sweetheart, my bride, is a secret garden, a walled garden, a private spring;

<sup>13</sup>there the plants flourish. They grow like an orchard of pomegranate trees

and bear the finest fruits. There is no lack of henna and nard,

<sup>14</sup>of saffron, calamus, and cinnamon, or incense of every kind. Myrrh and aloes grow there with all the most fragrant perfumes.

<sup>15</sup>Fountains water the garden, streams of flowing water, brooks gushing down from the Lebanon Mountains.

<sup>16</sup>The Woman Wake up, North Wind. South Wind, blow on my garden; fill the air with fragrance. Let my lover come to his garden and eat the best of its fruits.

**5**<sup>1</sup>The Man I have entered my garden, my sweetheart, my bride. I am gathering my spices and myrrh; I am eating my honey and honeycomb; I am drinking my wine and milk. The Women Eat, lovers, and drink until you are drunk with love!

<sup>2</sup>The Woman While I slept, my heart was awake. I dreamed my lover knocked at the door. The Man Let me come in, my darling, my sweetheart, my dove. My head is wet with dew, and my hair is damp from the mist.

<sup>3</sup>The Woman I have already undressed; why should I get dressed again? I have

washed my feet; why should I get them dirty again?

<sup>4</sup>My lover put his hand to the door, and I was thrilled that he was near.

<sup>5</sup>I was ready to let him come in. My hands were covered with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, as I grasped the handle of the door.

<sup>6</sup>I opened the door for my lover, but he had already gone. How I wanted to hear his voice! I looked for him, but couldn't find him; I called to him, but heard no answer.

<sup>7</sup>The sentries patrolling the city found me; they struck me and bruised me; the guards at the city wall tore off my cape.

<sup>8</sup>Promise me, women of Jerusalem, that if you find my lover, you will tell him I am weak from passion.

<sup>9</sup>The Women Most beautiful of women, is your lover different from everyone else? What is there so wonderful about him that we should give you our promise?

<sup>10</sup>The Woman My lover is handsome and strong; he is one in ten thousand.

<sup>11</sup>His face is bronzed and smooth; his hair is wavy, black as a raven.

<sup>12</sup>His eyes are as beautiful as doves by a flowing brook, doves washed in milk and standing by the stream.

<sup>13</sup>His cheeks are as lovely as a garden that is full of herbs and spices. His lips are like lilies, wet with liquid myrrh.

<sup>14</sup>His hands are well-formed, and he wears rings set with gems. His body is like smooth ivory, with sapphires set in it.

<sup>15</sup>His thighs are columns of alabaster set in sockets of gold. He is majestic, like the Lebanon Mountains with their towering cedars.

<sup>16</sup>His mouth is sweet to kiss; everything about him enchants me. This is what my lover is like, women of Jerusalem.

**6**<sup>1</sup>The Women Most beautiful of women, where has your lover gone? Tell us which way your lover went, so that we can help you find him.

<sup>2</sup>The Woman My lover has gone to his garden, where the balsam trees grow. He is feeding his flock in the garden and gathering lilies.

<sup>3</sup>My lover is mine, and I am his; he feeds his flock among the lilies.

<sup>4</sup>The Man My love, you are as beautiful as Jerusalem, as lovely as the city of Tirzah, as breathtaking as these great cities.

<sup>5</sup>Turn your eyes away from me; they are holding me captive. Your hair dances like a flock of goats bounding down the hills of Gilead.

<sup>6</sup>Your teeth are as white as a flock of sheep that have just been washed. Not one of them is missing; they are all perfectly matched.

<sup>7</sup>Your cheeks glow behind your veil.

<sup>8</sup>Let the king have sixty queens, eighty concubines, young women without number!

<sup>9</sup>But I love only one, and she is as lovely as a dove. She is her mother's only daughter, her mother's favorite child. All women look at her and praise her; queens and concubines sing her praises.

<sup>10</sup>Who is this whose glance is like the dawn? She is beautiful and bright, as dazzling as the sun or the moon.

<sup>11</sup>I have come down among the almond trees to see the young plants in the valley, to see the new leaves on the vines

and the blossoms on the pomegranate trees.

<sup>12</sup>I am trembling; you have made me as eager for love as a chariot driver is for battle.

<sup>13</sup>The Women Dance, dance, girl of Shulam. Let us watch you as you dance. The Woman Why do you want to watch me as I dance between the rows of onlookers?

**7**<sup>1</sup>The Man What a magnificent young woman you are! How beautiful are your feet in sandals. The curve of your thighs is like the work of an artist.

<sup>2</sup>A bowl is there, that never runs out of spiced wine. A sheaf of wheat is there, surrounded by lilies.

<sup>3</sup>Your breasts are like twin deer, like two gazelles.

<sup>4</sup>Your neck is like a tower of ivory. Your eyes are like the pools in the city of Heshbon, near the gate of that great city. Your nose is as lovely as the tower of Lebanon that stands guard at Damascus.

<sup>5</sup>Your head is held high like Mount Carmel. Your braided hair shines like the finest satin; its beauty could hold a king captive.

<sup>6</sup>How pretty you are, how beautiful;  
how complete the delights of your love.

<sup>7</sup>You are as graceful as a palm tree,  
and your breasts are clusters of dates.

<sup>8</sup>I will climb the palm tree and pick  
its fruit. To me your breasts are like  
bunches of grapes, your breath like the  
fragrance of apples,

<sup>9</sup>and your mouth like the finest wine.  
The Woman Then let the wine flow  
straight to my lover, flowing over his lips  
and teeth.

<sup>10</sup>I belong to my lover, and he desires  
me.

<sup>11</sup>Come, darling, let's go out to the  
countryside and spend the night in the  
villages.

<sup>12</sup>We will get up early and look at the  
vines to see whether they've started to  
grow, whether the blossoms are opening  
and the pomegranate trees are in bloom.  
There I will give you my love.

<sup>13</sup>You can smell the scent of mandrakes,  
and all the pleasant fruits are near our  
door. Darling, I have kept for you the old  
delights and the new.

**8**<sup>1</sup>I wish that you were my brother,  
that my mother had nursed you at

her breast. Then, if I met you in the street, I could kiss you and no one would mind.

<sup>2</sup>I would take you to my mother's house, where you could teach me love. I would give you spiced wine, my pomegranate wine to drink.

<sup>3</sup>Your left hand is under my head, and your right hand caresses me.

<sup>4</sup>Promise me, women of Jerusalem, that you will not interrupt our love.

<sup>5</sup>The Women Who is this coming from the desert, arm in arm with her lover? The Woman Under the apple tree I woke you, in the place where you were born.

<sup>6</sup>Close your heart to every love but mine; hold no one in your arms but me. Love is as powerful as death; passion is as strong as death itself. It bursts into flame and burns like a raging fire.

<sup>7</sup>Water cannot put it out; no flood can drown it. But if any tried to buy love with their wealth, contempt is all they would get.

<sup>8</sup>The Woman's Brothers We have a young sister, and her breasts are still small. What will we do for her when a young man comes courting?



<sup>9</sup>If she is a wall, we will build her a silver tower. But if she is a gate, we will protect her with panels of cedar.

<sup>10</sup>The Woman I am a wall, and my breasts are its towers. My lover knows that with him I find contentment and peace.

<sup>11</sup>The Man Solomon has a vineyard in a place called Baal Hamon. There are farmers who rent it from him; each one pays a thousand silver coins.

<sup>12</sup>Solomon is welcome to his thousand coins, and the farmers to two hundred as their share; I have a vineyard of my own!

<sup>13</sup>Let me hear your voice from the garden, my love; my companions are waiting to hear you speak.

<sup>14</sup>The Woman Come to me, my lover, like a gazelle, like a young stag on the mountains where spices grow.

# I saiah

**1** <sup>1</sup>This book contains the messages about Judah and Jerusalem which God revealed to Isaiah son of Amoz during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD said, Earth and sky, listen to what I am saying! The children I brought up have rebelled against me.

<sup>3</sup>Cattle know who owns them, and donkeys know where their master feeds them. But that is more than my people Israel know. They don't understand at all.

<sup>4</sup>You are doomed, you sinful nation, you corrupt and evil people! Your sins drag you down! You have rejected the LORD, the holy God of Israel, and have turned your backs on him.

<sup>5</sup>Why do you keep on rebelling? Do you want to be punished even more? Israel, your head is already covered with wounds, and your heart and mind are sick.

<sup>6</sup>From head to foot there is not a healthy spot on your body. You are covered with bruises and sores and open wounds. Your wounds have not been cleaned or bandaged. No medicine has been put on them.

<sup>7</sup>Your country has been devastated, and your cities have been burned to the ground. While you look on, foreigners take over your land and bring everything to ruin.

<sup>8</sup>Jerusalem alone is left, a city under siege -- as defenseless as a guard's hut in a vineyard or a shed in a cucumber field.

<sup>9</sup>If the LORD Almighty had not let some of the people survive, Jerusalem would have been totally destroyed, just as Sodom and Gomorrah were.

<sup>10</sup>Jerusalem, your rulers and your people are like those of Sodom and Gomorrah. Listen to what the LORD is saying to you. Pay attention to what our God is teaching you.

<sup>11</sup>He says, Do you think I want all these sacrifices you keep offering to me? I have had more than enough of the sheep you burn as sacrifices and of the

fat of your fine animals. I am tired of the blood of bulls and sheep and goats.

<sup>12</sup>Who asked you to bring me all this when you come to worship me? Who asked you to do all this tramping around in my Temple?

<sup>13</sup>It's useless to bring your offerings. I am disgusted with the smell of the incense you burn. I cannot stand your New Moon Festivals, your Sabbaths, and your religious gatherings; they are all corrupted by your sins.

<sup>14</sup>I hate your New Moon Festivals and holy days; they are a burden that I am tired of bearing.

<sup>15</sup>When you lift your hands in prayer, I will not look at you. No matter how much you pray, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with blood.

<sup>16</sup>Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil

<sup>17</sup>and learn to do right. See that justice is done -- help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD says, Now, let's settle the matter. You are stained red with sin,

but I will wash you as clean as snow. Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool.

<sup>19</sup>If you will only obey me, you will eat the good things the land produces.

<sup>20</sup>But if you defy me, you are doomed to die. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>21</sup>The city that once was faithful is behaving like a whore! At one time it was filled with righteous people, but now only murderers remain.

<sup>22</sup>Jerusalem, you were once like silver, but now you are worthless; you were like good wine, but now you are only water.

<sup>23</sup>Your leaders are rebels and friends of thieves; they are always accepting gifts and bribes. They never defend orphans in court or listen when widows present their case.

<sup>24</sup>So now, listen to what the LORD Almighty, Israel's powerful God, is saying: I will take revenge on you, my enemies, and you will cause me no more trouble.

<sup>25</sup>I will take action against you. I will purify you the way metal is refined, and will remove all your impurity.

<sup>26</sup>I will give you rulers and advisers like those you had long ago. Then Jerusalem will be called the righteous, faithful city.

<sup>27</sup>Because the LORD is righteous, he will save Jerusalem and everyone there who repents.

<sup>28</sup>But he will crush everyone who sins and rebels against him; he will kill everyone who forsakes him.

<sup>29</sup>You will be sorry that you ever worshiped trees and planted sacred gardens.

<sup>30</sup>You will wither like a dying oak, like a garden that no one waters.

<sup>31</sup>Just as straw is set on fire by a spark, so powerful people will be destroyed by their own evil deeds, and no one will be able to stop the destruction.

**2**<sup>1</sup> Here is the message which God gave to Isaiah son of Amoz about Judah and Jerusalem:

<sup>2</sup>In days to come the mountain where the Temple stands will be the highest one of all, towering above all the hills. Many nations will come streaming to it,

<sup>3</sup>and their people will say, Let us go up the hill of the LORD, to the Temple of Israel's God. He will teach us what he

wants us to do; we will walk in the paths he has chosen. For the LORD's teaching comes from Jerusalem; from Zion he speaks to his people.

<sup>4</sup>He will settle disputes among great nations. They will hammer their swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives. Nations will never again go to war, never prepare for battle again.

<sup>5</sup>Now, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light which the LORD gives us!

<sup>6</sup>O God, you have forsaken your people, the descendants of Jacob! The land is full of magic practices from the East and from Philistia. The people follow foreign customs.

<sup>7</sup>Their land is full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots.

<sup>8</sup>Their land is full of idols, and they worship objects that they have made with their own hands.

<sup>9</sup>Everyone will be humiliated and disgraced. Do not forgive them, LORD!

<sup>10</sup>They will hide in caves in the rocky hills or dig holes in the ground to try to

escape from the LORD's anger and to hide from his power and glory!

<sup>11</sup> A day is coming when human pride will be ended and human arrogance destroyed. Then the LORD alone will be exalted.

<sup>12</sup> On that day the LORD Almighty will humble everyone who is powerful, everyone who is proud and conceited.

<sup>13</sup> He will destroy the tall cedars of Lebanon and all the oaks in the land of Bashan.

<sup>14</sup> He will level the high mountains and hills,

<sup>15</sup> every high tower, and the walls of every fortress.

<sup>16</sup> He will sink even the largest and most beautiful ships.

<sup>17</sup> Human pride will be ended, and human arrogance will be destroyed. Idols will completely disappear, and the LORD alone will be exalted on that day.

<sup>18</sup> (2: 17)

<sup>19</sup> People will hide in caves in the rocky hills or dig holes in the ground to try to escape from the LORD's anger and to hide from his power and glory, when he comes to shake the earth.



<sup>20</sup>When that day comes, they will throw away the gold and silver idols they have made, and abandon them to the moles and the bats.

<sup>21</sup>When the LORD comes to shake the earth, people will hide in holes and caves in the rocky hills to try to escape from his anger and to hide from his power and glory.

<sup>22</sup>Put no more confidence in mortals. What are they worth?

**3**<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord, the Almighty LORD, is about to take away from Jerusalem and Judah everything and everyone that the people depend on. He is going to take away their food and their water,

<sup>2</sup> their heroes and their soldiers, their judges and their prophets, their fortunetellers and their statesmen,

<sup>3</sup> their military and civilian leaders, their politicians and everyone who uses magic to control events.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD will let the people be governed by immature boys.

<sup>5</sup>Everyone will take advantage of everyone else. Young people will not respect their elders, and worthless people will not respect their superiors.

<sup>6</sup>A time will come when the members of a clan will choose one of their number and say to him, You at least have something to wear, so be our leader in this time of trouble.

<sup>7</sup>But he will answer, Not me! I can't help you. I don't have any food or clothes either. Don't make me your leader!

<sup>8</sup>Yes, Jerusalem is doomed! Judah is collapsing! Everything they say and do is against the LORD; they openly insult God himself.

<sup>9</sup>Their prejudices will be held against them. They sin as openly as the people of Sodom did. They are doomed, and they have brought it on themselves.

<sup>10</sup>The righteous will be happy, and things will go well for them. They will get to enjoy what they have worked for.

<sup>11</sup>But evil people are doomed; what they have done to others will now be done to them.

<sup>12</sup>Moneylenders oppress my people, and their creditors cheat them. My people, your leaders are misleading you, so that you do not know which way to turn.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD is ready to state his case; he is ready to judge his people.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD is bringing the elders and leaders of his people to judgment. He makes this accusation: You have plundered vineyards, and your houses are full of what you have taken from the poor.

<sup>15</sup>You have no right to crush my people and take advantage of the poor. I, the Sovereign LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD said, Look how proud the women of Jerusalem are! They walk along with their noses in the air. They are always flirting. They take dainty little steps, and the bracelets on their ankles jingle.

<sup>17</sup>But I will punish them -- I will shave their heads and leave them bald.

<sup>18</sup>A day is coming when the Lord will take away from the women of Jerusalem everything they are so proud of -- the ornaments they wear on their ankles, on their heads, on their necks,

<sup>19</sup>and on their wrists. He will take away their veils

<sup>20</sup>and their hats; the magic charms they wear on their arms and at their waists;

<sup>21</sup>the rings they wear on their fingers and in their noses;

<sup>22</sup>all their fine robes, gowns, cloaks, and purses;

<sup>23</sup>their revealing garments, their linen handkerchiefs, and the scarves and long veils they wear on their heads.

<sup>24</sup>Instead of using perfumes, they will stink; instead of fine belts, they will wear coarse ropes; instead of having beautiful hair, they will be bald; instead of fine clothes, they will be dressed in rags; their beauty will be turned to shame!

<sup>25</sup>The men of the city, yes, even the strongest men, will be killed in war.

<sup>26</sup>The city gates will mourn and cry, and the city itself will be like a woman sitting on the ground, stripped naked.

**4**<sup>1</sup>When that time comes, seven women will grab hold of one man and say, We can feed and clothe ourselves, but please let us say you are our husband, so that we won't have to endure the shame of being unmarried.

<sup>2</sup>The time is coming when the LORD will make every plant and tree in the land grow large and beautiful. All the people of Israel who survive will take delight and pride in the crops that the land produces.

<sup>3</sup>Everyone who is left in Jerusalem, whom God has chosen for survival, will be called holy.

<sup>4</sup>By his power the Lord will judge and purify the nation and wash away the guilt of Jerusalem and the blood that has been shed there.

<sup>5</sup>Then over Mount Zion and over all who are gathered there, the LORD will send a cloud in the daytime and smoke and a bright flame at night. God's glory will cover and protect the whole city.

<sup>6</sup>His glory will shade the city from the heat of the day and make it a place of safety, sheltered from the rain and storm.

**5**<sup>1</sup> Listen while I sing you this song, a song of my friend and his vineyard: My friend had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

<sup>2</sup>He dug the soil and cleared it of stones; he planted the finest vines. He

built a tower to guard them, dug a pit for treading the grapes. He waited for the grapes to ripen, but every grape was sour.

<sup>3</sup>So now my friend says, You people who live in Jerusalem and Judah, judge between my vineyard and me.

<sup>4</sup>Is there anything I failed to do for it? Then why did it produce sour grapes and not the good grapes I expected?

<sup>5</sup>Here is what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge around it, break down the wall that protects it, and let wild animals eat it and trample it down.

<sup>6</sup>I will let it be overgrown with weeds. I will not trim the vines or hoe the ground; instead, I will let briars and thorns cover it. I will even forbid the clouds to let rain fall on it.

<sup>7</sup>Israel is the vineyard of the LORD Almighty; the people of Judah are the vines he planted. He expected them to do what was good, but instead they committed murder. He expected them to do what was right, but their victims cried out for justice.

<sup>8</sup>You are doomed! You buy more houses and fields to add to those you already have. Soon there will be no place for anyone else to live, and you alone will live in the land.

<sup>9</sup>I have heard the LORD Almighty say, All these big, fine houses will be empty ruins.

<sup>10</sup>The grapevines growing on five acres of land will yield only five gallons of wine. Ten bushels of seed will produce only one bushel of grain.

<sup>11</sup>You are doomed! You get up early in the morning to start drinking, and you spend long evenings getting drunk.

<sup>12</sup>At your feasts you have harps and tambourines and flutes -- and wine. But you don't understand what the LORD is doing,

<sup>13</sup>and so you will be carried away as prisoners. Your leaders will starve to death, and the common people will die of thirst.

<sup>14</sup>The world of the dead is hungry for them, and it opens its mouth wide. It gulps down the nobles of Jerusalem along with the noisy crowd of common people.

<sup>15</sup> Everyone will be disgraced, and all who are proud will be humbled.

<sup>16</sup> But the LORD Almighty shows his greatness by doing what is right, and he reveals his holiness by judging his people.

<sup>17</sup> In the ruins of the cities lambs will eat grass and young goats will find pasture.

<sup>18</sup> You are doomed! You are unable to break free from your sins.

<sup>19</sup> You say, Let the LORD hurry up and do what he says he will, so that we can see it. Let Israel's holy God carry out his plans; let's see what he has in mind.

<sup>20</sup> You are doomed! You call evil good and call good evil. You turn darkness into light and light into darkness. You make what is bitter sweet, and what is sweet you make bitter.

<sup>21</sup> You are doomed! You think you are wise, so very clever.

<sup>22</sup> You are doomed! Heroes of the wine bottle! Brave and fearless when it comes to mixing drinks!

<sup>23</sup> But for just a bribe you let the guilty go free, and you keep the innocent from getting justice.



<sup>24</sup> So now, just as straw and dry grass shrivel and burn in the fire, your roots will rot and your blossoms will dry up and blow away, because you have rejected what the LORD Almighty, Israel's holy God, has taught us.

<sup>25</sup> The LORD is angry with his people and has stretched out his hand to punish them. The mountains will shake, and the bodies of those who die will be left in the streets like rubbish. Yet even then the LORD's anger will not be ended, but his hand will still be stretched out to punish.

<sup>26</sup> The LORD gives a signal to call for a distant nation. He whistles for them to come from the ends of the earth. And here they come, swiftly, quickly!

<sup>27</sup> None of them grow tired; none of them stumble. They never doze or sleep. Not a belt is loose; not a sandal strap is broken.

<sup>28</sup> Their arrows are sharp, and their bows are ready to shoot. Their horses' hoofs are as hard as flint, and their chariot wheels turn like a whirlwind.

<sup>29</sup> The soldiers roar like lions that have killed an animal and are carrying it off

where no one can take it away from them.

<sup>30</sup>When that day comes, they will roar over Israel as loudly as the sea. Look at this country! Darkness and distress! The light is swallowed by darkness.

**6**<sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on his throne, high and exalted, and his robe filled the whole Temple.

<sup>2</sup>Around him flaming creatures were standing, each of which had six wings. Each creature covered its face with two wings, and its body with two, and used the other two for flying.

<sup>3</sup>They were calling out to each other: Holy, holy, holy! The LORD Almighty is holy! His glory fills the world.

<sup>4</sup>The sound of their voices made the foundation of the Temple shake, and the Temple itself became filled with smoke.

<sup>5</sup>I said, There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes I have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.

<sup>6</sup>Then one of the creatures flew down to me, carrying a burning coal that he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.

<sup>7</sup>He touched my lips with the burning coal and said, This has touched your lips, and now your guilt is gone, and your sins are forgiven.

<sup>8</sup>Then I heard the Lord say, Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger? I answered, I will go! Send me!

<sup>9</sup>So he told me to go and give the people this message: No matter how much you listen, you will not understand. No matter how much you look, you will not know what is happening.

<sup>10</sup>Then he said to me, Make the minds of these people dull, their ears deaf, and their eyes blind, so that they cannot see or hear or understand. If they did, they might turn to me and be healed.

<sup>11</sup>I asked, How long will it be like this, Lord? He answered, Until the cities are ruined and empty -- until the houses are uninhabited -- until the land itself is a desolate wasteland.

<sup>12</sup>I will send the people far away and make the whole land desolate.

<sup>13</sup>Even if one person out of ten remains in the land, he too will be destroyed; he will be like the stump of an oak tree that has been cut down. (The stump represents a new beginning for God's people.)

**7**<sup>1</sup>When King Ahaz, the son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah, ruled Judah, war broke out. Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, attacked Jerusalem, but were unable to capture it.

<sup>2</sup>When word reached the king of Judah that the armies of Syria were already in the territory of Israel, he and all his people were so terrified that they trembled like trees shaking in the wind.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD said to Isaiah, Take your son Shear Jashub, and go to meet King Ahaz. You will find him on the road where the cloth makers work, at the end of the ditch that brings water from the upper pool.

<sup>4</sup>Tell him to keep alert, to stay calm, and not to be frightened or disturbed. The anger of King Rezin and his Syrians and of King Pekah is no more dangerous

than the smoke from two smoldering sticks of wood.

<sup>5</sup>Syria, together with Israel and its king, has made a plot.

<sup>6</sup>They intend to invade Judah, terrify the people into joining their side, and then put Tabeel's son on the throne.

<sup>7</sup>But I, the LORD, declare that this will never happen.

<sup>8</sup>Why? Because Syria is no stronger than Damascus, its capital city, and Damascus is no stronger than King Rezin. As for Israel, within sixty-five years it will be too shattered to survive as a nation.

<sup>9</sup>Israel is no stronger than Samaria, its capital city, and Samaria is no stronger than King Pekah. If your faith is not enduring, you will not endure.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD sent another message to Ahaz:

<sup>11</sup>Ask the LORD your God to give you a sign. It can be from deep in the world of the dead or from high up in heaven.

<sup>12</sup>Ahaz answered, I will not ask for a sign. I refuse to put the LORD to the test.

<sup>13</sup>To that Isaiah replied, Listen, now, descendants of King David. It's bad enough for you to wear out the patience of people -- do you have to wear out God's patience too?

<sup>14</sup>Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him Immanuel.'

<sup>15</sup>By the time he is old enough to make his own decisions, people will be drinking milk and eating honey.

<sup>16</sup>Even before that time comes, the lands of those two kings who terrify you will be deserted.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD is going to bring on you, on your people, and on the whole royal family, days of trouble worse than any that have come since the kingdom of Israel separated from Judah -- he is going to bring the king of Assyria.

<sup>18</sup>When that time comes, the LORD will whistle as a signal for the Egyptians to come like flies from the farthest branches of the Nile, and for the Assyrians to come from their land like bees.

<sup>19</sup>They will swarm in the rugged valleys and in the caves in the rocks, and they

will cover every thorn bush and every pasture.

<sup>20</sup>When that time comes, the Lord will hire a barber from across the Euphrates -- the emperor of Assyria! -- and he will shave off your beards and the hair on your heads and your bodies.

<sup>21</sup>When that time comes, even if a farmer has been able to save only one young cow and two goats,

<sup>22</sup>they will give so much milk that he will have all he needs. Yes, the few survivors left in the land will have milk and honey to eat.

<sup>23</sup>When that time comes, the fine vineyards, each with a thousand vines and each worth a thousand pieces of silver, will be overgrown with thorn bushes and briars.

<sup>24</sup>People will go hunting there with bows and arrows. Yes, the whole country will be full of briars and thorn bushes.

<sup>25</sup>All the hills where crops were once planted will be so overgrown with thorns that no one will go there. It will be a place where cattle and sheep graze.

**8**<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to me, Take a large piece of writing material and write

on it in large letters: Quick Loot, Fast Plunder.

<sup>2</sup>Get two reliable men, the priest Uriah and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah, to serve as witnesses.

<sup>3</sup>Some time later my wife became pregnant. When our son was born, the LORD said to me, Name him Quick-Loot-Fast-Plunder.

<sup>4</sup>Before the boy is old enough to say Mamma and Daddy, all the wealth of Damascus and all the loot of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD spoke to me again.

<sup>6</sup>He said, Because these people have rejected the quiet waters of Shiloah Brook and tremble before King Rezin and King Pekah,

<sup>7</sup>I, the Lord, will bring the emperor of Assyria and all his forces to attack Judah. They will advance like the flood waters of the Euphrates River, overflowing all its banks.

<sup>8</sup>They will sweep through Judah in a flood, rising shoulder high and covering everything. God is with us! His outspread wings protect the land.



<sup>9</sup>Gather together in fear, you nations!  
Listen, you distant parts of the earth.  
Get ready to fight, but be afraid! Yes, get  
ready, but be afraid!

<sup>10</sup>Make your plans! But they will never  
succeed. Talk all you want to! But it is all  
useless, because God is with us.

<sup>11</sup>With his great power the LORD  
warned me not to follow the road which  
the people were following. He said,

<sup>12</sup>Do not join in the schemes of the  
people and do not be afraid of the things  
that they fear.

<sup>13</sup>Remember that I, the LORD Almighty,  
am holy; I am the one you must fear.

<sup>14</sup>Because of my awesome holiness  
I am like a stone that people stumble  
over; I am like a trap that will catch the  
people of the kingdoms of Judah and  
Israel and the people of Jerusalem.

<sup>15</sup>Many will stumble; they will fall and  
be crushed. They will be caught in a trap.

<sup>16</sup>You, my disciples, are to guard and  
preserve the messages that God has  
given me.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD has hidden himself from  
his people, but I trust him and place my  
hope in him.

<sup>18</sup>Here I am with the children the LORD has given me. The LORD Almighty, whose throne is on Mount Zion, has sent us as living messages to the people of Israel.

<sup>19</sup>But people will tell you to ask for messages from fortunetellers and mediums, who chirp and mutter. They will say, After all, people should ask for messages from the spirits and consult the dead on behalf of the living.

<sup>20</sup>You are to answer them, Listen to what the LORD is teaching you! Don't listen to mediums -- what they tell you cannot keep trouble away.

<sup>21</sup>The people will wander through the land, discouraged and hungry. In their hunger and their anger they will curse their king and their God. They may look up to the sky

<sup>22</sup>or stare at the ground, but they will see nothing but trouble and darkness, terrifying darkness into which they are being driven.

**9**<sup>1</sup>There will be no way for them to escape from this time of trouble. The land of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali was once disgraced, but the future will

bring honor to this region, from the Mediterranean eastward to the land on the other side of the Jordan, and even to Galilee itself, where the foreigners live.

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them.

<sup>3</sup>You have given them great joy, Lord; you have made them happy. They rejoice in what you have done, as people rejoice when they harvest grain or when they divide captured wealth.

<sup>4</sup>For you have broken the yoke that burdened them and the rod that beat their shoulders. You have defeated the nation that oppressed and exploited your people, just as you defeated the army of Midian long ago.

<sup>5</sup>The boots of the invading army and all their bloodstained clothing will be destroyed by fire.

<sup>6</sup>A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>His royal power will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace.

He will rule as King David's successor, basing his power on right and justice, from now until the end of time. The LORD Almighty is determined to do all this.

<sup>8</sup>The Lord has pronounced judgment on the kingdom of Israel, on the descendants of Jacob.

<sup>9</sup>All the people of Israel, everyone who lives in the city of Samaria, will know that he has done this. Now they are proud and arrogant. They say,

<sup>10</sup>The brick buildings have fallen down, but we will replace them with stone buildings. The beams of sycamore wood have been cut down, but we will replace them with the finest cedar.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD has stirred up their enemies to attack them.

<sup>12</sup>Syria on the east and Philistia on the west have opened their mouths to devour Israel. Yet even so the LORD's anger is not ended; his hand is still stretched out to punish.

<sup>13</sup>The people of Israel have not repented; even though the LORD Almighty has punished them, they have not returned to him.

<sup>14</sup>In a single day the LORD will punish Israel's leaders and its people; he will cut them off, head and tail.

<sup>15</sup>The old and honorable men are the head -- and the tail is the prophets whose teachings are lies!

<sup>16</sup>Those who lead these people have misled them and totally confused them.

<sup>17</sup>And so the Lord will not let any of the young men escape, and he will not show pity on any of the widows and orphans, because all the people are godless and wicked and everything they say is evil. Yet even so the LORD's anger will not be ended, but his hand will still be stretched out to punish.

<sup>18</sup>The wickedness of the people burns like a fire that destroys thorn bushes and thistles. It burns like a forest fire that sends up columns of smoke.

<sup>19</sup>Because the LORD Almighty is angry, his punishment burns like a fire throughout the land and destroys the people, and it is each of us for ourselves.

<sup>20</sup>Everywhere in the country people snatch and eat any bit of food they can find, but their hunger is never satisfied. They even eat their own children!

<sup>21</sup> The people of Manasseh and the people of Ephraim attack each other, and together they attack Judah. Yet even so the LORD's anger is not ended; his hand is still stretched out to punish.

**10**<sup>1</sup> You are doomed! You make unjust laws that oppress my people.

<sup>2</sup> That is how you keep the poor from having their rights and from getting justice. That is how you take the property that belongs to widows and orphans.

<sup>3</sup> What will you do when God punishes you? What will you do when he brings disaster on you from a distant country? Where will you run to find help? Where will you hide your wealth?

<sup>4</sup> You will be killed in battle or dragged off as prisoners. Yet even so the LORD's anger will not be ended; his hand will still be stretched out to punish.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD said, Assyria! I use Assyria like a club to punish those with whom I am angry.

<sup>6</sup> I sent Assyria to attack a godless nation, people who have made me angry. I sent them to loot and steal and trample the people like dirt in the streets.

<sup>7</sup> But the Assyrian emperor has his own violent plans in mind. He is determined to destroy many nations.

<sup>8</sup> He boasts, Every one of my commanders is a king!

<sup>9</sup> I conquered the cities of Calno and Carchemish, the cities of Hamath and Arpad. I conquered Samaria and Damascus.

<sup>10</sup> I reached out to punish those kingdoms that worship idols, idols more numerous than those of Jerusalem and Samaria.

<sup>11</sup> I have destroyed Samaria and all its idols, and I will do the same to Jerusalem and the images that are worshiped there.

<sup>12</sup> But the Lord says, When I finish what I am doing on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, I will punish the emperor of Assyria for all his boasting and all his pride.

<sup>13</sup> The emperor of Assyria boasts, I have done it all myself. I am strong and wise and clever. I wiped out the boundaries between nations and took the supplies they had stored. Like a bull I have trampled the people who live there.

<sup>14</sup>The nations of the world were like a bird's nest, and I gathered their wealth as easily as gathering eggs. Not a wing fluttered to scare me off; no beak opened to scream at me!

<sup>15</sup>But the LORD says, Can an ax claim to be greater than the one who uses it? Is a saw more important than the one who saws with it? A club doesn't lift up a person; a person lifts up a club.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD Almighty is going to send disease to punish those who are now well-fed. In their bodies there will be a fire that burns and burns.

<sup>17</sup>God, the light of Israel, will become a fire. Israel's holy God will become a flame, which in a single day will burn up everything, even the thorns and thistles.

<sup>18</sup>The rich forests and farmlands will be totally destroyed, in the same way that a fatal sickness destroys someone.

<sup>19</sup>There will be so few trees left that even a child will be able to count them.

<sup>20</sup>A time is coming when the people of Israel who have survived will not rely any more on the nation that almost destroyed them. They will truly put their trust in the LORD, Israel's holy God.



<sup>21</sup> A few of the people of Israel will come back to their mighty God.

<sup>22</sup> Even though now there are as many people of Israel as there are grains of sand by the sea, only a few will come back. Destruction is in store for the people, and it is fully deserved.

<sup>23</sup> Yes, throughout the whole country the Sovereign LORD Almighty will bring destruction, as he said he would.

<sup>24</sup> The Sovereign LORD Almighty says to his people who live in Zion, Do not be afraid of the Assyrians, even though they oppress you as the Egyptians used to do.

<sup>25</sup> In only a little while I will finish punishing you, and then I will destroy them.

<sup>26</sup> I, the LORD Almighty, will beat them with my whip as I did the people of Midian at Oreb Rock. I will punish Assyria as I punished Egypt.

<sup>27</sup> When that time comes, I will free you from the power of Assyria, and their yoke will no longer be a burden on your shoulders.

<sup>28</sup> The enemy army has captured the city of Ai! They have passed through

Migron! They left their supplies at Michmash!

<sup>29</sup>They have crossed the pass and are spending the night at Geba! The people in the town of Ramah are terrified, and the people in King Saul's hometown of Gibeah have run away.

<sup>30</sup>Shout, people of Gallim! Listen, people of Laishah! Answer, people of Anathoth!

<sup>31</sup>The people of Madmenah and Gebim are running for their lives.

<sup>32</sup>Today the enemy are in the town of Nob, and there they are shaking their fists at Mount Zion, at the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>33</sup>The LORD Almighty will bring them crashing down like branches cut off a tree. The proudest and highest of them will be cut down and humiliated.

<sup>34</sup>The LORD will cut them down as trees in the heart of the forest are cut down with an ax, as even the finest trees of Lebanon fall!

**11** <sup>1</sup>The royal line of David is like a tree that has been cut down; but just as new branches sprout from

a stump, so a new king will arise from among David's descendants.

<sup>2</sup>The spirit of the LORD will give him wisdom and the knowledge and skill to rule his people. He will know the LORD's will and honor him,

<sup>3</sup>and find pleasure in obeying him. He will not judge by appearance or hearsay;

<sup>4</sup>he will judge the poor fairly and defend the rights of the helpless. At his command the people will be punished, and evil persons will die.

<sup>5</sup>He will rule his people with justice and integrity.

<sup>6</sup>Wolves and sheep will live together in peace, and leopards will lie down with young goats. Calves and lion cubs will feed together, and little children will take care of them.

<sup>7</sup>Cows and bears will eat together, and their calves and cubs will lie down in peace. Lions will eat straw as cattle do.

<sup>8</sup>Even a baby will not be harmed if it plays near a poisonous snake.

<sup>9</sup>On Zion, God's sacred hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil. The land will be as full of knowledge of the LORD as the seas are full of water.

<sup>10</sup>A day is coming when the new king from the royal line of David will be a symbol to the nations. They will gather in his royal city and give him honor.

<sup>11</sup>When that day comes, the Lord will once again use his power and bring back home those of his people who are left in Assyria and Egypt, in the lands of Pathros, Ethiopia, Elam, Babylonia, and Hamath, and in the coastlands and on the islands of the sea.

<sup>12</sup>The Lord will raise a signal flag to show the nations that he is gathering together again the scattered people of Israel and Judah and bringing them back from the four corners of the earth.

<sup>13</sup>The kingdom of Israel will not be jealous of Judah any more, and Judah will not be the enemy of Israel.

<sup>14</sup>Together they will attack the Philistines on the west and plunder the people who live to the east. They will conquer the people of Edom and Moab, and the people of Ammon will obey them.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD will dry up the Gulf of Suez, and he will bring a hot wind to dry up the Euphrates, leaving only seven

tiny streams, so that anyone can walk across.

<sup>16</sup>There will be a highway out of Assyria for those of his people Israel who have survived there, just as there was for their ancestors when they left Egypt.

**12**<sup>1</sup>A day is coming when people will sing, I praise you, LORD! You were angry with me, but now you comfort me and are angry no longer.

<sup>2</sup>God is my savior; I will trust him and not be afraid. The LORD gives me power and strength; he is my savior.

<sup>3</sup>As fresh water brings joy to the thirsty, so God's people rejoice when he saves them.

<sup>4</sup>A day is coming when people will sing, Give thanks to the LORD! Call for him to help you! Tell all the nations what he has done! Tell them how great he is!

<sup>5</sup>Sing to the LORD because of the great things he has done. Let the whole world hear the news.

<sup>6</sup>Let everyone who lives in Zion shout and sing! Israel's holy God is great, and he lives among his people.

**13**<sup>1</sup> This is a message about Babylon, which Isaiah son of Amoz received from God.

<sup>2</sup> On the top of a barren hill raise the battle flag! Shout to the soldiers and raise your arm as the signal for them to attack the gates of the proud city.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD has called out his proud and confident soldiers to fight a holy war and punish those he is angry with.

<sup>4</sup> Listen to the noise on the mountains -- the sound of a great crowd of people, the sound of nations and kingdoms gathering. The LORD of Armies is preparing his troops for battle.

<sup>5</sup> They are coming from far-off countries at the ends of the earth. In his anger the LORD is coming to devastate the whole country.

<sup>6</sup> Howl in pain! The day of the LORD is near, the day when the Almighty brings destruction.

<sup>7</sup> Everyone's hands will hang limp, and everyone's courage will fail.

<sup>8</sup> They will all be terrified and overcome with pain, like the pain of a woman in labor. They will look at each other in fear, and their faces will burn with shame.

<sup>9</sup>The day of the LORD is coming -- that cruel day of his fierce anger and fury. The earth will be made a wilderness, and every sinner will be destroyed.

<sup>10</sup>Every star and every constellation will stop shining, the sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will give no light.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, I will bring disaster on the earth and punish all wicked people for their sins. I will humble everyone who is proud and punish everyone who is arrogant and cruel.

<sup>12</sup>Those who survive will be scarcer than gold.

<sup>13</sup>I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place on that day when I, the LORD Almighty, show my anger.

<sup>14</sup>The foreigners living in Babylon will run away to their homelands, scattering like deer escaping from hunters, like sheep without a shepherd.

<sup>15</sup>Anyone who is caught will be stabbed to death.

<sup>16</sup>While they look on helplessly, their babies will be battered to death, their

houses will be looted, and their wives will be raped.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD says, I am stirring up the Medes to attack Babylon. They care nothing for silver and are not tempted by gold.

<sup>18</sup>With their bows and arrows they will kill the young men. They will show no mercy to babies and take no pity on children.

<sup>19</sup>Babylonia is the most beautiful kingdom of all; it is the pride of its people. But I, the LORD, will overthrow Babylon as I did Sodom and Gomorrah!

<sup>20</sup>No one will ever live there again. No wandering Arab will ever pitch a tent there, and no shepherd will ever pasture a flock there.

<sup>21</sup>It will be a place where desert animals live and where owls build their nests. Ostriches will live there, and wild goats will prance through the ruins.

<sup>22</sup>The towers and palaces will echo with the cries of hyenas and jackals. Babylon's time has come! Her days are almost over.

**14**<sup>1</sup>The LORD will once again be merciful to his people Israel and



choose them as his own. He will let them live in their own land again, and foreigners will come and live there with them.

<sup>2</sup>Many nations will help the people of Israel return to the land which the LORD gave them, and there the nations will serve Israel as slaves. Those who once captured Israel will now be captured by Israel, and the people of Israel will rule over those who once oppressed them.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD will give the people of Israel relief from their pain and suffering and from the hard work they were forced to do.

<sup>4</sup>When he does this, they are to mock the king of Babylon and say: The cruel king has fallen! He will never oppress anyone again!

<sup>5</sup>The LORD has ended the power of the evil rulers

<sup>6</sup>who angrily oppressed the peoples and never stopped persecuting the nations they had conquered.

<sup>7</sup>Now at last the whole world enjoys rest and peace, and everyone sings for joy.

<sup>8</sup>The cypress trees and the cedars of Lebanon rejoice over the fallen king, because there is no one to cut them down, now that he is gone!

<sup>9</sup>The world of the dead is getting ready to welcome the king of Babylon. The ghosts of those who were powerful on earth are stirring about. The ghosts of kings are rising from their thrones.

<sup>10</sup>They all call out to him, Now you are as weak as we are! You are one of us!

<sup>11</sup>You used to be honored with the music of harps, but now here you are in the world of the dead. You lie on a bed of maggots and are covered with a blanket of worms.

<sup>12</sup>King of Babylon, bright morning star, you have fallen from heaven! In the past you conquered nations, but now you have been thrown to the ground.

<sup>13</sup>You were determined to climb up to heaven and to place your throne above the highest stars. You thought you would sit like a king on that mountain in the north where the gods assemble.

<sup>14</sup>You said you would climb to the tops of the clouds and be like the Almighty.

<sup>15</sup>But instead, you have been brought down to the deepest part of the world of the dead.

<sup>16</sup>The dead will stare and gape at you. They will ask, Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble?

<sup>17</sup>Is this the man who destroyed cities and turned the world into a desert? Is this the man who never freed his prisoners or let them go home?

<sup>18</sup>All the kings of the earth lie in their magnificent tombs,

<sup>19</sup>but you have no tomb, and your corpse is thrown out to rot. It is covered by the bodies of soldiers killed in battle, thrown with them into a rocky pit, and trampled down.

<sup>20</sup>Because you ruined your country and killed your own people, you will not be buried like other kings. None of your evil family will survive.

<sup>21</sup>Let the slaughter begin! The sons of this king will die because of their ancestors' sins. None of them will ever rule the earth or cover it with cities.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD Almighty says, I will attack Babylon and bring it to ruin. I will leave

nothing -- no children, no survivors at all. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>23</sup>I will turn Babylon into a marsh, and owls will live there. I will sweep Babylon with a broom that will sweep everything away. I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>24</sup>The LORD Almighty has sworn an oath: What I have planned will happen. What I have determined to do will be done.

<sup>25</sup>I will destroy the Assyrians in my land of Israel and trample them on my mountains. I will free my people from the Assyrian yoke and from the burdens they have had to bear.

<sup>26</sup>This is my plan for the world, and my arm is stretched out to punish the nations.

<sup>27</sup>The LORD Almighty is determined to do this; he has stretched out his arm to punish, and no one can stop him.

<sup>28</sup>This is a message that was proclaimed in the year that King Ahaz died.

<sup>29</sup>People of Philistia, the rod that beat you is broken, but you have no reason to be glad. When one snake dies, a worse

one comes in its place. A snake's egg hatches a flying dragon.

<sup>30</sup>The LORD will be a shepherd to the poor of his people and will let them live in safety. But he will send a terrible famine on you Philistines, and it will not leave any of you alive.

<sup>31</sup>Howl and cry for help, all you Philistine cities! Be terrified, all of you! A cloud of dust is coming from the north -- it is an army with no cowards in its ranks.

<sup>32</sup>How shall we answer the messengers that come to us from Philistia? We will tell them that the LORD has established Zion and that his suffering people will find safety there.

**15**<sup>1</sup>This is a message about Moab. The cities of Ar and Kir are destroyed in a single night, and silence covers the land of Moab.

<sup>2</sup>The people of Dibon climb the hill to weep at the shrine. The people of Moab wail in grief over the cities of Nebo and Medeba; they have shaved their heads and their beards in grief.

<sup>3</sup>The people in the streets are dressed in sackcloth; in the city squares and on the rooftops people mourn and cry.

<sup>4</sup>The people of Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, and their cry can be heard as far away as Jahaz. Even the soldiers tremble; their courage is gone.

<sup>5</sup>My heart cries out for Moab! The people have fled to the town of Zoar, and to Eglath Shelishiyah. Some climb the road to Luhith, weeping as they go; some escape to Horonaim, grieving loudly.

<sup>6</sup>Nimrim Brook is dry, the grass beside it has withered, and nothing green is left.

<sup>7</sup>The people go across the Valley of Willows, trying to escape with all their possessions.

<sup>8</sup>Everywhere at Moab's borders the sound of crying is heard. It is heard at the towns of Eglaim and Beerelim.

<sup>9</sup>At the town of Dibon the river is red with blood, and God has something even worse in store for the people there. Yes, there will be a bloody slaughter of everyone left in Moab.

**16**<sup>1</sup> From the city of Sela in the desert the people of Moab send a lamb as a present to the one who rules in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> They wait on the banks of the Arnon River and move aimlessly back and forth, like birds driven from their nest.

<sup>3</sup> They say to the people of Judah, Tell us what to do. Protect us like a tree that casts a cool shadow in the heat of noon, and let us rest in your shade. We are refugees; hide us where no one can find us.

<sup>4</sup> Let us stay in your land. Protect us from those who want to destroy us. (Oppression and destruction will end, and those who are devastating the country will be gone.)

<sup>5</sup> Then one of David's descendants will be king, and he will rule the people with faithfulness and love. He will be quick to do what is right, and he will see that justice is done.)

<sup>6</sup> The people of Judah say, We have heard how proud the people of Moab are. We know that they are arrogant and conceited, but their boasts are empty.

<sup>7</sup>The people of Moab will weep because of the troubles they suffer. They will all weep when they remember the fine food they used to eat in the city of Kir Heres. They will be driven to despair.

<sup>8</sup>The farms near Heshbon and the vineyards of Sibmah are destroyed -- those vineyards whose wine used to make the rulers of the nations drunk. At one time the vines spread as far as the city of Jazer, and eastward into the desert, and westward to the other side of the Dead Sea.

<sup>9</sup>Now I weep for Sibmah's vines as I weep for Jazer. My tears fall for Heshbon and Elealeh, because there is no harvest to make the people glad.

<sup>10</sup>No one is happy now in the fertile fields. No one shouts or sings in the vineyards. No one tramples grapes to make wine; the shouts of joy are ended.

<sup>11</sup>I groan with sadness for Moab, with grief for Kir Heres.

<sup>12</sup>The people of Moab wear themselves out going to their mountain shrines and to their temples to pray, but it will do them no good.



<sup>13</sup>That is the message the LORD gave earlier about Moab.

<sup>14</sup>And now the LORD says, In exactly three years Moab's great wealth will disappear. Of its many people, only a few will survive, and they will be weak.

**17** <sup>1</sup>The LORD said, Damascus will not be a city any longer; it will be only a pile of ruins.

<sup>2</sup>The cities of Syria will be deserted forever. They will be a pasture for sheep and cattle, and no one will drive them away.

<sup>3</sup>Israel will be defenseless, and Damascus will lose its independence. Those Syrians who survive will be in disgrace like the people of Israel. I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD said, A day is coming when Israel's greatness will come to an end, and its wealth will be replaced by poverty.

<sup>5</sup>Israel will be like a field where the grain has been cut and harvested, as desolate as a field in Rephaim Valley when it has been picked bare.

<sup>6</sup>Only a few people will survive, and Israel will be like an olive tree from

which all the olives have been picked except two or three at the very top, or a few that are left on the lower branches. I, the LORD God of Israel, have spoken.

<sup>7</sup>When that day comes, people will turn for help to their Creator, the holy God of Israel.

<sup>8</sup>They will no longer rely on the altars they made with their own hands, or trust in their own handiwork -- symbols of the goddess Asherah and altars for burning incense.

<sup>9</sup>When that day comes, well-defended cities will be deserted and left in ruins like the cities that the Hivites and the Amorites abandoned as they fled from the people of Israel.

<sup>10</sup>Israel, you have forgotten the God who rescues you and protects you like a mighty rock. Instead, you plant sacred gardens in order to worship a foreign god.

<sup>11</sup>But even if they sprouted and blossomed the very morning you planted them, there would still be no harvest. There would be only trouble and incurable pain.

<sup>12</sup>Powerful nations are in commotion with a sound like the roar of the sea, like the crashing of huge waves.

<sup>13</sup>The nations advance like rushing waves, but God reprimands them and they retreat, driven away like dust on a mountainside, like straw in a whirlwind.

<sup>14</sup>At evening they cause terror, but by morning they are gone. That is the fate of everyone who plunders our land.

**18**<sup>1</sup>Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia there is a land where the sound of wings is heard.

<sup>2</sup>From that land ambassadors come down the Nile in boats made of reeds. Go back home, swift messengers! Take a message back to your land divided by rivers, to your strong and powerful nation, to your tall and smooth-skinned people, who are feared all over the world.

<sup>3</sup>Listen, everyone who lives on earth! Look for a signal flag to be raised on the mountaintops! Listen for the blowing of the bugle!

<sup>4</sup>The LORD said to me, I will look down from heaven as quietly as the dew forms in the warm nights of harvest time, as

serenely as the sun shines in the heat of the day.

<sup>5</sup>Before the grapes are gathered, when the blossoms have all fallen and the grapes are ripening, the enemy will destroy the Ethiopians as easily as a knife cuts branches from a vine.

<sup>6</sup>The corpses of their soldiers will be left exposed to the birds and the wild animals. In summer the birds will feed on them, and in winter, the animals.

<sup>7</sup>A time is coming when the LORD Almighty will receive offerings from this land divided by rivers, this strong and powerful nation, this tall and smooth-skinned people, who are feared all over the world. They will come to Mount Zion, where the LORD Almighty is worshiped.

**19**<sup>1</sup>This is a message about Egypt. The LORD is coming to Egypt, riding swiftly on a cloud. The Egyptian idols tremble before him, and the people of Egypt lose their courage.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD says, I will stir up civil war in Egypt and turn brother against brother and neighbor against neighbor.

Rival cities will fight each other, and rival kings will struggle for power.

<sup>3</sup>I am going to frustrate the plans of the Egyptians and destroy their morale. They will ask their idols to help them, and they will go and consult mediums and ask the spirits of the dead for advice.

<sup>4</sup>I will hand the Egyptians over to a tyrant, to a cruel king who will rule them. I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>5</sup>The water will be low in the Nile, and the river will gradually dry up.

<sup>6</sup>The channels of the river will stink as they slowly go dry. Reeds and rushes will wither,

<sup>7</sup>and all the crops planted along the banks of the Nile will dry up and be blown away.

<sup>8</sup>Everyone who earns a living by fishing in the Nile will groan and cry; their hooks and their nets will be useless.

<sup>9</sup>Those who make linen cloth will be in despair;

<sup>10</sup>weavers and skilled workers will be broken and depressed.

<sup>11</sup>The leaders of the city of Zoan are fools! Egypt's wisest people give stupid advice! How do they dare to tell the king

that they are successors to the ancient scholars and kings?

<sup>12</sup>King of Egypt, where are those clever advisers of yours? Perhaps they can tell you what plans the LORD Almighty has for Egypt.

<sup>13</sup>The leaders of Zoan and Memphis are fools. They were supposed to lead the nation, but they have misled it.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD has made them give confusing advice. As a result, Egypt does everything wrong and staggers like a drunk slipping on his own vomit.

<sup>15</sup>No one in Egypt, rich or poor, important or unknown, can offer help.

<sup>16</sup>A time is coming when the people of Egypt will be as timid as women. They will tremble in terror when they see that the LORD Almighty has stretched out his hand to punish them.

<sup>17</sup>The people of Egypt will be terrified of Judah every time they are reminded of the fate that the LORD Almighty has prepared for them.

<sup>18</sup>When that time comes, the Hebrew language will be spoken in five Egyptian cities. The people there will take their oaths in the name of the LORD Almighty.

One of the cities will be called, City of the Sun.

<sup>19</sup>When that time comes, there will be an altar to the LORD in the land of Egypt and a stone pillar dedicated to him at the Egyptian border.

<sup>20</sup>They will be symbols of the LORD Almighty's presence in Egypt. When the people there are oppressed and call out to the LORD for help, he will send someone to rescue them.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD will reveal himself to the Egyptian people, and then they will acknowledge and worship him, and bring him sacrifices and offerings. They will make solemn promises to him and do what they promise.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD will punish the Egyptians, but then he will heal them. They will turn to him, and he will hear their prayers and heal them.

<sup>23</sup>When that time comes, there will be a highway between Egypt and Assyria. The people of these two countries will travel back and forth between them, and the two nations will worship together.

<sup>24</sup>When that time comes, Israel will rank with Egypt and Assyria, and these

three nations will be a blessing to all the world.

<sup>25</sup>The LORD Almighty will bless them and say, I will bless you, Egypt, my people; you, Assyria, whom I created; and you, Israel, my chosen people.

**20**<sup>1</sup>Under the orders of Emperor Sargon of Assyria, the commander-in-chief of the Assyrian army attacked the Philistine city of Ashdod.

<sup>2</sup>Three years earlier the LORD had told Isaiah son of Amoz to take off his sandals and the sackcloth he was wearing. He obeyed and went around naked and barefoot.

<sup>3</sup>When Ashdod was captured, the LORD said, My servant Isaiah has been going around naked and barefoot for three years. This is a sign of what will happen to Egypt and Ethiopia.

<sup>4</sup>The emperor of Assyria will lead away naked the prisoners he captures from those two countries. Young and old, they will walk barefoot and naked, with their buttocks exposed, bringing shame on Egypt.



<sup>5</sup>Those who have put their trust in Ethiopia and have boasted about Egypt will be disillusioned, their hopes shattered.

<sup>6</sup>When that time comes, the people who live along the coast of Philistia will say, Look at what has happened to the people we relied on to protect us from the emperor of Assyria! How will we ever survive?

**21** <sup>1</sup>This is a message about Babylonia. Like a whirlwind sweeping across the desert, disaster will come from a terrifying land.

<sup>2</sup>I have seen a vision of cruel events, a vision of betrayal and destruction. Army of Elam, attack! Army of Media, lay siege to the cities! God will put an end to the suffering which Babylon has caused.

<sup>3</sup>What I saw and heard in the vision has filled me with terror and pain, pain like that of a woman in labor.

<sup>4</sup>My head is spinning, and I am trembling with fear. I had been longing for evening to come, but it has brought me nothing but terror.

<sup>5</sup>In the vision a banquet is ready; rugs are spread for the guests to sit on. They

are eating and drinking. Suddenly the command rings out: Officers! Prepare your shields!

<sup>6</sup>Then the Lord said to me, Go and post a sentry, and tell him to report what he sees.

<sup>7</sup>If he sees riders coming on horseback, two by two, and riders on donkeys and camels, he is to observe them carefully.

<sup>8</sup>The sentry calls out, Sir, I have been standing guard at my post day and night.

<sup>9</sup>Suddenly, here they come! Riders on horseback, two by two. The sentry gives the news, Babylon has fallen! All the idols they worshiped lie shattered on the ground.

<sup>10</sup>My people Israel, you have been threshed like wheat, but now I have announced to you the good news that I have heard from the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel.

<sup>11</sup>This is a message about Edom. Someone calls to me from Edom, Sentry, how soon will the night be over? Tell me how soon it will end.

<sup>12</sup>I answer, Morning is coming, but night will come again. If you want to ask again, come back and ask.

<sup>13</sup>This is a message about Arabia. People of Dedan, you whose caravans camp in the barren country of Arabia,  
<sup>14</sup>give water to the thirsty people who come to you. You people of the land of Tema, give food to the refugees.

<sup>15</sup>People are fleeing to escape from swords that are ready to kill them, from bows that are ready to shoot, from all the dangers of war.

<sup>16</sup>Then the Lord said to me, In exactly one year the greatness of the tribes of Kedar will be at an end.

<sup>17</sup>The archers are the bravest warriors of Kedar, but few of them will be left. I, the LORD God of Israel, have spoken.

**22**<sup>1</sup>This is a message about the Valley of Vision. What is happening? Why are all the people of the city celebrating on the roofs of the houses?

<sup>2</sup>The whole city is in an uproar, filled with noise and excitement. Your people who died in this war did not die fighting.

<sup>3</sup>All your leaders ran away and were captured before they shot a single arrow.

<sup>4</sup> Now leave me alone to weep bitterly over all those of my people who have died. Don't try to comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> This is a time of panic, defeat, and confusion in the Valley of Vision, and the Sovereign LORD Almighty has sent it on us. The walls of our city have been battered down, and cries for help have echoed among the hills.

<sup>6</sup> The soldiers from the land of Elam came riding on horseback, armed with bows and arrows. Soldiers from the land of Kir had their shields ready.

<sup>7</sup> The fertile valleys of Judah were filled with chariots; soldiers on horseback stood in front of Jerusalem's gates.

<sup>8</sup> All of Judah's defenses crumbled. When that happened, you brought weapons out of the arsenal.

<sup>9</sup> You found the places where the walls of Jerusalem needed repair. You inspected all the houses in Jerusalem and tore some of them down to get stones to repair the city walls. In order to store water,

<sup>10</sup> (22: 9)

<sup>11</sup> you built a reservoir inside the city to hold the water flowing down from the old

pool. But you paid no attention to God, who planned all this long ago and who caused it to happen.

<sup>12</sup>The Sovereign LORD Almighty was calling you then to weep and mourn, to shave your heads and wear sackcloth.

<sup>13</sup>Instead, you laughed and celebrated. You killed sheep and cattle to eat, and you drank wine. You said, We might as well eat and drink! Tomorrow we'll be dead.

<sup>14</sup>The Sovereign LORD Almighty himself spoke to me and said, This evil will never be forgiven them as long as they live. I, the Sovereign LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>15</sup>The Sovereign LORD Almighty told me to go to Shebna, the manager of the royal household, and say to him,

<sup>16</sup>Who do you think you are? What right do you have to carve a tomb for yourself out of the rocky hillside?

<sup>17</sup>You may be important, but the LORD will pick you up and throw you away.

<sup>18</sup>He will pick you up like a ball and throw you into a much larger country. You will die there beside the chariots you

were so proud of. You are a disgrace to your master's household.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD will remove you from office and bring you down from your high position.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD said to Shebna, When that happens, I will send for my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiyah.

<sup>21</sup>I will put your official robe and belt on him and give him all the authority you have had. He will be like a father to the people of Jerusalem and Judah.

<sup>22</sup>I will give him complete authority under the king, the descendant of David. He will have the keys of office; what he opens, no one will shut, and what he shuts, no one will open.

<sup>23</sup>I will fasten him firmly in place like a peg, and he will be a source of honor to his whole family.

<sup>24</sup>But all his relatives and dependents will become a burden to him. They will hang on him like pots and bowls hanging from a peg!

<sup>25</sup>When that happens, the peg that was firmly fastened will pull loose and fall. And that will be the end of everything

that was hanging on it. The LORD has spoken.

**23**<sup>1</sup> This is a message about Tyre. Howl with grief, you sailors out on the ocean! Your home port of Tyre has been destroyed; its houses and its harbor are in ruins. As your ships return from Cyprus, you learn the news.

<sup>2</sup> Wail, you merchants of Sidon! You sent agents

<sup>3</sup> across the sea to buy and sell the grain that grew in Egypt and to do business with all the nations.

<sup>4</sup> City of Sidon, you are disgraced! The sea and the great ocean depths disown you and say, I never had any children. I never raised sons or daughters.

<sup>5</sup> Even the Egyptians will be shocked and dismayed when they learn that Tyre has been destroyed.

<sup>6</sup> Howl with grief, you people of Phoenicia! Try to escape to Spain!

<sup>7</sup> Can this be the joyful city of Tyre, founded so long ago? Is this the city that sent settlers across the sea to establish colonies?

<sup>8</sup> Who was it that planned to bring all this on Tyre, that imperial city, whose

merchant princes were the most honored men on earth?

<sup>9</sup>The LORD Almighty planned it. He planned it in order to put an end to their pride in what they had done and to humiliate their honored ones.

<sup>10</sup>Go and farm the land, you people in the colonies in Spain! There is no one to protect you any more.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD has stretched out his hand over the sea and overthrown kingdoms. He has commanded that the Phoenician centers of commerce be destroyed.

<sup>12</sup>City of Sidon, your happiness has ended, and your people are oppressed. Even if they escape to Cyprus, they will still not be safe.

<sup>13</sup>(It was the Babylonians, not the Assyrians, who let the wild animals overrun Tyre. It was the Babylonians who put up siege towers, tore down the fortifications of Tyre, and left the city in ruins.)

<sup>14</sup>Howl with grief, you sailors out on the ocean! The city you relied on has been destroyed.

<sup>15</sup>A time is coming when Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, the lifetime



of a king. When those years are over, Tyre will be like the prostitute in the song:

<sup>16</sup>Take your harp, go round the town, you poor forgotten whore! Play and sing your songs again to bring men back once more.

<sup>17</sup>When the seventy years are over, the LORD will let Tyre go back to her old trade, and she will hire herself out to all the kingdoms of the world.

<sup>18</sup>The money she earns by commerce will be dedicated to the LORD. She will not store it away, but those who worship the LORD will use her money to buy the food and the clothing they need.

**24** <sup>1</sup>The LORD is going to devastate the earth and leave it desolate. He will twist the earth's surface and scatter its people.

<sup>2</sup>Everyone will meet the same fate -- the priests and the people, slaves and masters, buyers and sellers, lenders and borrowers, rich and poor.

<sup>3</sup>The earth will lie shattered and ruined. The LORD has spoken and it will be done.

<sup>4</sup>The earth dries up and withers; the whole world grows weak; both earth and sky decay.

<sup>5</sup>The people have defiled the earth by breaking God's laws and by violating the covenant he made to last forever.

<sup>6</sup>So God has pronounced a curse on the earth. Its people are paying for what they have done. Fewer and fewer remain alive.

<sup>7</sup>The grapevines wither, and wine is becoming scarce. Everyone who was once happy is now sad,

<sup>8</sup>and the joyful music of their harps and drums has ceased.

<sup>9</sup>There is no more happy singing over wine; no one enjoys its taste any more.

<sup>10</sup>In the city everything is in chaos, and people lock themselves in their houses for safety.

<sup>11</sup>People shout in the streets because there is no more wine. Happiness is gone forever; it has been banished from the land.

<sup>12</sup>The city is in ruins, and its gates have been broken down.

<sup>13</sup>This is what will happen in every nation all over the world. It will be like

the end of harvest, when the olives have been beaten off every tree and the last grapes picked from the vines.

<sup>14</sup>Those who survive will sing for joy. Those in the West will tell how great the LORD is,

<sup>15</sup>and those in the East will praise him. The people who live along the sea will praise the LORD, the God of Israel.

<sup>16</sup>From the most distant parts of the world we will hear songs in praise of Israel, the righteous nation. But there is no hope for me! I am wasting away! Traitors continue to betray, and their treachery grows worse and worse.

<sup>17</sup>Listen to me, everyone! There are terrors, pits, and traps waiting for you.

<sup>18</sup>Anyone who tries to escape from the terror will fall in a pit, and anyone who escapes from the pit will be caught in a trap. Torrents of rain will pour from the sky, and earth's foundations will shake.

<sup>19</sup>The earth will crack and shatter and split open.

<sup>20</sup>The earth itself will stagger like a drunk, sway like a hut in a storm. The world is weighed down by its sins; it will collapse and never rise again.

<sup>21</sup> A time is coming when the LORD will punish the powers above and the rulers of the earth.

<sup>22</sup> God will crowd kings together like prisoners in a pit. He will shut them in prison until the time of their punishment comes.

<sup>23</sup> The moon will grow dark, and the sun will no longer shine, for the LORD Almighty will be king. He will rule in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and the leaders of the people will see his glory.

**25** <sup>1</sup> LORD, you are my God; I will honor you and praise your name. You have done amazing things; you have faithfully carried out the plans you made long ago.

<sup>2</sup> You have turned cities into ruins and destroyed their fortifications. The palaces which our enemies built are gone forever.

<sup>3</sup> The people of powerful nations will praise you; you will be feared in the cities of cruel nations.

<sup>4</sup> The poor and the helpless have fled to you and have been safe in times of trouble. You give them shelter from

storms and shade from the burning heat. Cruel enemies attack like a winter storm,  
<sup>5</sup>like drought in a dry land. But you, LORD, have silenced our enemies; you silence the shouts of cruel people, as a cloud cools a hot day.

<sup>6</sup>Here on Mount Zion the LORD Almighty will prepare a banquet for all the nations of the world -- a banquet of the richest food and the finest wine.

<sup>7</sup>Here he will suddenly remove the cloud of sorrow that has been hanging over all the nations.

<sup>8</sup>The Sovereign LORD will destroy death forever! He will wipe away the tears from everyone's eyes and take away the disgrace his people have suffered throughout the world. The LORD himself has spoken.

<sup>9</sup>When it happens, everyone will say, He is our God! We have put our trust in him, and he has rescued us. He is the LORD! We have put our trust in him, and now we are happy and joyful because he has saved us.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD will protect Mount Zion, but the people of Moab will be trampled

down the way straw is trampled in manure.

<sup>11</sup> They will reach out their hands as if they were trying to swim, but God will humiliate them, and their hands will sink helplessly.

<sup>12</sup> He will destroy the fortresses of Moab with their high walls and bring them tumbling down into the dust.

**26** <sup>1</sup> A day is coming when the people will sing this song in the land of Judah: Our city is strong! God himself defends its walls!

<sup>2</sup> Open the city gates and let the faithful nation enter, the nation whose people do what is right.

<sup>3</sup> You, LORD, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in you.

<sup>4</sup> Trust in the LORD forever; he will always protect us.

<sup>5</sup> He has humbled those who were proud; he destroyed the strong city they lived in, and sent its walls crashing into the dust.

<sup>6</sup> Those who were oppressed walk over it now and trample it under their feet.

<sup>7</sup> LORD, you make the path smooth for good people; the road they travel is level.

<sup>8</sup> We follow your will and put our hope in you; you are all that we desire.

<sup>9</sup> At night I long for you with all my heart; when you judge the earth and its people, they will all learn what justice is.

<sup>10</sup> Even though you are kind to the wicked, they never learn to do what is right. Even here in a land of righteous people they still do wrong; they refuse to recognize your greatness.

<sup>11</sup> Your enemies do not know that you will punish them. LORD, put them to shame and let them suffer; let them suffer the punishment you have prepared. Show them how much you love your people.

<sup>12</sup> You will give us prosperity, LORD; everything that we achieve is the result of what you do.

<sup>13</sup> LORD our God, we have been ruled by others, but you alone are our LORD.

<sup>14</sup> Now they are dead and will not live again; their ghosts will not rise, for you have punished them and destroyed

them. No one remembers them any more.

<sup>15</sup>LORD, you have made our nation grow, enlarging its territory on every side; and this has brought you honor.

<sup>16</sup>You punished your people, LORD, and in anguish they prayed to you.

<sup>17</sup>You, LORD, have made us cry out, as a woman in labor cries out in pain.

<sup>18</sup>We were in pain and agony, but we gave birth to nothing. We have won no victory for our land; we have accomplished nothing.

<sup>19</sup>Those of our people who have died will live again! Their bodies will come back to life. All those sleeping in their graves will wake up and sing for joy. As the sparkling dew refreshes the earth, so the LORD will revive those who have long been dead.

<sup>20</sup>Go into your houses, my people, and shut the door behind you. Hide yourselves for a little while until God's anger is over.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD is coming from his heavenly dwelling place to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The murders that were secretly committed



on the earth will be revealed, and the ground will no longer hide those who have been killed.

**27** <sup>1</sup> On that day the LORD will use his powerful and deadly sword to punish Leviathan, that wriggling, twisting dragon, and to kill the monster that lives in the sea.

<sup>2</sup> On that day the LORD will say of his pleasant vineyard,

<sup>3</sup> I watch over it and water it continually. I guard it night and day so that no one will harm it.

<sup>4</sup> I am no longer angry with the vineyard. If there were thorns and briers to fight against, I would burn them up completely.

<sup>5</sup> But if the enemies of my people want my protection, let them make peace with me. Yes, let them make peace with me.

<sup>6</sup> In the days to come the people of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, will take root like a tree, and they will blossom and bud. The earth will be covered with the fruit they produce.

<sup>7</sup> Israel has not been punished by the LORD as severely as its enemies nor lost as many people.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD punished his people by sending them into exile. He took them away with a cruel wind from the east.

<sup>9</sup>But Israel's sins will be forgiven only when the stones of pagan altars are ground up like chalk, and no more incense altars or symbols of the goddess Asherah are left.

<sup>10</sup>The fortified city lies in ruins. It is deserted like an empty wilderness. It has become a pasture for cattle, where they can rest and graze.

<sup>11</sup>The branches of the trees are withered and broken, and women gather them for firewood. Because the people have understood nothing, God their Creator will not pity them or show them any mercy.

<sup>12</sup>On that day, from the Euphrates to the Egyptian border, the LORD will gather his people one by one, as threshing separates the wheat from the chaff.

<sup>13</sup>When that day comes, a trumpet will be blown to call back from Assyria and Egypt all the Israelites who are in exile there. They will come and worship the LORD in Jerusalem, on his sacred hill.

**28**<sup>1</sup>The kingdom of Israel is doomed! Its glory is fading like the crowns of flowers on the heads of its drunken leaders. Their proud heads are well perfumed, but there they lie, dead drunk.

<sup>2</sup>The Lord has someone strong and powerful ready to attack them, someone who will come like a hailstorm, like a torrent of rain, like a rushing, overpowering flood, and will overwhelm the land.

<sup>3</sup>The pride of those drunken leaders will be trampled underfoot.

<sup>4</sup>The fading glory of those proud leaders will disappear like the first figs of the season, picked and eaten as soon as they are ripe.

<sup>5</sup>A day is coming when the LORD Almighty will be like a glorious crown of flowers for his people who survive.

<sup>6</sup>He will give a sense of justice to those who serve as judges, and courage to those who defend the city gates from attack.

<sup>7</sup>Even the prophets and the priests are so drunk that they stagger. They have drunk so much wine and liquor that they

stumble in confusion. The prophets are too drunk to understand the visions that God sends, and the priests are too drunk to decide the cases that are brought to them.

<sup>8</sup>The tables where they sit are all covered with vomit, and not a clean spot is left.

<sup>9</sup>They complain about me. They say, Who does that man think he's teaching? Who needs his message? It's only good for babies that have just stopped nursing!

<sup>10</sup>He is trying to teach us letter by letter, line by line, lesson by lesson.

<sup>11</sup>If you won't listen to me, then God will use foreigners speaking some strange-sounding language to teach you a lesson.

<sup>12</sup>He offered rest and comfort to all of you, but you refused to listen to him.

<sup>13</sup>That is why the LORD is going to teach you letter by letter, line by line, lesson by lesson. Then you will stumble with every step you take. You will be wounded, trapped, and taken prisoner.

<sup>14</sup> Now you arrogant leaders who rule here in Jerusalem over this people, listen to what the LORD is saying.

<sup>15</sup> You boast that you have made a treaty with death and reached an agreement with the world of the dead. You are certain that disaster will spare you when it comes, because you depend on lies and deceit to keep you safe.

<sup>16</sup> This, now, is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am placing in Zion a foundation that is firm and strong. In it I am putting a solid cornerstone on which are written the words, Faith that is firm is also patient.

<sup>17</sup> Justice will be the measuring line for the foundation, and honesty will be its plumb line. Hailstorms will sweep away all the lies you depend on, and floods will destroy your security.

<sup>18</sup> The treaty you have made with death will be abolished, and your agreement with the world of the dead will be canceled. When disaster sweeps down, you will be overcome.

<sup>19</sup> It will strike you again and again, morning after morning. You will have to

bear it day and night. Each new message from God will bring new terror!

<sup>20</sup>You will be like the person in the proverb, who tries to sleep in a bed too short to stretch out on, with a blanket too narrow to wrap himself in.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD will fight as he did at Mount Perazim and in the valley of Gibeon, in order to do what he intends to do -- strange as his actions may seem. He will complete his work, his mysterious work.

<sup>22</sup>Don't laugh at the warning I am giving you! If you do, it will be even harder for you to escape. I have heard the LORD Almighty's decision to destroy the whole country.

<sup>23</sup>Listen to what I am saying; pay attention to what I am telling you.

<sup>24</sup>Farmers don't constantly plow their fields and keep getting them ready for planting.

<sup>25</sup>Once they have prepared the soil, they plant the seeds of herbs such as dill and cumin. They plant rows of wheat and barley, and at the edges of their fields they plant other grain.

<sup>26</sup>They know how to do their work, because God has taught them.

<sup>27</sup> They never use a heavy club to beat out dill seeds or cumin seeds; instead they use light sticks of the proper size.

<sup>28</sup> They do not ruin the wheat by threshing it endlessly, and they know how to thresh it by driving a cart over it without bruising the grains.

<sup>29</sup> All this wisdom comes from the LORD Almighty. The plans God makes are wise, and they always succeed.

**29** <sup>1</sup> God's altar, Jerusalem itself, is doomed! The city where David camped is doomed! Let another year or two come and go, with its feasts and festivals,

<sup>2</sup> and then God will bring disaster on the city that is called God's altar. There will be weeping and wailing, and the whole city will be like an altar covered with blood.

<sup>3</sup> God will attack the city, surround it, and besiege it.

<sup>4</sup> Jerusalem will be like a ghost struggling to speak from under the ground, a muffled voice coming from the dust.

<sup>5</sup> Jerusalem, all the foreigners who attack you will be blown away like dust,

and their terrifying armies will fly away like straw. Suddenly and unexpectedly<sup>6</sup> the LORD Almighty will rescue you with violent thunderstorms and earthquakes. He will send windstorms and raging fire;<sup>7</sup> then all the armies of the nations attacking the city of God's altar, all their weapons and equipment -- everything -- will vanish like a dream, like something imagined in the night.

<sup>8</sup>All the nations that assemble to attack Jerusalem will be like a starving person who dreams he is eating and wakes up hungry, or like someone dying of thirst who dreams he is drinking and wakes with a dry throat.

<sup>9</sup>Go ahead and be stupid! Go ahead and be blind! Get drunk without any wine! Stagger without drinking a drop!

<sup>10</sup>The LORD has made you drowsy, ready to fall into a deep sleep. The prophets should be the eyes of the people, but God has blindfolded them.

<sup>11</sup>The meaning of every prophetic vision will be hidden from you; it will be like a sealed scroll. If you take it to someone who knows how to read and



ask him to read it to you, he will say he can't because it is sealed.

<sup>12</sup>If you give it to someone who can't read and ask him to read it to you, he will answer that he doesn't know how.

<sup>13</sup>The Lord said, These people claim to worship me, but their words are meaningless, and their hearts are somewhere else. Their religion is nothing but human rules and traditions, which they have simply memorized.

<sup>14</sup>So I will startle them with one unexpected blow after another. Those who are wise will turn out to be fools, and all their cleverness will be useless.

<sup>15</sup>Those who try to hide their plans from the LORD are doomed! They carry out their schemes in secret and think no one will see them or know what they are doing.

<sup>16</sup>They turn everything upside down. Which is more important, the potter or the clay? Can something you have made say, You didn't make me? Or can it say, You don't know what you are doing?

<sup>17</sup>As the saying goes, before long the dense forest will become farmland, and the farmland will go back to forest.

<sup>18</sup>When that day comes, the deaf will be able to hear a book being read aloud, and the blind, who have been living in darkness, will open their eyes and see.

<sup>19</sup>Poor and humble people will once again find the happiness which the LORD, the holy God of Israel, gives.

<sup>20</sup>It will be the end of those who oppress others and show contempt for God. Every sinner will be destroyed.

<sup>21</sup>God will destroy those who slander others, those who prevent the punishment of criminals, and those who tell lies to keep honest people from getting justice.

<sup>22</sup>So now the LORD, the God of Israel, who rescued Abraham from trouble, says, My people, you will not be disgraced any longer, and your faces will no longer be pale with shame.

<sup>23</sup>When you see the children that I will give you, then you will acknowledge that I am the holy God of Israel. You will honor me and stand in awe of me.

<sup>24</sup>Foolish people will learn to understand, and those who are always grumbling will be glad to be taught.

**30**<sup>1</sup> The LORD has spoken: Those who rule Judah are doomed because they rebel against me. They follow plans that I did not make, and sign treaties against my will, piling one sin on another.

<sup>2</sup> They go to Egypt for help without asking for my advice. They want Egypt to protect them, so they put their trust in Egypt's king.

<sup>3</sup> But the king will be powerless to help them, and Egypt's protection will end in disaster.

<sup>4</sup> Although their ambassadors have already arrived at the Egyptian cities of Zoan and Hanes,

<sup>5</sup> the people of Judah will regret that they ever trusted that unreliable nation, a nation that fails them when they expect help.

<sup>6</sup> This is God's message about the animals of the southern desert: The ambassadors travel through dangerous country, where lions live and where there are poisonous snakes and flying dragons. They load their donkeys and camels with expensive gifts for a nation that cannot give them any help.

<sup>7</sup>The help that Egypt gives is useless. So I have nicknamed Egypt, The Harmless Dragon.

<sup>8</sup>God told me to write down in a book what the people are like, so that there would be a permanent record of how evil they are.

<sup>9</sup>They are always rebelling against God, always lying, always refusing to listen to the LORD's teachings.

<sup>10</sup>They tell the prophets to keep quiet. They say, Don't talk to us about what's right. Tell us what we want to hear. Let us keep our illusions.

<sup>11</sup>Get out of our way and stop blocking our path. We don't want to hear about your holy God of Israel.

<sup>12</sup>But this is what the holy God of Israel says: You ignore what I tell you and rely on violence and deceit.

<sup>13</sup>You are guilty. You are like a high wall with a crack running down it; suddenly you will collapse.

<sup>14</sup>You will be shattered like a clay pot, so badly broken that there is no piece big enough to pick up hot coals with or to dip water from a cistern.

<sup>15</sup>The Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says to the people, Come back and quietly trust in me. Then you will be strong and secure. But you refuse to do it.

<sup>16</sup>Instead, you plan to escape from your enemies by riding fast horses. And you are right -- escape is what you will have to do! You think your horses are fast enough, but those who pursue you will be faster!

<sup>17</sup>A thousand of you will run away when you see one enemy soldier, and five soldiers will be enough to make you all run away. Nothing will be left of your army except a lonely flagpole on the top of a hill.

<sup>18</sup>And yet the LORD is waiting to be merciful to you. He is ready to take pity on you because he always does what is right. Happy are those who put their trust in the LORD.

<sup>19</sup>You people who live in Jerusalem will not weep any more. The LORD is compassionate, and when you cry to him for help, he will answer you.

<sup>20</sup>The Lord will make you go through hard times, but he himself will be there

to teach you, and you will not have to search for him any more.

<sup>21</sup> If you wander off the road to the right or the left, you will hear his voice behind you saying, Here is the road. Follow it.

<sup>22</sup> You will take your idols plated with silver and your idols covered with gold, and will throw them away like filth, shouting, Out of my sight!

<sup>23</sup> Whenever you plant your crops, the Lord will send rain to make them grow and will give you a rich harvest, and your livestock will have plenty of pasture.

<sup>24</sup> The oxen and donkeys that plow your fields will eat the finest and best fodder.

<sup>25</sup> On the day when the forts of your enemies are captured and their people are killed, streams of water will flow from every mountain and every hill.

<sup>26</sup> The moon will be as bright as the sun, and the sun will be seven times brighter than usual, like the light of seven days in one. This will all happen when the LORD bandages and heals the wounds he has given his people.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD's power and glory can be seen in the distance. Fire and smoke

show his anger. He speaks, and his words burn like fire.

<sup>28</sup>He sends the wind in front of him like a flood that carries everything away. It sweeps nations to destruction and puts an end to their evil plans.

<sup>29</sup>But you, God's people, will be happy and sing as you do on the night of a sacred festival. You will be as happy as those who walk to the music of flutes on their way to the Temple of the LORD, the defender of Israel.

<sup>30</sup>The LORD will let everyone hear his majestic voice and feel the force of his anger. There will be flames, cloudbursts, hailstones, and torrents of rain.

<sup>31</sup>The Assyrians will be terrified when they hear the LORD's voice and feel the force of his punishment.

<sup>32</sup>As the LORD strikes them again and again, his people will keep time with the music of drums and harps. God himself will fight against the Assyrians.

<sup>33</sup>Long ago a place was prepared where a huge fire will burn the emperor of Assyria. It is deep and wide, and piled high with wood. The LORD will breathe out a stream of flame to set it on fire.

**31** <sup>1</sup> Those who go to Egypt for help are doomed! They are relying on Egypt's vast military strength -- horses, chariots, and soldiers. But they do not rely on the LORD, the holy God of Israel, or ask him for help.

<sup>2</sup> He knows what he is doing! He sends disaster. He carries out his threats to punish evil people and those who protect them.

<sup>3</sup> The Egyptians are not gods -- they are only human. Their horses are not supernatural. When the LORD acts, the strong nation will crumble, and the weak nation it helped will fall. Both of them will be destroyed.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD said to me, No matter how shepherds yell and shout, they can't scare away a lion from an animal that it has killed; in the same way, there is nothing that can keep me, the LORD Almighty, from protecting Mount Zion.

<sup>5</sup> Just as a bird hovers over its nest to protect its young, so I, the LORD Almighty, will protect Jerusalem and defend it.



<sup>6</sup>God said, People of Israel, you have sinned against me and opposed me. But now, come back to me!

<sup>7</sup>A time is coming when all of you will throw away the sinful idols you made out of silver and gold.

<sup>8</sup>Assyria will be destroyed in war, but not by human power. The Assyrians will run from battle, and their young men will be made slaves.

<sup>9</sup>Their emperor will run away in terror, and the officers will be so frightened that they will abandon their battle flags. The LORD has spoken -- the LORD who is worshiped in Jerusalem and whose fire burns there for sacrifices.

**32**<sup>1</sup> Some day there will be a king who rules with integrity, and national leaders who govern with justice.

<sup>2</sup>Each of them will be like a shelter from the wind and a place to hide from storms. They will be like streams flowing in a desert, like the shadow of a giant rock in a barren land.

<sup>3</sup>Their eyes and ears will be open to the needs of the people.

<sup>4</sup>They will not be impatient any longer, but they will act with understanding and will say what they mean.

<sup>5</sup>No one will think that a fool is honorable or say that a scoundrel is honest.

<sup>6</sup>A fool speaks foolishly and thinks up evil things to do. What he does and what he says are an insult to the LORD, and he never feeds the hungry or gives thirsty people anything to drink.

<sup>7</sup>A stupid person is evil and does evil things; he plots to ruin the poor with lies and to keep them from getting their rights.

<sup>8</sup>But an honorable person acts honestly and stands firm for what is right.

<sup>9</sup>You women who live an easy life, free from worries, listen to what I am saying.

<sup>10</sup>You may be satisfied now, but this time next year you will be in despair because there will be no grapes for you to gather.

<sup>11</sup>You have been living an easy life, free from worries; but now, tremble with fear! Strip off your clothes and tie rags around your waist.

<sup>12</sup>Beat your breasts in grief because the fertile fields and the vineyards have been destroyed,

<sup>13</sup>and thorn bushes and briars are growing on my people's land. Weep for all the houses where people were happy and for the city that was full of life.

<sup>14</sup>Even the palace will be abandoned and the capital city totally deserted. Homes and the forts that guarded them will be in ruins forever. Wild donkeys will roam there, and sheep will find pasture there.

<sup>15</sup>But once more God will send us his spirit. The wasteland will become fertile, and fields will produce rich crops.

<sup>16</sup>Everywhere in the land righteousness and justice will be done.

<sup>17</sup>Because everyone will do what is right, there will be peace and security forever.

<sup>18</sup>God's people will be free from worries, and their homes peaceful and safe.

<sup>19</sup>(But hail will fall on the forests, and the city will be torn down.)

<sup>20</sup>How happy everyone will be with plenty of water for the crops and safe

pasture everywhere for the donkeys and cattle.

**33**<sup>1</sup> Our enemies are doomed! They have robbed and betrayed, although no one has robbed them or betrayed them. But their time to rob and betray will end, and they themselves will become victims of robbery and treachery.

<sup>2</sup> LORD, have mercy on us. We have put our hope in you. Protect us day by day and save us in times of trouble.

<sup>3</sup> When you fight for us, nations run away from the noise of battle.

<sup>4</sup> Their belongings are pounced upon and taken as loot.

<sup>5</sup> How great the LORD is! He rules over everything. He will fill Jerusalem with justice and integrity

<sup>6</sup> and give stability to the nation. He always protects his people and gives them wisdom and knowledge. Their greatest treasure is their reverence for the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> The brave are calling for help. The ambassadors who tried to bring about peace are crying bitterly.

<sup>8</sup>The highways are so dangerous that no one travels on them. Treaties are broken and agreements are violated. No one is respected any more.

<sup>9</sup>The land lies idle and deserted. The forests of Lebanon have withered, the fertile valley of Sharon is like a desert, and in Bashan and on Mount Carmel the leaves are falling from the trees.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says to the nations, Now I will act. I will show how powerful I am.

<sup>11</sup>You make worthless plans and everything you do is useless. My spirit is like a fire that will destroy you.

<sup>12</sup>You will crumble like rocks burned to make lime, like thorns burned to ashes.

<sup>13</sup>Let everyone near and far hear what I have done and acknowledge my power.

<sup>14</sup>The sinful people of Zion are trembling with fright. They say, God's judgment is like a fire that burns forever. Can any of us survive a fire like that?

<sup>15</sup>You can survive if you say and do what is right. Don't use your power to cheat the poor and don't accept bribes. Don't join with those who plan to commit murder or to do other evil things.

<sup>16</sup>Then you will be safe; you will be as secure as if in a strong fortress. You will have food to eat and water to drink.

<sup>17</sup>Once again you will see a king ruling in splendor over a land that stretches in all directions.

<sup>18</sup>Your old fears of foreign tax collectors and spies will be only a memory.

<sup>19</sup>You will no longer see any arrogant foreigners who speak a language that you can't understand.

<sup>20</sup>Look at Zion, the city where we celebrate our religious festivals. Look at Jerusalem! What a safe place it will be to live in! It will be like a tent that is never moved, whose pegs are never pulled up and whose ropes never break.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD will show us his glory. We will live beside broad rivers and streams, but hostile ships will not sail on them.

<sup>22</sup>All the rigging on those ships is useless; the sails cannot be spread! We will seize all the wealth of enemy armies, and there will be so much that even the lame can get a share. The LORD himself will be our king; he will rule over us and protect us.

<sup>23</sup> (33: 22)

<sup>24</sup>No one who lives in our land will ever again complain of being sick, and all sins will be forgiven.

**34**<sup>1</sup>Come, people of all nations! Gather around and listen. Let the whole earth and everyone living on it come here and listen.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD is angry with all the nations and all their armies. He has condemned them to destruction.

<sup>3</sup>Their corpses will not be buried, but will lie there rotting and stinking; and the mountains will be red with blood.

<sup>4</sup>The sun, moon, and stars will crumble to dust. The sky will disappear like a scroll being rolled up, and the stars will fall like leaves dropping from a vine or a fig tree.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD has prepared his sword in heaven, and now it will strike Edom, those people whom he has condemned to destruction.

<sup>6</sup>His sword will be covered with their blood and fat, like the blood and fat of lambs and goats that are sacrificed. The LORD will offer this sacrifice in the city of Bozrah; he will make this a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

<sup>7</sup>The people will fall like wild oxen and young bulls, and the earth will be red with blood and covered with fat.

<sup>8</sup>This is the time when the LORD will rescue Zion and take vengeance on her enemies.

<sup>9</sup>The rivers of Edom will turn into tar, and the soil will turn into sulfur. The whole country will burn like tar.

<sup>10</sup>It will burn day and night, and smoke will rise from it forever. The land will lie waste age after age, and no one will ever travel through it again.

<sup>11</sup>Owls and ravens will take over the land. The LORD will make it a barren waste again, as it was before the creation.

<sup>12</sup>There will be no king to rule the country, and the leaders will all be gone.

<sup>13</sup>Thorns and thistles will grow up in all the palaces and walled towns, and jackals and owls will live in them.

<sup>14</sup>Wild animals will roam there, and demons will call to each other. The night monster will come there looking for a place to rest.

<sup>15</sup>Owls will build their nests, lay eggs, hatch their young, and care for them



there. Vultures will gather there, one after another.

<sup>16</sup>Search in the LORD's book of living creatures and read what it says. Not one of these creatures will be missing, and not one will be without its mate. The LORD has commanded it to be so; he himself will bring them together.

<sup>17</sup>It is the LORD who will divide the land among them and give each of them a share. They will live in the land age after age, and it will belong to them forever.

**35** <sup>1</sup>The desert will rejoice, and flowers will bloom in the wastelands.

<sup>2</sup>The desert will sing and shout for joy; it will be as beautiful as the Lebanon Mountains and as fertile as the fields of Carmel and Sharon. Everyone will see the LORD's splendor, see his greatness and power.

<sup>3</sup>Give strength to hands that are tired and to knees that tremble with weakness.

<sup>4</sup>Tell everyone who is discouraged, Be strong and don't be afraid! God is coming to your rescue, coming to punish your enemies.

<sup>5</sup>The blind will be able to see, and the deaf will hear.

<sup>6</sup>The lame will leap and dance, and those who cannot speak will shout for joy. Streams of water will flow through the desert;

<sup>7</sup>the burning sand will become a lake, and dry land will be filled with springs. Where jackals used to live, marsh grass and reeds will grow.

<sup>8</sup>There will be a highway there, called The Road of Holiness. No sinner will ever travel that road; no fools will mislead those who follow it.

<sup>9</sup>No lions will be there; no fierce animals will pass that way. Those whom the LORD has rescued will travel home by that road.

<sup>10</sup>They will reach Jerusalem with gladness, singing and shouting for joy. They will be happy forever, forever free from sorrow and grief.

**36**<sup>1</sup>In the fourteenth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah, Sennacherib, the emperor of Assyria, attacked the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

<sup>2</sup>Then he ordered his chief official to go from Lachish to Jerusalem with a large military force to demand that King Hezekiah surrender. The official occupied the road where the cloth makers work, by the ditch that brings water from the upper pool.

<sup>3</sup>Three Judeans came out to meet him: the official in charge of the palace, Eliakim son of Hilkiah; the court secretary, Shebna; and the official in charge of the records, Joah son of Asaph.

<sup>4</sup>The Assyrian official told them that the emperor wanted to know what made King Hezekiah so confident.

<sup>5</sup>He 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?

<sup>6</sup>You are expecting Egypt to help you, but that would be like using a reed as a walking stick -- it would break and would jab your hand. That is what the king of Egypt is like when anyone relies on him.

<sup>7</sup>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 at one altar only.

<sup>8</sup>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 riders.

<sup>9</sup>You are no match for even the lowest ranking Assyrian official, and yet you expect the Egyptians to send you chariots and horsemen.

<sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah told the official, Speak Aramaic to us. We understand it. Don't speak Hebrew; all the people on the wall are listening.

<sup>12</sup>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.

<sup>13</sup>Then the official stood up and shouted in Hebrew, Listen to what the emperor of Assyria is telling you.

<sup>14</sup>He warns you not to let Hezekiah deceive you. Hezekiah can't save you.

<sup>15</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>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 --

<sup>17</sup>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.

<sup>18</sup>Don't let Hezekiah fool you into thinking that the LORD will rescue you. Did the gods of any other nations save their countries from the emperor of Assyria?

<sup>19</sup>Where are they now, the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the

gods of Sepharvaim? Did anyone save Samaria?

<sup>20</sup>When 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?

<sup>21</sup>The people kept quiet, just as King Hezekiah had told them to; they did not say a word.

<sup>22</sup>Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah tore their clothes in grief and went and reported to the king what the Assyrian official had said.

**37** <sup>1</sup>As soon as King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes in grief, put on sackcloth, and went to the Temple of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>He 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.

<sup>3</sup>This is the message which he told them to give to 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.

<sup>4</sup>The 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.

<sup>5</sup>When Isaiah received King Hezekiah's message,

<sup>6</sup>he sent back this answer: The LORD tells you not to let the Assyrians frighten you by their claims that he cannot save you.

<sup>7</sup>The 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.

<sup>8</sup>The 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.

<sup>9</sup>Word 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

<sup>10</sup>of Judah to 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.

<sup>11</sup>You have heard what an Assyrian emperor does to any country he decides to destroy. Do you think that you can escape?

<sup>12</sup>My 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.

<sup>13</sup>Where are the kings of the cities of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?

<sup>14</sup>King 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,

<sup>15</sup>and prayed,

<sup>16</sup>Almighty LORD, God of Israel, seated above the winged creatures, you alone are God, ruling all the kingdoms of the world. You created the earth and the sky.

<sup>17</sup>Now, LORD, hear us and look at what is happening to us. Listen to all the things that Sennacherib is saying to insult you, the living God.



<sup>18</sup>We all know, LORD, that the emperors of Assyria have destroyed many nations, made their lands desolate,

<sup>19</sup>and burned up their gods -- which were no gods at all, only images of wood and stone made by human hands.

<sup>20</sup>Now, LORD our God, rescue us from the Assyrians, so that all the nations of the world will know that you alone are God.

<sup>21</sup>Then Isaiah sent a message telling King Hezekiah that in answer to the king's prayer

<sup>22</sup>the LORD had said, The city of Jerusalem laughs at you, Sennacherib, and makes fun of you.

<sup>23</sup>Whom do you think you have been insulting and ridiculing? You have been disrespectful to me, the holy God of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>You sent your servants 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.

<sup>25</sup>You boasted that you dug wells and drank water in foreign lands, and that the feet of your soldiers tramped the Nile River dry.

<sup>26</sup>Have 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.

<sup>27</sup>The 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.

<sup>28</sup>But I know everything about you, what you do and where you go. I know how you rage against me.

<sup>29</sup>I 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 will take you back by the same road you came.

<sup>30</sup>Then 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 grain and harvest it, and plant vines and eat grapes.

<sup>31</sup> Those in Judah who survive will flourish like plants that send roots deep into the ground and produce fruit.

<sup>32</sup> There will be people in Jerusalem and on Mount Zion who will survive, because the LORD Almighty is determined to make this happen.

<sup>33</sup> And 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.

<sup>34</sup> He will go back by the same road he came, without entering this city. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>35</sup> I 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.

<sup>36</sup> 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!

<sup>37</sup> Then the Assyrian emperor Sennacherib withdrew and returned to Nineveh.

<sup>38</sup>One 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.

**38**<sup>1</sup>About 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.

<sup>2</sup>Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed:

<sup>3</sup>Remember, 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.

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD commanded Isaiah

<sup>5</sup>to go back to Hezekiah and say to him, I, the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will let you live fifteen years longer.

<sup>6</sup>I will rescue you and this city of Jerusalem from the emperor of Assyria, and I will continue to protect the city.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah replied, The LORD will give you a sign to prove that he will keep his promise.

<sup>8</sup> On the stairway built by King Ahaz, the LORD will make the shadow go back ten steps. And the shadow moved back ten steps.

<sup>9</sup> After Hezekiah recovered from his illness, he wrote this song of praise:

<sup>10</sup> I thought that in the prime of life I was going to the world of the dead, Never to live out my life.

<sup>11</sup> I thought that in this world of the living I would never again see the LORD Or any living person.

<sup>12</sup> My life was cut off and ended, Like a tent that is taken down, Like cloth that is cut from a loom. I thought that God was ending my life.

<sup>13</sup> All night I cried out with pain, As if a lion were breaking my bones. I thought that God was ending my life.

<sup>14</sup> My voice was thin and weak, And I moaned like a dove. My eyes grew tired from looking to heaven. LORD, rescue me from all this trouble.

<sup>15</sup>What can I say? The LORD has done this. My heart is bitter, and I cannot sleep.

<sup>16</sup>Lord, I will live for you, for you alone; Heal me and let me live.

<sup>17</sup>My bitterness will turn into peace. You save my life from all danger; You forgive all my sins.

<sup>18</sup>No one in the world of the dead can praise you; The dead cannot trust in your faithfulness.

<sup>19</sup>It is the living who praise you, As I praise you now. Parents tell their children how faithful you are.

<sup>20</sup>LORD, you have healed me. We will play harps and sing your praise, Sing praise in your Temple as long as we live.

<sup>21</sup>Isaiah told the king to put a paste made of figs on his boil, and he would get well.

<sup>22</sup>Then King Hezekiah asked, What is the sign to prove that I will be able to go to the Temple?

**39**<sup>1</sup>About that same time the king of Babylonia, Merodach Baladan, son of Baladan, heard that King Hezekiah had been sick, so he sent him a letter and a present.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Then the prophet Isaiah went to King Hezekiah and asked, Where did these messengers come from and what did they say to you? Hezekiah answered, They came from a very distant country, from Babylonia.

<sup>4</sup> What did they see in the palace? They saw everything. There is nothing in the storerooms that I didn't show them.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah then told the king, The LORD Almighty says that

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Some of your own direct descendants will be taken away and made eunuchs to serve in the palace of the king of Babylonia.

<sup>8</sup> King 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.

**40**<sup>1</sup> Comfort my people, says our God. Comfort them!

<sup>2</sup> Encourage the people of Jerusalem. Tell them they have suffered long enough and their sins are now forgiven. I have punished them in full for all their sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries out, Prepare in the wilderness a road for the LORD! Clear the way in the desert for our God!

<sup>4</sup> Fill every valley; level every mountain. The hills will become a plain, and the rough country will be made smooth.

<sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it. The LORD himself has promised this.

<sup>6</sup> A voice cries out, Proclaim a message! What message shall I proclaim? I ask. Proclaim that all human beings are like grass; they last no longer than wild flowers.

<sup>7</sup> Grass withers and flowers fade when the LORD sends the wind blowing over them. People are no more enduring than grass.



<sup>8</sup>Yes, grass withers and flowers fade, but the word of our God endures forever.

<sup>9</sup>Jerusalem, go up on a high mountain and proclaim the good news! Call out with a loud voice, Zion; announce the good news! Speak out and do not be afraid. Tell the towns of Judah that their God is coming!

<sup>10</sup>The Sovereign LORD is coming to rule with power, bringing with him the people he has rescued.

<sup>11</sup>He will take care of his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs together and carry them in his arms; he will gently lead their mothers.

<sup>12</sup>Can anyone measure the ocean by handfuls or measure the sky with his hands? Can anyone hold the soil of the earth in a cup or weigh the mountains and hills on scales?

<sup>13</sup>Can anyone tell the LORD what to do? Who can teach him or give him advice?

<sup>14</sup>With whom does God consult in order to know and understand and to learn how things should be done?

<sup>15</sup>To the LORD the nations are nothing, no more than a drop of water; the distant islands are as light as dust.

<sup>16</sup>All the animals in the forests of Lebanon are not enough for a sacrifice to our God, and its trees are too few to kindle the fire.

<sup>17</sup>The nations are nothing at all to him.

<sup>18</sup>To whom can God be compared? How can you describe what he is like?

<sup>19</sup>He is not like an idol that workers make, that metalworkers cover with gold and set in a base of silver.

<sup>20</sup>Anyone who cannot afford silver or gold chooses wood that will not rot. He finds a skillful worker to make an image that won't fall down.

<sup>21</sup>Do you not know? Were you not told long ago? Have you not heard how the world began?

<sup>22</sup>It was made by the one who sits on his throne above the earth and beyond the sky; the people below look as tiny as ants. He stretched out the sky like a curtain, like a tent in which to live.

<sup>23</sup>He brings down powerful rulers and reduces them to nothing.

<sup>24</sup>They are like young plants, just set out and barely rooted. When the LORD sends a wind, they dry up and blow away like straw.

<sup>25</sup>To whom can the holy God be compared? Is there anyone else like him?

<sup>26</sup>Look up at the sky! Who created the stars you see? The one who leads them out like an army, he knows how many there are and calls each one by name! His power is so great -- not one of them is ever missing!

<sup>27</sup>Israel, why then do you complain that the LORD doesn't know your troubles or care if you suffer injustice?

<sup>28</sup>Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The LORD is the everlasting God; he created all the world. He never grows tired or weary. No one understands his thoughts.

<sup>29</sup>He strengthens those who are weak and tired.

<sup>30</sup>Even those who are young grow weak; young people can fall exhausted.

<sup>31</sup>But those who trust in the LORD for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak.

**41** <sup>1</sup>God says, Be silent and listen to me, you distant lands! Get ready

to present your case in court; you will have your chance to speak. Let us come together to decide who is right.

<sup>2</sup>Who was it that brought the conqueror from the east and makes him triumphant wherever he goes? Who gives him victory over kings and nations? His sword strikes them down as if they were dust. His arrows scatter them like straw before the wind.

<sup>3</sup>He follows in pursuit and marches safely on, so fast that he hardly touches the ground!

<sup>4</sup>Who was it that made this happen? Who has determined the course of history? I, the LORD, was there at the beginning, and I, the LORD, will be there at the end.

<sup>5</sup>The people of distant lands have seen what I have done; they are frightened and tremble with fear. So they all assemble and come.

<sup>6</sup>The skilled workers help and encourage each other.

<sup>7</sup>The carpenter says to the goldsmith, Well done! The one who beats the idol smooth encourages the one who nails it together. They say, The soldering is

good' -- and they fasten the idol in place with nails.

<sup>8</sup>But you, Israel my servant, you are the people that I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham, my friend.

<sup>9</sup>I brought you from the ends of the earth; I called you from its farthest corners and said to you, You are my servant. I did not reject you, but chose you.

<sup>10</sup>Do not be afraid -- I am with you! I am your God -- let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you.

<sup>11</sup>Those who are angry with you will know the shame of defeat. Those who fight against you will die

<sup>12</sup>and will disappear from the earth.

<sup>13</sup>I am the LORD your God; I strengthen you and tell you, Do not be afraid; I will help you.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD says, Small and weak as you are, Israel, don't be afraid; I will help you. I, the holy God of Israel, am the one who saves you.

<sup>15</sup>I will make you like a threshing board, with spikes that are new and sharp. You will thresh mountains and

destroy them; hills will crumble into dust.

<sup>16</sup>You will toss them in the air; the wind will carry them off, and they will be scattered by the storm. Then you will be happy because I am your God; you will praise me, the holy God of Israel.

<sup>17</sup>When my people in their need look for water, when their throats are dry with thirst, then I, the LORD, will answer their prayer; I, the God of Israel, will never abandon them.

<sup>18</sup>I will make rivers flow among barren hills and springs of water run in the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water and the dry land into flowing springs.

<sup>19</sup>I will make cedars grow in the desert, and acacias and myrtles and olive trees. Forests will grow in barren land, forests of pine and juniper and cypress.

<sup>20</sup>People will see this and know that I, the LORD, have done it. They will come to understand that Israel's holy God has made it happen.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD, the king of Israel, has this to say: You gods of the nations, present

your case. Bring the best arguments you have!

<sup>22</sup>Come here and predict what will happen, so that we will know it when it takes place. Explain to the court the events of the past, and tell us what they mean.

<sup>23</sup>Tell us what the future holds -- then we will know that you are gods! Do something good or bring some disaster; fill us with fear and awe!

<sup>24</sup>You and all you do are nothing; those who worship you are disgusting!

<sup>25</sup>I have chosen a man who lives in the east; I will bring him to attack from the north. He tramples on rulers as if they were mud, like a potter trampling clay.

<sup>26</sup>Which of you predicted that this would happen, so that we could say that you were right? None of you said a word about it; no one heard you say a thing!

<sup>27</sup>I, the LORD, was the first to tell Zion the news; I sent a messenger to Jerusalem to say, Your people are coming! They are coming home!

<sup>28</sup>When I looked among the gods, none of them had a thing to say; not one could answer the questions I asked.

<sup>29</sup>All these gods are useless; they can do nothing at all -- these idols are weak and powerless.

**42**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says, Here is my servant, whom I strengthen -- the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased. I have filled him with my Spirit, and he will bring justice to every nation.

<sup>2</sup>He will not shout or raise his voice or make loud speeches in the streets.

<sup>3</sup>He will not break off a bent reed nor put out a flickering lamp. He will bring lasting justice to all.

<sup>4</sup>He will not lose hope or courage; he will establish justice on the earth. Distant lands eagerly wait for his teaching.

<sup>5</sup>God created the heavens and stretched them out; he fashioned the earth and all that lives there; he gave life and breath to all its people. And now the LORD God says to his servant,

<sup>6</sup>I, the LORD, have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth. Through you I will make a covenant with all peoples; through you I will bring light to the nations.

<sup>7</sup>You will open the eyes of the blind and set free those who sit in dark prisons.



<sup>8</sup>I alone am the LORD your God. No other god may share my glory; I will not let idols share my praise.

<sup>9</sup>The things I predicted have now come true. Now I will tell you of new things even before they begin to happen.

<sup>10</sup>Sing a new song to the LORD; sing his praise, all the world! Praise him, you that sail the sea; praise him, all creatures of the sea! Sing, distant lands and all who live there!

<sup>11</sup>Let the desert and its towns praise God; let the people of Kedar praise him! Let those who live in the city of Sela shout for joy from the tops of the mountains!

<sup>12</sup>Let those who live in distant lands give praise and glory to the LORD!

<sup>13</sup>The LORD goes out to fight like a warrior; he is ready and eager for battle. He gives a war cry, a battle shout; he shows his power against his enemies.

<sup>14</sup>God says, For a long time I kept silent; I did not answer my people. But now the time to act has come; I cry out like a woman in labor.

<sup>15</sup>I will destroy the hills and mountains and dry up the grass and trees. I will

turn the river valleys into deserts and dry up the pools of water.

<sup>16</sup>I will lead my blind people by roads they have never traveled. I will turn their darkness into light and make rough country smooth before them. These are my promises, and I will keep them without fail.

<sup>17</sup>All who trust in idols, who call images their gods, will be humiliated and disgraced.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD says, Listen, you deaf people! Look closely, you that are blind!

<sup>19</sup>Is anyone more blind than my servant, more deaf than the messenger I send?

<sup>20</sup>Israel, you have seen so much, but what has it meant to you? You have ears to hear with, but what have you really heard?

<sup>21</sup>The LORD is a God who is eager to save, so he exalted his laws and teachings, and he wanted his people to honor them.

<sup>22</sup>But now his people have been plundered; they are locked up in dungeons and hidden away in prisons.

They were robbed and plundered, with no one to come to their rescue.

<sup>23</sup>Will any of you listen to this? From now on will you listen with care?

<sup>24</sup>Who gave Israel up to the looters? It was the LORD himself, against whom we sinned! We would not live as he wanted us to live or obey the teachings he gave us.

<sup>25</sup>So he made us feel the force of his anger and suffer the violence of war. Like fire his anger burned throughout Israel, but we never knew what was happening; we learned nothing at all from it.

**43**<sup>1</sup> Israel, the LORD who created you says, Do not be afraid -- I will save you. I have called you by name -- you are mine.

<sup>2</sup>When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you.

<sup>3</sup>For I am the LORD your God, the holy God of Israel, who saves you. I will give up Egypt to set you free; I will give up Ethiopia and Seba.

<sup>4</sup> I will give up whole nations to save your life, because you are precious to me and because I love you and give you honor.

<sup>5</sup> Do not be afraid -- I am with you! From the distant east and the farthest west I will bring your people home.

<sup>6</sup> I will tell the north to let them go and the south not to hold them back. Let my people return from distant lands, from every part of the world.

<sup>7</sup> They are my own people, and I created them to bring me glory.

<sup>8</sup> God says, Summon my people to court. They have eyes, but they are blind; they have ears, but they are deaf!

<sup>9</sup> Summon the nations to come to the trial. Which of their gods can predict the future? Which of them foretold what is happening now? Let these gods bring in their witnesses to prove that they are right, to testify to the truth of their words.

<sup>10</sup> People of Israel, you are my witnesses; I chose you to be my servant, so that you would know me and believe in me and understand that I am the only

God. Besides me there is no other god; there never was and never will be.

<sup>11</sup>I alone am the LORD, the only one who can save you.

<sup>12</sup>I predicted what would happen, and then I came to your aid. No foreign god has ever done this; you are my witnesses.

<sup>13</sup>I am God and always will be. No one can escape from my power; no one can change what I do.

<sup>14</sup>Israel's holy God, the LORD who saves you, says, To save you, I will send an army against Babylon; I will break down the city gates, and the shouts of her people will turn into crying.

<sup>15</sup>I am the LORD, your holy God. I created you, Israel, and I am your king.

<sup>16</sup>Long ago the LORD made a road through the sea, a path through the swirling waters.

<sup>17</sup>He led a mighty army to destruction, an army of chariots and horses. Down they fell, never to rise, snuffed out like the flame of a lamp!

<sup>18</sup>But the LORD says, Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago.

<sup>19</sup>Watch for the new thing I am going to do. It is happening already -- you can see it now! I will make a road through the wilderness and give you streams of water there.

<sup>20</sup>Even the wild animals will honor me; jackals and ostriches will praise me when I make rivers flow in the desert to give water to my chosen people.

<sup>21</sup>They are the people I made for myself, and they will sing my praises!

<sup>22</sup>The LORD says, But you were tired of me, Israel; you did not worship me.

<sup>23</sup>You did not bring me your burnt offerings of sheep; you did not honor me with your sacrifices. I did not burden you by demanding offerings or wear you out by asking for incense.

<sup>24</sup>You didn't buy incense for me or satisfy me with the fat of your animals. Instead you burdened me with your sins; you wore me out with the wrongs you have committed.

<sup>25</sup>And yet, I am the God who forgives your sins, and I do this because of who I am. I will not hold your sins against you.

<sup>26</sup>Let us go to court; bring your accusation! Present your case to prove you are in the right!

<sup>27</sup>Your earliest ancestor sinned; your leaders sinned against me,

<sup>28</sup>and your rulers profaned my sanctuary. So I brought destruction on Israel; I let my own people be insulted.

**44**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says, Listen now, Israel, my servant, my chosen people, the descendants of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>I am the LORD who created you; from the time you were born, I have helped you. Do not be afraid; you are my servant, my chosen people whom I love.

<sup>3</sup>I will give water to the thirsty land and make streams flow on the dry ground. I will pour out my spirit on your children and my blessing on your descendants.

<sup>4</sup>They will thrive like well-watered grass, like willows by streams of running water.

<sup>5</sup>One by one, people will say, I am the LORD's. They will come to join the people of Israel. They each will mark the name of the LORD on their arms and call themselves one of God's people.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD, who rules and protects Israel, the LORD Almighty, has this to say: I am the first, the last, the only God; there is no other god but me.

<sup>7</sup>Could anyone else have done what I did? Who could have predicted all that would happen from the very beginning to the end of time?

<sup>8</sup>Do not be afraid, my people! You know that from ancient times until now I have predicted all that would happen, and you are my witnesses. Is there any other god? Is there some powerful god I never heard of?

<sup>9</sup>All those who make idols are worthless, and the gods they prize so highly are useless. Those who worship these gods are blind and ignorant -- and they will be disgraced.

<sup>10</sup>It does no good to make a metal image to worship as a god!

<sup>11</sup>Everyone who worships it will be humiliated. The people who make idols are human beings and nothing more. Let them come and stand trial -- they will be terrified and will suffer disgrace.

<sup>12</sup>The metalworker takes a piece of metal and works with it over a fire. His



strong arm swings a hammer to pound the metal into shape. As he works, he gets hungry, thirsty, and tired.

<sup>13</sup>The carpenter measures the wood. He outlines a figure with chalk, carves it out with his tools, and makes it in the form of a man, a handsome human figure, to be placed in his house.

<sup>14</sup>He might cut down cedars to use, or choose oak or cypress wood from the forest. Or he might plant a laurel tree and wait for the rain to make it grow.

<sup>15</sup>A person uses part of a tree for fuel and part of it for making an idol. With one part he builds a fire to warm himself and bake bread; with the other part he makes a god and worships it.

<sup>16</sup>With some of the wood he makes a fire; he roasts meat, eats it, and is satisfied. He warms himself and says, How nice and warm! What a beautiful fire!

<sup>17</sup>The rest of the wood he makes into an idol, and then he bows down and worships it. He prays to it and says, You are my god -- save me!

<sup>18</sup>Such people are too stupid to know what they are doing. They close their eyes and their minds to the truth.

<sup>19</sup>The maker of idols hasn't the wit or the sense to say, Some of the wood I burned up. I baked some bread on the coals, and I roasted meat and ate it. And the rest of the wood I made into an idol. Here I am bowing down to a block of wood!

<sup>20</sup>It makes as much sense as eating ashes. His foolish ideas have so misled him that he is beyond help. He won't admit to himself that the idol he holds in his hand is not a god at all.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD says, Israel, remember this; remember that you are my servant. I created you to be my servant, and I will never forget you.

<sup>22</sup>I have swept your sins away like a cloud. Come back to me; I am the one who saves you.

<sup>23</sup>Shout for joy, you heavens! Shout, deep places of the earth! Shout for joy, mountains, and every tree of the forest! The LORD has shown his greatness by saving his people Israel.

<sup>24</sup>I am the LORD, your savior; I am the one who created you. I am the LORD, the Creator of all things. I alone stretched out the heavens; when I made the earth, no one helped me.

<sup>25</sup>I make fools of fortunetellers and frustrate the predictions of astrologers. The words of the wise I refute and show that their wisdom is foolishness.

<sup>26</sup>But when my servant makes a prediction, when I send a messenger to reveal my plans, I make those plans and predictions come true. I tell Jerusalem that people will live there again, and the cities of Judah that they will be rebuilt. Those cities will rise from the ruins.

<sup>27</sup>With a word of command I dry up the ocean.

<sup>28</sup>I say to Cyrus, You are the one who will rule for me; you will do what I want you to do: you will order that Jerusalem be rebuilt and that the foundations of the Temple be laid.

**45**<sup>1</sup>The LORD has chosen Cyrus to be king. He has appointed him to conquer nations; he sends him to strip kings of their power; the LORD will open

the gates of cities for him. To Cyrus the LORD says,

<sup>2</sup>I myself will prepare your way, leveling mountains and hills. I will break down bronze gates and smash their iron bars.

<sup>3</sup>I will give you treasures from dark, secret places; then you will know that I am the LORD and that the God of Israel has called you by name.

<sup>4</sup>I appoint you to help my servant Israel, the people that I have chosen. I have given you great honor, although you do not know me.

<sup>5</sup>I am the LORD; there is no other god. I will give you the strength you need, although you do not know me.

<sup>6</sup>I do this so that everyone from one end of the world to the other may know that I am the LORD and that there is no other god.

<sup>7</sup>I create both light and darkness; I bring both blessing and disaster. I, the LORD, do all these things.

<sup>8</sup>I will send victory from the sky like rain; the earth will open to receive it and will blossom with freedom and justice. I, the LORD, will make this happen.

<sup>9</sup>Does a clay pot dare argue with its maker, a pot that is like all the others? Does the clay ask the potter what he is doing? Does the pot complain that its maker has no skill?

<sup>10</sup>Do we dare say to our parents, Why did you make me like this?

<sup>11</sup>The LORD, the holy God of Israel, the one who shapes the future, says: You have no right to question me about my children or to tell me what I ought to do!

<sup>12</sup>I am the one who made the earth and created human beings to live there. By my power I stretched out the heavens; I control the sun, the moon, and the stars.

<sup>13</sup>I myself have stirred Cyrus to action to fulfill my purpose and put things right. I will straighten out every road that he travels. He will rebuild my city, Jerusalem, and set my captive people free. No one has hired him or bribed him to do this. The LORD Almighty has spoken.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD says to Israel, The wealth of Egypt and Ethiopia will be yours, and the tall men of Seba will be your slaves; they will follow you in chains. They will

bow down to you and confess, God is with you -- he alone is God.

<sup>15</sup>The God of Israel, who saves his people, is a God who conceals himself.

<sup>16</sup>Those who make idols will all be ashamed; all of them will be disgraced.

<sup>17</sup>But Israel is saved by the LORD, and her victory lasts forever; her people will never be disgraced.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD created the heavens -- he is the one who is God! He formed and made the earth -- he made it firm and lasting. He did not make it a desolate waste, but a place for people to live. It is he who says, I am the LORD, and there is no other god.

<sup>19</sup>I have not spoken in secret or kept my purpose hidden. I did not require the people of Israel to look for me in a desolate waste. I am the LORD, and I speak the truth; I make known what is right.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD says, Come together, people of the nations, all who survive the fall of the empire; present yourselves for the trial! The people who parade with their idols of wood and pray to gods that

cannot save them -- those people know nothing at all!

<sup>21</sup> Come and present your case in court; let the defendants consult one another. Who predicted long ago what would happen? Was it not I, the LORD, the God who saves his people? There is no other god.

<sup>22</sup> Turn to me now and be saved, people all over the world! I am the only God there is.

<sup>23</sup> My promise is true, and it will not be changed. I solemnly promise by all that I am: Everyone will come and kneel before me and vow to be loyal to me.

<sup>24</sup> They will say that only through me are victory and strength to be found; but all who hate me will suffer disgrace.

<sup>25</sup> I, the LORD, will rescue all the descendants of Jacob, and they will give me praise.

**46**<sup>1</sup> This is the end for Babylon's gods! Bel and Nebo once were worshiped, but now they are loaded on donkeys, a burden for the backs of tired animals.

<sup>2</sup>The idols cannot save themselves; they are captured and carried away. This is the end for Babylon's gods!

<sup>3</sup>Listen to me, descendants of Jacob, all who are left of my people. I have cared for you from the time you were born.

<sup>4</sup>I am your God and will take care of you until you are old and your hair is gray. I made you and will care for you; I will give you help and rescue you.

<sup>5</sup>To whom will you compare me? says the LORD. Is there anyone else like me?

<sup>6</sup>People open their purses and pour out gold; they weigh out silver on the scales. They hire a goldsmith to make a god; then they bow down and worship it.

<sup>7</sup>They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they put it in place, and there it stands, unable to move from where it is. If any pray to it, it cannot answer or save them from disaster.

<sup>8</sup>Remember this, you sinners; consider what I have done.

<sup>9</sup>Remember what happened long ago; acknowledge that I alone am God and that there is no one else like me.

<sup>10</sup>From the beginning I predicted the outcome; long ago I foretold what would



happen. I said that my plans would never fail, that I would do everything I intended to do.

<sup>11</sup>I am calling a man to come from the east; he will swoop down like a hawk and accomplish what I have planned. I have spoken, and it will be done.

<sup>12</sup>Listen to me, you stubborn people who think that victory is far away.

<sup>13</sup>I am bringing the day of victory near -- it is not far away at all. My triumph will not be delayed. I will save Jerusalem and bring honor to Israel there.

**47** <sup>1</sup>The LORD says, Babylon, come down from your throne, and sit in the dust on the ground. You were once like a virgin, a city unconquered, but you are soft and delicate no longer! You are now a slave!

<sup>2</sup>Turn the millstone! Grind the flour! Off with your veil! Strip off your fine clothes! Lift up your skirts to cross the streams!

<sup>3</sup>People will see you naked; they will see you humbled and shamed. I will take vengeance, and no one will stop me.

<sup>4</sup>The holy God of Israel sets us free -- his name is the LORD Almighty.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD says to Babylon, Sit in silence and darkness; no more will they call you the queen of nations!

<sup>6</sup>I was angry with my people; I treated them as no longer mine: I put them in your power, and you showed them no mercy; even the aged you treated harshly.

<sup>7</sup>You thought you would always be a queen, and did not take these things to heart or think how it all would end.

<sup>8</sup>Listen to this, you lover of pleasure, you that think you are safe and secure. You claim you are as great as God -- that there is no one else like you. You thought that you would never be a widow or suffer the loss of your children.

<sup>9</sup>But in a moment, in a single day, both of these things will happen. In spite of all the magic you use, you will lose your husband and children.

<sup>10</sup>You felt sure of yourself in your evil; you thought that no one could see you. Your wisdom and knowledge led you astray, and you said to yourself, I am God -- there is no one else like me.

<sup>11</sup>Disaster will come upon you, and none of your magic can stop it. Ruin will

come on you suddenly -- ruin you never dreamed of!

<sup>12</sup>Keep all your magic spells and charms; you have used them since you were young. Perhaps they will be of some help to you; perhaps you can frighten your enemies.

<sup>13</sup>You are powerless in spite of the advice you get. Let your astrologers come forward and save you -- those people who study the stars, who map out the zones of the heavens and tell you from month to month what is going to happen to you.

<sup>14</sup>They will be like bits of straw, and a fire will burn them up! They will not even be able to save themselves -- the flames will be too hot for them, not a cozy fire to warm themselves by.

<sup>15</sup>That is all the good they will do you -- those astrologers you've consulted all your life. They all will leave you and go their own way, and none will be left to save you.

**48**<sup>1</sup>Listen to this, people of Israel, you that are descended from Judah: You swear by the name of the LORD and claim to worship the God of

Israel -- but you don't mean a word you say.

<sup>2</sup>And yet you are proud to say that you are citizens of the holy city and that you depend on Israel's God, whose name is the LORD Almighty.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD says to Israel, Long ago I predicted what would take place; then suddenly I made it happen.

<sup>4</sup>I knew that you would prove to be stubborn, as rigid as iron and unyielding as bronze.

<sup>5</sup>And so I predicted your future long ago, announcing events before they took place, to keep you from claiming that your idols and images made them happen.

<sup>6</sup>All I foretold has now taken place; you have to admit my predictions were right. Now I will tell you of new things to come, events that I did not reveal before.

<sup>7</sup>Only now am I making them happen; nothing like this took place in the past. If it had, you would claim that you knew all about it.

<sup>8</sup>I knew that you couldn't be trusted, that you have always been known as a rebel. That is why you never heard of

this at all, why no word of it ever came to your ears.

<sup>9</sup>In order that people will praise my name, I am holding my anger in check; I am keeping it back and will not destroy you.

<sup>10</sup>I have tested you in the fire of suffering, as silver is refined in a furnace. But I have found that you are worthless.

<sup>11</sup>What I do is done for my own sake -- I will not let my name be dishonored or let anyone else share the glory that should be mine and mine alone.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD says, Listen to me, Israel, the people I have called! I am God, the first, the last, the only God!

<sup>13</sup>My hands made the earth's foundations and spread the heavens out. When I summon earth and sky, they come at once and present themselves.

<sup>14</sup>Assemble and listen, all of you! None of the gods could predict that the man I have chosen would attack Babylon; he will do what I want him to do.

<sup>15</sup>I am the one who spoke and called him; I led him out and gave him success.

<sup>16</sup>Now come close to me and hear what I say. From the beginning I have spoken

openly and have always made my words come true. (Now the Sovereign LORD has given me his power and sent me.)

<sup>17</sup>The holy God of Israel, the LORD who saves you, says: I am the LORD your God, the one who wants to teach you for your own good and direct you in the way you should go.

<sup>18</sup>If only you had listened to my commands! Then blessings would have flowed for you like a stream that never goes dry. Victory would have come to you like the waves that roll on the shore.

<sup>19</sup>Your descendants would be as numerous as grains of sand, and I would have made sure they were never destroyed.

<sup>20</sup>Go out from Babylon, go free! Shout the news gladly; make it known everywhere: The LORD has saved his servant Israel!

<sup>21</sup>When the LORD led his people through a hot, dry desert, they did not suffer from thirst. He made water come from a rock for them; he split the rock open, and water flowed out.

<sup>22</sup>There is no safety for sinners, says the LORD.

**49**<sup>1</sup> Listen to me, distant nations,  
you people who live far away!  
Before I was born, the LORD chose me  
and appointed me to be his servant.

<sup>2</sup> He made my words as sharp as a  
sword. With his own hand he protected  
me. He made me like an arrow, sharp  
and ready for use.

<sup>3</sup> He said to me, Israel, you are my  
servant; because of you, people will  
praise me.

<sup>4</sup> I said, I have worked, but how  
hopeless it is! I have used up my  
strength, but have accomplished  
nothing. Yet I can trust the LORD to  
defend my cause; he will reward me for  
what I do.

<sup>5</sup> Before I was born, the LORD appointed  
me; he made me his servant to bring  
back his people, to bring back the  
scattered people of Israel. The LORD  
gives me honor; he is the source of my  
strength.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD said to me, I have a greater  
task for you, my servant. Not only will  
you restore to greatness the people of  
Israel who have survived, but I will also

make you a light to the nations -- so that all the world may be saved.

<sup>7</sup> Israel's holy God and savior says to the one who is deeply despised, who is hated by the nations and is the servant of rulers: Kings will see you released and will rise to show their respect; princes also will see it, and they will bow low to honor you. This will happen because the LORD has chosen his servant; the holy God of Israel keeps his promises.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD says to his people, When the time comes to save you, I will show you favor and answer your cries for help. I will guard and protect you and through you make a covenant with all peoples. I will let you settle once again in your land that is now laid waste.

<sup>9</sup> I will say to the prisoners, Go free! and to those who are in darkness, Come out to the light! They will be like sheep that graze on the hills;

<sup>10</sup> they will never be hungry or thirsty. Sun and desert heat will not hurt them, for they will be led by one who loves them. He will lead them to springs of water.



<sup>11</sup> I will make a highway across the mountains and prepare a road for my people to travel.

<sup>12</sup> My people will come from far away, from the north and the west, and from Aswan in the south.

<sup>13</sup> Sing, heavens! Shout for joy, earth! Let the mountains burst into song! The LORD will comfort his people; he will have pity on his suffering people.

<sup>14</sup> But the people of Jerusalem said, The LORD has abandoned us! He has forgotten us.

<sup>15</sup> So the LORD answers, Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you.

<sup>16</sup> Jerusalem, I can never forget you! I have written your name on the palms of my hands.

<sup>17</sup> Those who will rebuild you are coming soon, and those who destroyed you will leave.

<sup>18</sup> Look around and see what is happening! Your people are assembling -- they are coming home! As surely as I am the living God, you will be proud of

your people, as proud as a bride is of her jewels.

<sup>19</sup>Your country was ruined and desolate -- but now it will be too small for those who are coming to live there. And those who left you in ruins will be far removed from you.

<sup>20</sup>Your people who were born in exile will one day say to you, This land is too small -- we need more room to live in!

<sup>21</sup>Then you will say to yourself, Who bore all these children for me? I lost my children and could have no more. I was exiled and driven away -- who brought these children up? I was left all alone -- where did these children come from?

<sup>22</sup>The Sovereign LORD says to his people: I will signal to the nations, and they will bring your children home.

<sup>23</sup>Kings will be like fathers to you; queens will be like mothers. They will bow low before you and honor you; they will humbly show their respect for you. Then you will know that I am the LORD; no one who waits for my help will be disappointed.

<sup>24</sup>Can you take away a soldier's loot? Can you rescue the prisoners of a tyrant?

<sup>25</sup>The LORD replies, That is just what is going to happen. The soldier's prisoners will be taken away, and the tyrant's loot will be seized. I will fight against whoever fights you, and I will rescue your children.

<sup>26</sup>I will make your oppressors kill each other; they will be drunk with murder and rage. Then all people will know that I am the LORD, the one who saves you and sets you free. They will know that I am Israel's powerful God.

**50**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says, Do you think I sent my people away like a man who divorces his wife? Where, then, are the papers of divorce? Do you think I sold you into captivity like a man who sells his children as slaves? No, you went away captive because of your sins; you were sent away because of your crimes.

<sup>2</sup>Why did my people fail to respond when I went to them to save them? Why did they not answer when I called? Am I too weak to save them? I can dry up the sea with a command and turn rivers into a desert, so that the fish in them die for lack of water.

<sup>3</sup>I can make the sky turn dark, as if it were in mourning for the dead.

<sup>4</sup>The Sovereign LORD has taught me what to say, so that I can strengthen the weary. Every morning he makes me eager to hear what he is going to teach me.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD has given me understanding, and I have not rebelled or turned away from him.

<sup>6</sup>I bared my back to those who beat me. I did not stop them when they insulted me, when they pulled out the hairs of my beard and spit in my face.

<sup>7</sup>But their insults cannot hurt me because the Sovereign LORD gives me help. I brace myself to endure them. I know that I will not be disgraced,

<sup>8</sup>for God is near, and he will prove me innocent. Does anyone dare bring charges against me? Let us go to court together! Let him bring his accusation!

<sup>9</sup>The Sovereign LORD himself defends me -- who, then, can prove me guilty? All my accusers will disappear; they will vanish like moth-eaten cloth.

<sup>10</sup>All of you that honor the LORD and obey the words of his servant, the path

you walk may be dark indeed, but trust in the LORD, rely on your God.

<sup>11</sup> All of you that plot to destroy others will be destroyed by your own plots. The LORD himself will make this happen; you will suffer a miserable fate.

**51** <sup>1</sup> The LORD says, Listen to me, you that want to be saved, you that come to me for help. Think of the rock from which you came, the quarry from which you were cut.

<sup>2</sup> Think of your ancestor, Abraham, and of Sarah, from whom you are descended. When I called Abraham, he was childless, but I blessed him and gave him children; I made his descendants numerous.

<sup>3</sup> I will show compassion to Jerusalem, to all who live in her ruins. Though her land is a desert, I will make it a garden, like the garden I planted in Eden. Joy and gladness will be there, and songs of praise and thanks to me.

<sup>4</sup> Listen to me, my people, listen to what I say: I give my teaching to the nations; my laws will bring them light.

<sup>5</sup> I will come quickly and save them; the time of my victory is near. I myself will rule over the nations. Distant lands wait

for me to come; they wait with hope for me to save them.

<sup>6</sup>Look up at the heavens; look at the earth! The heavens will disappear like smoke; the earth will wear out like old clothing, and all its people will die like flies. But the deliverance I bring will last forever; my victory will be final.

<sup>7</sup>Listen to me, you that know what is right, who have my teaching fixed in your hearts. Do not be afraid when people taunt and insult you;

<sup>8</sup>they will vanish like moth-eaten clothing! But the deliverance I bring will last forever; my victory will endure for all time.

<sup>9</sup>Wake up, LORD, and help us! Use your power and save us; use it as you did in ancient times. It was you that cut the sea monster Rahab to pieces.

<sup>10</sup>It was you also who dried up the sea and made a path through the water, so that those you were saving could cross.

<sup>11</sup>Those whom you have rescued will reach Jerusalem with gladness, singing and shouting for joy. They will be happy forever, forever free from sorrow and grief.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD says, I am the one who strengthens you. Why should you fear mortals, who are no more enduring than grass?

<sup>13</sup>Have you forgotten the LORD who made you, who stretched out the heavens and laid the earth's foundations? Why should you live in constant fear of the fury of those who oppress you, of those who are ready to destroy you? Their fury can no longer touch you.

<sup>14</sup>Those who are prisoners will soon be set free; they will live a long life and have all the food they need.

<sup>15</sup>I am the LORD your God; I stir up the sea and make its waves roar. My name is the LORD Almighty!

<sup>16</sup>I stretched out the heavens and laid the earth's foundations; I say to Jerusalem, You are my people! I have given you my teaching, and I protect you with my hand.

<sup>17</sup>Jerusalem, wake up! Rouse yourself and get up! You have drunk the cup of punishment that the LORD in his anger gave you to drink; you drank it down, and it made you stagger.

<sup>18</sup>There is no one to lead you, no one among your people to take you by the hand.

<sup>19</sup>A double disaster has fallen on you: your land has been devastated by war, and your people have starved. There is no one to show you sympathy.

<sup>20</sup>At the corner of every street your people collapse from weakness; they are like deer caught in a hunter's net. They have felt the force of God's anger.

<sup>21</sup>You suffering people of Jerusalem, you that stagger as though you were drunk,

<sup>22</sup>the LORD your God defends you and says, I am taking away the cup that I gave you in my anger. You will no longer have to drink the wine that makes you stagger.

<sup>23</sup>I will give it to those who oppressed you, to those who made you lie down in the streets and trampled on you as if you were dirt.

**52**<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem, be strong and great again! Holy city of God, clothe yourself with splendor! The heathen will never enter your gates again.



<sup>2</sup> Shake yourself free, Jerusalem! Rise from the dust and sit on your throne! Undo the chains that bind you, captive people of Zion!

<sup>3</sup> The Sovereign LORD says to his people, When you became slaves, no money was paid for you; in the same way nothing will be paid to set you free.

<sup>4</sup> When you went to live in Egypt as foreigners, you did so of your own free will; Assyria, however, took you away by force and paid nothing for you.

<sup>5</sup> And now in Babylonia the same thing has happened: you are captives, and nothing was paid for you. Those who rule over you boast and brag and constantly show contempt for me.

<sup>6</sup> In time to come you will acknowledge that I am God and that I have spoken to you.

<sup>7</sup> How wonderful it is to see a messenger coming across the mountains, bringing good news, the news of peace! He announces victory and says to Zion, Your God is king!

<sup>8</sup> Those who guard the city are shouting, shouting together for joy. They can see

with their own eyes the return of the LORD to Zion.

<sup>9</sup>Break into shouts of joy, you ruins of Jerusalem! The LORD will rescue his city and comfort his people.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD will use his holy power; he will save his people, and all the world will see it.

<sup>11</sup>Be sure to leave Babylonia, all you that carry the Temple equipment. Touch no forbidden thing; keep yourselves holy and leave.

<sup>12</sup>This time you will not have to leave in a hurry; you will not be trying to escape. The LORD your God will lead you and protect you on every side.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD says, My servant will succeed in his task; he will be highly honored.

<sup>14</sup>Many people were shocked when they saw him; he was so disfigured that he hardly looked human.

<sup>15</sup>But now many nations will marvel at him, and kings will be speechless with amazement. They will see and understand something they had never known.

**53**<sup>1</sup> The people reply, Who would have believed what we now report? Who could have seen the LORD's hand in this?

<sup>2</sup> It was the will of the LORD that his servant grow like a plant taking root in dry ground. He had no dignity or beauty to make us take notice of him. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing that would draw us to him.

<sup>3</sup> We despised him and rejected him; he endured suffering and pain. No one would even look at him -- we ignored him as if he were nothing.

<sup>4</sup> But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God.

<sup>5</sup> But because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received.

<sup>6</sup> All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way. But the LORD made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved.

<sup>7</sup> He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly; he never said a word. Like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared, he never said a word.

<sup>8</sup> He was arrested and sentenced and led off to die, and no one cared about his fate. He was put to death for the sins of our people.

<sup>9</sup> He was placed in a grave with those who are evil, he was buried with the rich, even though he had never committed a crime or ever told a lie.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD says, It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants; he will live a long life, and through him my purpose will succeed.

<sup>11</sup> After a life of suffering, he will again have joy; he will know that he did not suffer in vain. My devoted servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for his sake I will forgive them.

<sup>12</sup> And so I will give him a place of honor, a place among the great and powerful. He willingly gave his life and shared the fate of evil men. He took the

place of many sinners and prayed that they might be forgiven.

**54**<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem, you have been like a childless woman, but now you can sing and shout for joy. Now you will have more children than a woman whose husband never left her.

<sup>2</sup> Make the tent you live in larger; lengthen its ropes and strengthen the pegs!

<sup>3</sup> You will extend your boundaries on all sides; your people will get back the land that the other nations now occupy. Cities now deserted will be filled with people.

<sup>4</sup> Do not be afraid -- you will not be disgraced again; you will not be humiliated. You will forget your unfaithfulness as a young wife, and your desperate loneliness as a widow.

<sup>5</sup> Your Creator will be like a husband to you -- the LORD Almighty is his name. The holy God of Israel will save you -- he is the ruler of all the world.

<sup>6</sup> Israel, you are like a young wife, deserted by her husband and deeply distressed. But the LORD calls you back to him and says:

<sup>7</sup> For one brief moment I left you; with deep love I will take you back.

<sup>8</sup> I turned away angry for only a moment, but I will show you my love forever. So says the LORD who saves you.

<sup>9</sup> In the time of Noah I promised never again to flood the earth. Now I promise not to be angry with you again; I will not reprimand or punish you.

<sup>10</sup> The mountains and hills may crumble, but my love for you will never end; I will keep forever my promise of peace. So says the LORD who loves you.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD says, O Jerusalem, you suffering, helpless city, with no one to comfort you, I will rebuild your foundations with precious stones.

<sup>12</sup> I will build your towers with rubies, your gates with stones that glow like fire, and the wall around you with jewels.

<sup>13</sup> I myself will teach your people and give them prosperity and peace.

<sup>14</sup> Justice and right will make you strong. You will be safe from oppression and terror.

<sup>15</sup>Whoever attacks you, does it without my consent; whoever fights against you will fall.

<sup>16</sup>I create the blacksmith, who builds a fire and forges weapons. I also create the soldier, who uses the weapons to kill.

<sup>17</sup>But no weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend my servants and give them victory. The LORD has spoken.

**55** <sup>1</sup>The LORD says, Come, everyone who is thirsty -- here is water! Come, you that have no money -- buy grain and eat! Come! Buy wine and milk -- it will cost you nothing!

<sup>2</sup>Why spend money on what does not satisfy? Why spend your wages and still be hungry? Listen to me and do what I say, and you will enjoy the best food of all.

<sup>3</sup>Listen now, my people, and come to me; come to me, and you will have life! I will make a lasting covenant with you and give you the blessings I promised to David.

<sup>4</sup>I made him a leader and commander of nations, and through him I showed them my power.

<sup>5</sup>Now you will summon foreign nations; at one time they did not know you, but now they will come running to join you! I, the LORD your God, the holy God of Israel, will make all this happen; I will give you honor and glory.

<sup>6</sup>Turn to the LORD and pray to him, now that he is near.

<sup>7</sup>Let the wicked leave their way of life and change their way of thinking. Let them turn to the LORD, our God; he is merciful and quick to forgive.

<sup>8</sup>My thoughts, says the LORD, are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours.

<sup>9</sup>As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours.

<sup>10</sup>My word is like the snow and the rain that come down from the sky to water the earth. They make the crops grow and provide seed for planting and food to eat.



<sup>11</sup> So also will be the word that I speak -- it will not fail to do what I plan for it; it will do everything I send it to do.

<sup>12</sup> You will leave Babylon with joy; you will be led out of the city in peace. The mountains and hills will burst into singing, and the trees will shout for joy.

<sup>13</sup> Cypress trees will grow where now there are briars; myrtle trees will come up in place of thorns. This will be a sign that will last forever, a reminder of what I, the LORD, have done.

**56** <sup>1</sup> The LORD says to his people, Do what is just and right, for soon I will save you.

<sup>2</sup> I will bless those who always observe the Sabbath and do not misuse it. I will bless those who do nothing evil.

<sup>3</sup> A foreigner who has joined the LORD's people should not say, The LORD will not let me worship with his people. A man who has been castrated should never think that because he cannot have children, he can never be part of God's people.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD says to such a man, If you honor me by observing the Sabbath and

if you do what pleases me and faithfully keep my covenant,

<sup>5</sup> then your name will be remembered in my Temple and among my people longer than if you had sons and daughters. You will never be forgotten.

<sup>6</sup> And the LORD says to those foreigners who become part of his people, who love him and serve him, who observe the Sabbath and faithfully keep his covenant:

<sup>7</sup> I will bring you to Zion, my sacred hill, give you joy in my house of prayer, and accept the sacrifices you offer on my altar. My Temple will be called a house of prayer for the people of all nations.

<sup>8</sup> The Sovereign LORD, who has brought his people Israel home from exile, has promised that he will bring still other people to join them.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD has told the foreign nations to come like wild animals and devour his people.

<sup>10</sup> He says, All the leaders, who are supposed to warn my people, are blind! They know nothing. They are like watch dogs that don't bark -- they only lie

around and dream. How they love to sleep!

<sup>11</sup>They are like greedy dogs that never get enough. These leaders have no understanding. They each do as they please and seek their own advantage.

<sup>12</sup>Let's get some wine, these drunkards say, and drink all we can hold! Tomorrow will be even better than today!

**57** <sup>1</sup>Good people die, and no one understands or even cares. But when they die, no calamity can hurt them.

<sup>2</sup>Those who live good lives find peace and rest in death.

<sup>3</sup>Come here to be judged, you sinners! You are no better than sorcerers, adulterers, and prostitutes.

<sup>4</sup>Who are you making fun of? Who are you liars jeering at?

<sup>5</sup>You worship the fertility gods by having sex under those sacred trees of yours. You offer your children as sacrifices in the rocky caves near stream beds.

<sup>6</sup>You take smooth stones from there and worship them as gods. You pour out wine as offerings to them and bring

them grain offerings. Do you think I am pleased with all this?

<sup>7</sup>You go to the high mountains to offer sacrifices and have sex.

<sup>8</sup>You set up your obscene idols just inside your front doors. You forsake me; you take off your clothes and climb in your large beds with your lovers, whom you pay to sleep with you. And there you satisfy your lust.

<sup>9</sup>You put on your perfumes and ointments and go to worship the god Molech. To find gods to worship, you send messengers far and wide, even to the world of the dead.

<sup>10</sup>You wear yourselves out looking for other gods, but you never give up. You think your obscene idols give you strength, and so you never grow weak.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, Who are these gods that make you afraid, so that you tell me lies and forget me completely? Have you stopped honoring me because I have kept silent for so long?

<sup>12</sup>You think that what you do is right, but I will expose your conduct, and your idols will not be able to help you.

<sup>13</sup>When you cry for help, let those idols of yours save you! A puff of wind will carry them off! But those who trust in me will live in the land and will worship me in my Temple.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD says, Let my people return to me. Remove every obstacle from their path! Build the road and make it ready!

<sup>15</sup>I am the high and holy God, who lives forever. I live in a high and holy place, but I also live with people who are humble and repentant, so that I can restore their confidence and hope.

<sup>16</sup>I gave my people life, and I will not continue to accuse them or be angry with them forever.

<sup>17</sup>I was angry with them because of their sin and greed, and so I punished them and abandoned them. But they were stubborn and kept on going their own way.

<sup>18</sup>I have seen how they acted, but I will heal them. I will lead them and help them, and I will comfort those who mourn.

<sup>19</sup>I offer peace to all, both near and far! I will heal my people.

<sup>20</sup>But evil people are like the restless sea, whose waves never stop rolling in, bringing filth and muck.

<sup>21</sup>There is no safety for sinners, says the LORD.

**58**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says, Shout as loud as you can! Tell my people Israel about their sins!

<sup>2</sup>They worship me every day, claiming that they are eager to know my ways and obey my laws. They say they want me to give them just laws and that they take pleasure in worshiping me.

<sup>3</sup>The people ask, Why should we fast if the LORD never notices? Why should we go without food if he pays no attention? The LORD says to them, The truth is that at the same time you fast, you pursue your own interests and oppress your workers.

<sup>4</sup>Your fasting makes you violent, and you quarrel and fight. Do you think this kind of fasting will make me listen to your prayers?

<sup>5</sup>When you fast, you make yourselves suffer; you bow your heads low like a blade of grass and spread out sackcloth and ashes to lie on. Is that what you call

fasting? Do you think I will be pleased with that?

<sup>6</sup>The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free.

<sup>7</sup>Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives.

<sup>8</sup>Then my favor will shine on you like the morning sun, and your wounds will be quickly healed. I will always be with you to save you; my presence will protect you on every side.

<sup>9</sup>When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond. If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word;

<sup>10</sup>if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon.

<sup>11</sup>And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a

garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never goes dry.

<sup>12</sup>Your people will rebuild what has long been in ruins, building again on the old foundations. You will be known as the people who rebuilt the walls, who restored the ruined houses.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD says, If you treat the Sabbath as sacred and do not pursue your own interests on that day; if you value my holy day and honor it by not traveling, working, or talking idly on that day,

<sup>14</sup>then you will find the joy that comes from serving me. I will make you honored all over the world, and you will enjoy the land I gave to your ancestor, Jacob. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**59**<sup>1</sup> Don't think that the LORD is too weak to save you or too deaf to hear your call for help!

<sup>2</sup>It is because of your sins that he doesn't hear you. It is your sins that separate you from God when you try to worship him.

<sup>3</sup>You are guilty of lying, violence, and murder.



<sup>4</sup>You go to court, but you do not have justice on your side. You depend on lies to win your case. You carry out your plans to hurt others.

<sup>5</sup>The evil plots you make are as deadly as the eggs of a poisonous snake. Crush an egg, out comes a snake! But your plots will do you no good -- they are as useless as clothing made of cobwebs!

<sup>6</sup>(59:5)

<sup>7</sup>You are always planning something evil, and you can hardly wait to do it. You never hesitate to murder innocent people. You leave ruin and destruction wherever you go,

<sup>8</sup>and no one is safe when you are around. Everything you do is unjust. You follow a crooked path, and no one who walks that path will ever be safe.

<sup>9</sup>The people say, Now we know why God does not save us from those who oppress us. We hope for light to walk by, but there is only darkness,

<sup>10</sup>and we grope about like blind people. We stumble at noon, as if it were night, as if we were in the dark world of the dead.

<sup>11</sup> We are frightened and distressed. We long for God to save us from oppression and wrong, but nothing happens.

<sup>12</sup> LORD, our crimes against you are many. Our sins accuse us. We are well aware of them all.

<sup>13</sup> We have rebelled against you, rejected you, and refused to follow you. We have oppressed others and turned away from you. Our thoughts are false; our words are lies.

<sup>14</sup> Justice is driven away, and right cannot come near. Truth stumbles in the public square, and honesty finds no place there.

<sup>15</sup> There is so little honesty that those who stop doing evil find themselves the victims of crime. The LORD has seen this, and he is displeased that there is no justice.

<sup>16</sup> He is astonished to see that there is no one to help the oppressed. So he will use his own power to rescue them and to win the victory.

<sup>17</sup> He will wear justice like a coat of armor and saving power like a helmet. He will clothe himself with the strong desire to set things right and to punish

and avenge the wrongs that people suffer.

<sup>18</sup>He will punish his enemies according to what they have done, even those who live in distant lands.

<sup>19</sup>From east to west everyone will fear him and his great power. He will come like a rushing river, like a strong wind.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD says to his people, I will come to Jerusalem to defend you and to save all of you that turn from your sins.

<sup>21</sup>And I make a covenant with you: I have given you my power and my teachings to be yours forever, and from now on you are to obey me and teach your children and your descendants to obey me for all time to come.

**60**<sup>1</sup> Arise, Jerusalem, and shine like the sun; The glory of the LORD is shining on you!

<sup>2</sup>Other nations will be covered by darkness, But on you the light of the LORD will shine; The brightness of his presence will be with you.

<sup>3</sup>Nations will be drawn to your light, And kings to the dawning of your new day.

<sup>4</sup> Look around you and see what is happening: Your people are gathering to come home! Your sons will come from far away; Your daughters will be carried like children.

<sup>5</sup> You will see this and be filled with joy; You will tremble with excitement. The wealth of the nations will be brought to you; From across the sea their riches will come.

<sup>6</sup> Great caravans of camels will come, from Midian and Ephah. They will come from Sheba, bringing gold and incense. People will tell the good news of what the LORD has done!

<sup>7</sup> All the sheep of Kedar and Nebaioth Will be brought to you as sacrifices And offered on the altar to please the LORD. The LORD will make his Temple more glorious than ever.

<sup>8</sup> What are these ships that skim along like clouds, Like doves returning home?

<sup>9</sup> They are ships coming from distant lands, Bringing God's people home. They bring with them silver and gold To honor the name of the LORD, The holy God of Israel, Who has made all nations honor his people.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says to Jerusalem,  
Foreigners will rebuild your walls, And  
their kings will serve you. In my anger I  
punished you, But now I will show you  
my favor and mercy.

<sup>11</sup>Day and night your gates will be  
open, So that the kings of the nations  
May bring you their wealth.

<sup>12</sup>But nations that do not serve you Will  
be completely destroyed.

<sup>13</sup>The wood of the pine, the juniper,  
and the cypress, The finest wood from  
the forests of Lebanon, Will be brought  
to rebuild you, Jerusalem, To make  
my Temple beautiful, To make my city  
glorious.

<sup>14</sup>The descendants of those who  
oppressed you will come And bow low  
to show their respect. All who once  
despised you will worship at your feet.  
They will call you The City of the LORD,  
Zion, the City of Israel's Holy God.'

<sup>15</sup>You will no longer be forsaken and  
hated, A city deserted and desolate. I  
will make you great and beautiful, A  
place of joy forever and ever.

<sup>16</sup>Nations and kings will care for you As  
a mother nurses her child. You will know

that I, the LORD, have saved you, That the mighty God of Israel sets you free.

<sup>17</sup>I will bring you gold instead of bronze, Silver and bronze instead of iron and wood, And iron instead of stone. Your rulers will no longer oppress you; I will make them rule with justice and peace.

<sup>18</sup>The sounds of violence will be heard no more; Destruction will not shatter your country again. I will protect and defend you like a wall; You will praise me because I have saved you.

<sup>19</sup>No longer will the sun be your light by day Or the moon be your light by night; I, the LORD, will be your eternal light; The light of my glory will shine on you.

<sup>20</sup>Your days of grief will come to an end. I, the LORD, will be your eternal light, More lasting than the sun and moon.

<sup>21</sup>Your people will all do what is right, And will possess the land forever. I planted them, I made them, To reveal my greatness to all.

<sup>22</sup>Even your smallest and humblest family Will become as great as a powerful nation. When the right time comes, I

will make this happen quickly. I am the LORD!

**61** <sup>1</sup>The Sovereign LORD has filled me with his Spirit. He has chosen me and sent me To bring good news to the poor, To heal the broken-hearted, To announce release to captives And freedom to those in prison.

<sup>2</sup>He has sent me to proclaim That the time has come When the LORD will save his people And defeat their enemies. He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,

<sup>3</sup>To give to those who mourn in Zion Joy and gladness instead of grief, A song of praise instead of sorrow. They will be like trees That the LORD himself has planted. They will all do what is right, And God will be praised for what he has done.

<sup>4</sup>They will rebuild cities that have long been in ruins.

<sup>5</sup>My people, foreigners will serve you. They will take care of your flocks And farm your land and tend your vineyards.

<sup>6</sup>And you will be known as the priests of the LORD, The servants of our God. You will enjoy the wealth of the nations And be proud that it is yours.

<sup>7</sup>Your shame and disgrace are ended.  
You will live in your own land, And your  
wealth will be doubled; Your joy will last  
forever.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD says, I love justice and  
I hate oppression and crime. I will  
faithfully reward my people And make  
an eternal covenant with them.

<sup>9</sup>They will be famous among the  
nations; Everyone who sees them will  
know That they are a people whom I  
have blessed.

<sup>10</sup>Jerusalem rejoices because of what  
the LORD has done. She is like a bride  
dressed for her wedding. God has  
clothed her with salvation and victory.

<sup>11</sup>As surely as seeds sprout and grow,  
The Sovereign LORD will save his people,  
And all the nations will praise him.

**62**<sup>1</sup> I will speak out to encourage  
Jerusalem; I will not be silent  
until she is saved, And her victory shines  
like a torch in the night.

<sup>2</sup>Jerusalem, the nations will see you  
victorious! All their kings will see your  
glory. You will be called by a new name,  
A name given by the LORD himself.



<sup>3</sup>You will be like a beautiful crown for the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>No longer will you be called Forsaken, Or your land be called The Deserted Wife. Your new name will be God Is Pleased with Her. Your land will be called Happily Married, Because the LORD is pleased with you And will be like a husband to your land.

<sup>5</sup>Like a young man taking a virgin as his bride, He who formed you will marry you. As a groom is delighted with his bride, So your God will delight in you.

<sup>6</sup>On your walls, Jerusalem, I have placed sentries; They must never be silent day or night. They must remind the LORD of his promises And never let him forget them.

<sup>7</sup>They must give him no rest until he restores Jerusalem And makes it a city the whole world praises.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD has made a solemn promise, And by his power he will carry it out: Your grain will no longer be food for your enemies, And foreigners will no longer drink your wine.

<sup>9</sup>But you that planted and harvested the grain Will eat the bread and praise

the LORD. You that tended and gathered the grapes Will drink the wine in the courts of my Temple.

<sup>10</sup>People of Jerusalem, go out of the city And build a road for your returning people! Prepare a highway; clear it of stones! Put up a signal so that the nations can know

<sup>11</sup>That the LORD is announcing to all the earth: Tell the people of Jerusalem That the LORD is coming to save you, Bringing with him the people he has rescued.

<sup>12</sup>You will be called God's Holy People, The People the LORD Has Saved. Jerusalem will be called The City That God Loves, The City That God Did Not Forsake.

**63**<sup>1</sup>Who is this coming from the city of Bozrah in Edom? Who is this so splendidly dressed in red, marching along in power and strength? It is the LORD, powerful to save, coming to announce his victory.

<sup>2</sup>Why is his clothing so red, like that of someone who tramples grapes to make wine?

<sup>3</sup>The LORD answers, I have trampled the nations like grapes, and no one came to help me. I trampled them in my anger, and their blood has stained all my clothing.

<sup>4</sup>I decided that the time to save my people had come; it was time to punish their enemies.

<sup>5</sup>I was amazed when I looked and saw that there was no one to help me. But my anger made me strong, and I won the victory myself.

<sup>6</sup>In my anger I trampled whole nations and shattered them. I poured out their lifeblood on the ground.

<sup>7</sup>I will tell of the LORD's unfailing love; I praise him for all he has done for us. He has richly blessed the people of Israel because of his mercy and constant love.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD said, They are my people; they will not deceive me. And so he saved them

<sup>9</sup>from all their suffering. It was not an angel, but the LORD himself who saved them. In his love and compassion he rescued them. He had always taken care of them in the past,

<sup>10</sup>but they rebelled against him and made his holy spirit sad. So the LORD became their enemy and fought against them.

<sup>11</sup>But then they remembered the past, the days of Moses, the servant of the LORD, and they asked, Where now is the LORD, who saved the leaders of his people from the sea? Where is the LORD, who gave his spirit to Moses?

<sup>12</sup>Where is the LORD, who by his power did great things through Moses, dividing the waters of the sea and leading his people through the deep water, to win everlasting fame for himself? Led by the LORD, they were as sure-footed as wild horses, and never stumbled.

<sup>13</sup>(63: 12)

<sup>14</sup>As cattle are led into a fertile valley, so the LORD gave his people rest. He led his people and brought honor to his name.

<sup>15</sup>LORD, look upon us from heaven, where you live in your holiness and glory. Where is your great concern for us? Where is your power? Where are your love and compassion? Do not ignore us.

<sup>16</sup>You are our father. Our ancestors Abraham and Jacob do not acknowledge us, but you, LORD, are our father, the one who has always rescued us.

<sup>17</sup>Why do you let us stray from your ways? Why do you make us so stubborn that we turn away from you? Come back, for the sake of those who serve you, for the sake of the people who have always been yours.

<sup>18</sup>We, your holy people, were driven out by our enemies for a little while; they trampled down your sanctuary.

<sup>19</sup>You treat us as though you had never been our ruler, as though we had never been your people.

**64** <sup>1</sup>Why don't you tear the sky open and come down? The mountains would see you and shake with fear.

<sup>2</sup>They would tremble like water boiling over a hot fire. Come and reveal your power to your enemies, and make the nations tremble at your presence!

<sup>3</sup>There was a time when you came and did terrifying things that we did not expect; the mountains saw you and shook with fear.

<sup>4</sup>No one has ever seen or heard of a God like you, who does such deeds for those who put their hope in him.

<sup>5</sup>You welcome those who find joy in doing what is right, those who remember how you want them to live. You were angry with us, but we went on sinning; in spite of your great anger we have continued to do wrong since ancient times.

<sup>6</sup>All of us have been sinful; even our best actions are filthy through and through. Because of our sins we are like leaves that wither and are blown away by the wind.

<sup>7</sup>No one turns to you in prayer; no one goes to you for help. You have hidden yourself from us and have abandoned us because of our sins.

<sup>8</sup>But you are our father, LORD. We are like clay, and you are like the potter. You created us,

<sup>9</sup>so do not be too angry with us or hold our sins against us forever. We are your people; be merciful to us.

<sup>10</sup>Your sacred cities are like a desert; Jerusalem is a deserted ruin,

<sup>11</sup> and our Temple, the sacred and beautiful place where our ancestors praised you, has been destroyed by fire. All the places we loved are in ruins.

<sup>12</sup> LORD, are you unmoved by all this? Are you going to do nothing and make us suffer more than we can endure?

**65** <sup>1</sup> The LORD said, I was ready to answer my people's prayers, but they did not pray. I was ready for them to find me, but they did not even try. The nation did not pray to me, even though I was always ready to answer, Here I am; I will help you.

<sup>2</sup> I have always been ready to welcome my people, who stubbornly do what is wrong and go their own way.

<sup>3</sup> They shamelessly keep on making me angry. They offer pagan sacrifices at sacred gardens and burn incense on pagan altars.

<sup>4</sup> At night they go to caves and tombs to consult the spirits of the dead. They eat pork and drink broth made from meat offered in pagan sacrifices.

<sup>5</sup> And then they say to others, Keep away from us; we are too holy for you to touch! I cannot stand people like that --

my anger against them is like a fire that never goes out.

<sup>6</sup>I have already decided on their punishment, and their sentence is written down. I will not overlook what they have done, but will repay them

<sup>7</sup>for their sins and the sins of their ancestors. They have burned incense at pagan hill shrines and spoken evil of me. So I will punish them as their past deeds deserve.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD says, No one destroys good grapes; instead, they make wine with them. Neither will I destroy all my people -- I will save those who serve me.

<sup>9</sup>I will bless the Israelites who belong to the tribe of Judah, and their descendants will possess my land of mountains. My chosen people, who serve me, will live there.

<sup>10</sup>They will worship me and will lead their sheep and cattle to pasture in the Plain of Sharon in the west and in Trouble Valley in the east.

<sup>11</sup>But it will be different for you that forsake me, who ignore Zion, my sacred hill, and worship Gad and Meni, the gods of luck and fate.



<sup>12</sup>It will be your fate to die a violent death, because you did not answer when I called you or listen when I spoke. You chose to disobey me and do evil.

<sup>13</sup>And so I tell you that those who worship and obey me will have plenty to eat and drink, but you will be hungry and thirsty. They will be happy, but you will be disgraced.

<sup>14</sup>They will sing for joy, but you will cry with a broken heart.

<sup>15</sup>My chosen people will use your name as a curse. I, the Sovereign LORD, will put you to death. But I will give a new name to those who obey me.

<sup>16</sup>Anyone in the land who asks for a blessing will ask to be blessed by the faithful God. Whoever takes an oath will swear by the name of the faithful God. The troubles of the past will be gone and forgotten.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD says, I am making a new earth and new heavens. The events of the past will be completely forgotten.

<sup>18</sup>Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create. The new Jerusalem I make will be full of joy, and her people will be happy.

<sup>19</sup>I myself will be filled with joy because of Jerusalem and her people. There will be no weeping there, no calling for help.

<sup>20</sup>Babies will no longer die in infancy, and all people will live out their life span. Those who live to be a hundred will be considered young. To die before that would be a sign that I had punished them.

<sup>21</sup>People will build houses and get to live in them -- they will not be used by someone else. They will plant vineyards and enjoy the wine -- it will not be drunk by others. Like trees, my people will live long lives. They will fully enjoy the things that they have worked for.

<sup>22</sup>(65: 21)

<sup>23</sup>The work they do will be successful, and their children will not meet with disaster. I will bless them and their descendants for all time to come.

<sup>24</sup>Even before they finish praying to me, I will answer their prayers.

<sup>25</sup>Wolves and lambs will eat together; lions will eat straw, as cattle do, and snakes will no longer be dangerous. On Zion, my sacred hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil.

**66** <sup>1</sup>The LORD says, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house, then, could you build for me, what kind of place for me to live in?

<sup>2</sup>I myself created the whole universe! I am pleased with those who are humble and repentant, who fear me and obey me.

<sup>3</sup>The people do as they please. It's all the same to them whether they kill a bull as a sacrifice or sacrifice a human being; whether they sacrifice a lamb or break a dog's neck; whether they present a grain offering or offer pigs' blood; whether they offer incense or pray to an idol. They take pleasure in disgusting ways of worship.

<sup>4</sup>So I will bring disaster upon them -- the very things they are afraid of -- because no one answered when I called or listened when I spoke. They chose to disobey me and do evil.

<sup>5</sup>Listen to what the LORD says, you that fear him and obey him: Because you are faithful to me, some of your own people hate you and will have nothing to do with you. They mock you and say, Let

the LORD show his greatness and save you, so that we may see you rejoice. But they themselves will be disgraced!

<sup>6</sup>Listen! That loud noise in the city, that sound in the Temple, is the sound of the LORD punishing his enemies!

<sup>7</sup>My holy city is like a woman who suddenly gives birth to a child without ever going into labor.

<sup>8</sup>Has anyone ever seen or heard of such a thing? Has a nation ever been born in a day? Zion will not have to suffer long, before the nation is born.

<sup>9</sup>Do not think that I will bring my people to the point of birth and not let them be born. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>10</sup>Rejoice with Jerusalem; be glad for her, all you that love this city! Rejoice with her now, all you that have mourned for her!

<sup>11</sup>You will enjoy her prosperity, like a child at its mother's breast.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD says, I will bring you lasting prosperity; the wealth of the nations will flow to you like a river that never goes dry. You will be like a child that is nursed by its mother, carried in her arms, and treated with love.

<sup>13</sup>I will comfort you in Jerusalem, as a mother comforts her child.

<sup>14</sup>When you see this happen, you will be glad; it will make you strong and healthy. Then you will know that I, the LORD, help those who obey me, and I show my anger against my enemies.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD will come with fire. He will ride on the wings of a storm to punish those he is angry with.

<sup>16</sup>By fire and sword he will punish all the people of the world whom he finds guilty -- and many will be put to death.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD says, The end is near for those who purify themselves for pagan worship, who go in procession to sacred gardens, and who eat pork and mice and other disgusting foods.

<sup>18</sup>I know their thoughts and their deeds. I am coming to gather the people of all the nations. When they come together, they will see what my power can do

<sup>19</sup>and will know that I am the one who punishes them. But I will spare some of them and send them to the nations and the distant lands that have not heard of my fame or seen my greatness and

power: to Spain, Libya, and Lydia, with its skilled archers, and to Tubal and Greece. Among these nations they will proclaim my greatness.

<sup>20</sup>They will bring back all your people from the nations as a gift to me. They will bring them to my sacred hill in Jerusalem on horses, mules, and camels, and in chariots and wagons, just as Israelites bring grain offerings to the Temple in ritually clean containers.

<sup>21</sup>I will make some of them priests and Levites.

<sup>22</sup>Just as the new earth and the new heavens will endure by my power, so your descendants and your name will endure.

<sup>23</sup>On every New Moon Festival and every Sabbath people of every nation will come to worship me here in Jerusalem, says the LORD.

<sup>24</sup>As they leave, they will see the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against me. The worms that eat them will never die, and the fire that burns them will never be put out. The sight of them will be disgusting to all people.

# Jeremiah

**1** <sup>1</sup>This book is the account of what was said by Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests of the town of Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD spoke to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year that Josiah son of Amon was king of Judah,

<sup>3</sup>and he spoke to him again when Josiah's son Jehoiakim was king. After that, the LORD spoke to him many times, until the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah son of Josiah. In the fifth month of that year the people of Jerusalem were taken into exile.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD said to me,

<sup>5</sup>I chose you before I gave you life, and before you were born I selected you to be a prophet to the nations.

<sup>6</sup>I answered, Sovereign LORD, I don't know how to speak; I am too young.

<sup>7</sup>But the LORD said to me, Do not say that you are too young, but go to the people I send you to, and tell them everything I command you to say.

<sup>8</sup>Do not be afraid of them, for I will be with you to protect you. I, the LORD, have spoken!

<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD reached out, touched my lips, and said to me, Listen, I am giving you the words you must speak.

<sup>10</sup>Today I give you authority over nations and kingdoms to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD asked me, Jeremiah, what do you see? I answered, A branch of an almond tree.

<sup>12</sup>You are right, the LORD said, and I am watching to see that my words come true.

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD spoke to me again. What else do you see? he asked. I answered, I see a pot boiling in the north, and it is about to tip over this way.

<sup>14</sup>He said to me, Destruction will boil over from the north on all who live in this land,

<sup>15</sup>because I am calling all the nations in the north to come. Their kings will set up their thrones at the gates of Jerusalem and around its walls and also around the other cities of Judah.



<sup>16</sup>I will punish my people because they have sinned; they have abandoned me, have offered sacrifices to other gods, and have made idols and worshiped them.

<sup>17</sup>Get ready, Jeremiah; go and tell them everything I command you to say. Do not be afraid of them now, or I will make you even more afraid when you are with them.

<sup>18</sup>Listen, Jeremiah! Everyone in this land -- the kings of Judah, the officials, the priests, and the people -- will be against you. But today I am giving you the strength to resist them; you will be like a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall. They will not defeat you, for I will be with you to protect you. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>19</sup>(1:18)

**2**<sup>1</sup>The LORD told me  
<sup>2</sup>to proclaim this message to everyone in Jerusalem. I remember how faithful you were when you were young, how you loved me when we were first married; you followed me through the desert, through a land that had not been planted.

<sup>3</sup> Israel, you belonged to me alone; you were my sacred possession. I sent suffering and disaster on everyone who hurt you. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>4</sup> Listen to the LORD's message, you descendants of Jacob, you tribes of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD says: What accusation did your ancestors bring against me? What made them turn away from me? They worshiped worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

<sup>6</sup> They did not care about me, even though I rescued them from Egypt and led them through the wilderness: a land of deserts and sand pits, a dry and dangerous land where no one lives and no one will even travel.

<sup>7</sup> I brought them into a fertile land, to enjoy its harvests and its other good things. But instead they ruined my land; they defiled the country I had given them.

<sup>8</sup> The priests did not ask, Where is the LORD? My own priests did not know me. The rulers rebelled against me; the prophets spoke in the name of Baal and worshiped useless idols.

<sup>9</sup>And so I, the LORD, will state my case against my people again. I will bring charges against their descendants.

<sup>10</sup>Go west to the island of Cyprus, and send someone eastward to the land of Kedar. You will see that nothing like this has ever happened before.

<sup>11</sup>No other nation has ever changed its gods, even though they were not real. But my people have exchanged me, the God who has brought them honor, for gods that can do nothing for them.

<sup>12</sup>And so I command the sky to shake with horror, to be amazed and astonished,

<sup>13</sup>for my people have committed two sins: they have turned away from me, the spring of fresh water, and they have dug cisterns, cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all.

<sup>14</sup>Israel is not a slave; he was not born into slavery. Why then do his enemies hunt him down?

<sup>15</sup>They have roared at him like lions; they have made his land a desert, and his towns lie in ruins, completely abandoned.

<sup>16</sup>Yes, the people of Memphis and Tahpanhes have cracked his skull.

<sup>17</sup>Israel, you brought this on yourself! You deserted me, the LORD your God, while I was leading you along the way.

<sup>18</sup>What do you think you will gain by going to Egypt to drink water from the Nile? What do you think you will gain by going to Assyria to drink water from the Euphrates?

<sup>19</sup>Your own evil will punish you, and your turning from me will condemn you. You will learn how bitter and wrong it is to abandon me, the LORD your God, and no longer to remain faithful to me. I, the Sovereign LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>20</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, Israel, long ago you rejected my authority; you refused to obey me and worship me. On every high hill and under every green tree you worshiped fertility gods.

<sup>21</sup>I planted you like a choice vine from the very best seed. But look what you have become! You are like a rotten, worthless vine.

<sup>22</sup>Even if you washed with the strongest soap, I would still see the stain of your guilt.

<sup>23</sup> How can you say you have not defiled yourself, that you have never worshiped Baal? Look how you sinned in the valley; see what you have done. You are like a wild camel in heat, running around loose,

<sup>24</sup> rushing into the desert. When she is in heat, who can control her? No male that wants her has to trouble himself; she is always available in mating season.

<sup>25</sup> Israel, don't wear your feet out, or let your throat become dry from chasing after other gods. But you say, No! I can't turn back. I have loved foreign gods and will go after them.

<sup>26</sup> The LORD says, Just as a thief is disgraced when caught, so all you people of Israel will be disgraced -- your kings and officials, your priests and prophets.

<sup>27</sup> You will all be disgraced -- you that say that a tree is your father and that a rock is your mother. This will happen because you turned away from me instead of turning to me. But when you are in trouble, you ask me to come and save you.

<sup>28</sup> Where are the gods that you made for yourselves? When you are in trouble,

let them save you -- if they can! Judah, you have as many gods as you have cities.

<sup>29</sup>What is your complaint? Why have you rebelled against me?

<sup>30</sup>I punished you, but it did no good; you would not let me correct you. Like a raging lion, you have murdered your prophets.

<sup>31</sup>People of Israel, listen to what I am saying. Have I been like a desert to you, like a dark and dangerous land? Why, then, do you say that you will do as you please, that you will never come back to me?

<sup>32</sup>Does a young woman forget her jewelry, or a bride her wedding dress? But my people have forgotten me for more days than can be counted.

<sup>33</sup>You certainly know how to chase after lovers. Even the worst of women can learn from you.

<sup>34</sup>Your clothes are stained with the blood of the poor and innocent, not with the blood of burglars. But in spite of all this,

<sup>35</sup>you say, I am innocent; surely the LORD is no longer angry with me. But I,

the LORD, will punish you because you deny that you have sinned.

<sup>36</sup>You have cheapened yourself by turning to the gods of other nations. You will be disappointed by Egypt, just as you were by Assyria.

<sup>37</sup>You will turn away from Egypt, hanging your head in shame. I, the LORD, have rejected those you trust; you will not gain anything from them.

**3**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says, If a man divorces his wife, and she leaves him and becomes another man's wife, he cannot take her back again. This would completely defile the land. But, Israel, you have had many lovers, and now you want to return to me!

<sup>2</sup>Look up at the hilltops. Is there any place where you have not acted like a prostitute? You waited for lovers along the roadside, as an Arab waits for victims in the desert. You have defiled the land with your prostitution.

<sup>3</sup>That is why the rains were held back, and the spring showers did not come. You even look like a prostitute; you have no shame.

<sup>4</sup>And now you say to me, You are my father, and you have loved me ever since I was a child.

<sup>5</sup>You won't always be angry; you won't be mad at me forever. Israel, that is what you said, but you did all the evil you could.

<sup>6</sup>When Josiah was king, the LORD said to me, Have you seen what Israel, that unfaithful woman, has done? She has turned away from me, and on every high hill and under every green tree she has acted like a prostitute.

<sup>7</sup>I thought that after she had done all this, she would surely return to me. But she did not return, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it all.

<sup>8</sup>Judah also saw that I divorced Israel and sent her away because she had turned from me and had become a prostitute. But Judah, Israel's unfaithful sister, was not afraid. She too became a prostitute

<sup>9</sup>and was not at all ashamed. She defiled the land, and she committed adultery by worshiping stones and trees.

<sup>10</sup>And after all this, Judah, Israel's unfaithful sister, only pretended to return



to me; she was not sincere. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>11</sup> Then the LORD told me that, even though Israel had turned away from him, she had proved to be better than unfaithful Judah.

<sup>12</sup> He told me to go and say to Israel, Unfaithful Israel, come back to me. I am merciful and will not be angry; I will not be angry with you forever.

<sup>13</sup> Only admit that you are guilty and that you have rebelled against the LORD, your God. Confess that under every green tree you have given your love to foreign gods and that you have not obeyed my commands. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>14</sup> Unfaithful people, come back; you belong to me. I will take one of you from each town and two from each clan, and I will bring you back to Mount Zion.

<sup>15</sup> I will give you rulers who obey me, and they will rule you with wisdom and understanding.

<sup>16</sup> Then when you have become numerous in that land, people will no longer talk about my Covenant Box. They will no longer think about it or

remember it; they will not even need it, nor will they make another one.

<sup>17</sup>When that time comes, Jerusalem will be called The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather there to worship me. They will no longer do what their stubborn and evil hearts tell them.

<sup>18</sup>Israel will join with Judah, and together they will come from exile in the country in the north and will return to the land that I gave your ancestors as a permanent possession.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD says, Israel, I wanted to accept you as my child and give you a delightful land, the most beautiful land in all the world. I wanted you to call me father and never again turn away from me.

<sup>20</sup>But like an unfaithful wife, you have not been faithful to me. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>21</sup>A noise is heard on the hilltops: it is the people of Israel crying and pleading because they have lived sinful lives and have forgotten the LORD their God.

<sup>22</sup>Return, all of you who have turned away from the LORD; he will heal you and make you faithful. You say, Yes, we

are coming to the LORD because he is our God.

<sup>23</sup>We were not helped at all by our pagan worship on the hilltops. Help for Israel comes only from the LORD our God.

<sup>24</sup>But the worship of Baal, the god of shame, has made us lose flocks and herds, sons and daughters -- everything that our ancestors have worked for since ancient times.

<sup>25</sup>We should lie down in shame and let our disgrace cover us. We and our ancestors have always sinned against the LORD our God; we have never obeyed his commands.

**4**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says, People of Israel, if you want to turn, then turn back to me. If you are faithful to me and remove the idols I hate,

<sup>2</sup>it will be right for you to swear by my name. Then all the nations will ask me to bless them, and they will praise me.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD says to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, Plow up your unplowed fields; do not plant your seeds among thorns.

<sup>4</sup> Keep your covenant with me, your LORD, and dedicate yourselves to me, you people of Judah and Jerusalem. If you don't, my anger will burn like fire because of the evil things you have done. It will burn, and there will be no one to put it out.

<sup>5</sup> Blow the trumpet throughout the land! Shout loud and clear! Tell the people of Judah and Jerusalem to run to the fortified cities.

<sup>6</sup> Point the way to Zion! Run for safety! Don't delay! The LORD is bringing disaster and great destruction from the north.

<sup>7</sup> Like a lion coming from its hiding place, a destroyer of nations has set out. He is coming to destroy Judah. The cities of Judah will be left in ruins, and no one will live in them.

<sup>8</sup> So put on sackcloth, and weep and wail because the fierce anger of the LORD has not turned away from Judah.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD said, On that day kings and officials will lose their courage; priests will be shocked and prophets will be astonished.

<sup>10</sup>Then I said, Sovereign LORD, you have completely deceived the people of Jerusalem! You have said there would be peace, but a sword is at their throats.

<sup>11</sup>The time is coming when the people of Jerusalem will be told that a scorching wind is blowing in from the desert toward them. It will not be a gentle wind that only blows away the chaff --

<sup>12</sup>the wind that comes at the LORD's command will be much stronger than that! It is the LORD himself who is pronouncing judgment on his people.

<sup>13</sup>Look, the enemy is coming like clouds. Their war chariots are like a whirlwind, and their horses are faster than eagles. We are lost! We are doomed!

<sup>14</sup>Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart, so that you may be saved. How long will you go on thinking sinful thoughts?

<sup>15</sup>Messengers from the city of Dan and from the hills of Ephraim announce the bad news.

<sup>16</sup>They have come to warn the nations and to tell Jerusalem that enemies are coming from a country far away. These

enemies will shout against the cities of Judah

<sup>17</sup> and will surround Jerusalem like men guarding a field, because her people have rebelled against the LORD. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>18</sup> Judah, you have brought this on yourself by the way you have lived and by the things you have done. Your sin has caused this suffering; it has stabbed you through the heart.

<sup>19</sup> The pain! I can't bear the pain! My heart! My heart is beating wildly! I can't keep quiet; I hear the trumpets and the shouts of battle.

<sup>20</sup> One disaster follows another; the whole country is left in ruins. Suddenly our tents are destroyed; their curtains are torn to pieces.

<sup>21</sup> How long must I see the battle raging and hear the blasts of trumpets?

<sup>22</sup> The LORD says, My people are stupid; they don't know me. They are like foolish children; they have no understanding. They are experts at doing what is evil, but failures at doing what is good.

<sup>23</sup>I looked at the earth -- it was a barren waste; at the sky -- there was no light.

<sup>24</sup>I looked at the mountains -- they were shaking, and the hills were rocking back and forth.

<sup>25</sup>I saw that there were no people; even the birds had flown away.

<sup>26</sup>The fertile land had become a desert; its cities were in ruins because of the LORD's fierce anger.

<sup>27</sup>(The LORD has said that the whole earth will become a wasteland, but that he will not completely destroy it.)

<sup>28</sup>The earth will mourn; the sky will grow dark. The LORD has spoken and will not change his mind. He has made his decision and will not turn back.

<sup>29</sup>At the noise of the cavalry and archers everyone will run away. Some will run to the forest; others will climb up among the rocks. Every town will be left empty, and no one will live in them again.

<sup>30</sup>Jerusalem, you are doomed! Why do you dress in scarlet? Why do you put on jewelry and paint your eyes? You are making yourself beautiful for nothing!

Your lovers have rejected you and want to kill you.

<sup>31</sup> I heard a cry, like a woman in labor, a scream like a woman bearing her first child. It was the cry of Jerusalem gasping for breath, stretching out her hand and saying, I am doomed! They are coming to kill me!

**5**<sup>1</sup> People of Jerusalem, run through your streets! Look around! See for yourselves! Search the marketplaces! Can you find one person who does what is right and tries to be faithful to God? If you can, the LORD will forgive Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Even though you claim to worship the LORD, you do not mean what you say.

<sup>3</sup> Surely the LORD looks for faithfulness. He struck you, but you paid no attention; he crushed you, but you refused to learn. You were stubborn and would not turn from your sins.

<sup>4</sup> Then I thought, These are only the poor and ignorant. They behave foolishly; they don't know what their God requires, what the LORD wants them to do.



<sup>5</sup>I will go to the people in power and talk with them. Surely they know what their God requires, what the LORD wants them to do. But all of them have rejected the LORD's authority and refuse to obey him.

<sup>6</sup>That is why lions from the forest will kill them; wolves from the desert will tear them to pieces, and leopards will prowl through their towns. If those people go out, they will be torn apart because their sins are numerous and time after time they have turned from God.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD asked, Why should I forgive the sins of my people? They have abandoned me and have worshiped gods that are not real. I fed my people until they were full, but they committed adultery and spent their time with prostitutes.

<sup>8</sup>They were like well-fed stallions wild with desire, each lusting for his neighbor's wife.

<sup>9</sup>Shouldn't I punish them for these things and take revenge on a nation such as this?

<sup>10</sup>I will send enemies to cut down my people's vineyards, but not to destroy them completely. I will tell them to strip away the branches, because those branches are not mine.

<sup>11</sup>The people of Israel and Judah have betrayed me completely. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD's people have denied him and have said, He won't really do anything. We won't have hard times; we won't have war or famine.

<sup>13</sup>They have said that the prophets are nothing but windbags and that they have no message from the LORD. The LORD God Almighty said to me, Jeremiah, because these people have said such things, I will make my words like a fire in your mouth. The people will be like wood, and the fire will burn them up.

<sup>14</sup>(5:13)

<sup>15</sup>People of Israel, the LORD is bringing a nation from far away to attack you. It is a strong and ancient nation, a nation whose language you do not know.

<sup>16</sup>Their archers are mighty soldiers who kill without mercy.

<sup>17</sup> They will devour your crops and your food; they will kill your sons and your daughters. They will slaughter your flocks and your herds and destroy your vines and fig trees. The fortified cities in which you trust will be destroyed by their army.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD says, Yet even in those days I will not completely destroy my people.

<sup>19</sup> When they ask why I did all these things, tell them, Jeremiah, that just as they turned away from me and served foreign gods in their own land, so they will serve strangers in a land that is not theirs.

<sup>20</sup> The LORD says, Tell the descendants of Jacob, tell the people of Judah:

<sup>21</sup> Pay attention, you foolish and stupid people, who have eyes, but cannot see, and have ears, but cannot hear.

<sup>22</sup> I am the LORD; why don't you fear me? Why don't you tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary of the sea, a permanent boundary that it cannot cross. The sea may toss, but it cannot go beyond it; the waves may roar, but they cannot break through.

<sup>23</sup> But you people! You are stubborn and rebellious; you have turned aside and left me.

<sup>24</sup> You never thought to honor me, even though I send the autumn rains and the spring rains and give you the harvest season each year.

<sup>25</sup> Instead, your sins have kept these good things from you.

<sup>26</sup> Evildoers live among my people; they lie in wait like those who lay nets to catch birds, but they have set their traps to catch people.

<sup>27</sup> Just as a hunter fills a cage with birds, they have filled their houses with loot. That is why they are powerful and rich,

<sup>28</sup> why they are fat and well fed. There is no limit to their evil deeds. They do not give orphans their rights or show justice to the oppressed.

<sup>29</sup> But I, the LORD, will punish them for these things; I will take revenge on this nation.

<sup>30</sup> A terrible and shocking thing has happened in the land:

<sup>31</sup> prophets speak nothing but lies; priests rule as the prophets command,

and my people offer no objections. But what will they do when it all comes to an end?

**6**<sup>1</sup> People of Benjamin, run for safety! Escape from Jerusalem! Sound the trumpet in Tekoa and build a signal fire in Beth Haccherem. Disaster and destruction are about to come from the north.

<sup>2</sup>The city of Zion is beautiful, but it will be destroyed;

<sup>3</sup>kings will camp there with their armies. They will pitch their tents around the city, and each of them will camp wherever they want.

<sup>4</sup>They will say, Prepare to attack Jerusalem! Get ready! We'll attack at noon! But then they will say, It's too late, the day is almost over, and the evening shadows are growing long.

<sup>5</sup>We'll attack by night; we'll destroy the city's fortresses.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD Almighty has ordered these kings to cut down trees and build mounds in order to besiege Jerusalem. He has said, I will punish this city because it is full of oppression.

<sup>7</sup>As a well keeps its water fresh, so Jerusalem keeps its evil fresh. I hear violence and destruction in the city; sickness and wounds are all I see.

<sup>8</sup>People of Jerusalem, let these troubles be a warning to you, or else I will abandon you; I will turn your city into a desert, a place where no one lives.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD Almighty said to me, Israel will be stripped clean like a vineyard from which every grape has been picked. So you must rescue everyone you can while there is still time.

<sup>10</sup>I answered, Who would listen to me if I spoke to them and warned them? They are stubborn and refuse to listen to your message; they laugh at what you tell me to say.

<sup>11</sup>Your anger against them burns in me too, LORD, and I can't hold it in any longer. Then the LORD said to me, Pour out my anger on the children in the streets and on the gatherings of the young people. Husbands and wives will be taken away, and even the very old will not be spared.

<sup>12</sup>Their houses will be given to others, and so will their fields and their wives.

I am going to punish the people of this land.

<sup>13</sup>Everyone, great and small, tries to make money dishonestly; even prophets and priests cheat the people.

<sup>14</sup>They act as if my people's wounds were only scratches. All is well, they say, when all is not well.

<sup>15</sup>Were they ashamed because they did these disgusting things? No, they were not at all ashamed; they don't even know how to blush. And so they will fall as others have fallen; when I punish them, that will be the end of them. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD said to his people, Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths and where the best road is. Walk in it, and you will live in peace. But they said, No, we will not!

<sup>17</sup>Then the LORD appointed sentries to listen for the trumpet's warning. But they said, We will not listen.

<sup>18</sup>So the LORD said, Listen, you nations, and learn what is going to happen to my people.

<sup>19</sup>Listen, earth! As punishment for all their schemes I am bringing ruin

on these people, because they have rejected my teaching and have not obeyed my words.

<sup>20</sup>What do I care about the incense they bring me from Sheba, or the spices from a distant land? I will not accept their offerings or be pleased with their sacrifices.

<sup>21</sup>And so I will make these people stumble and fall. Parents and children will die, and so will friends and neighbors.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD says, People are coming from a country in the north; a mighty nation far away is preparing for war.

<sup>23</sup>They have taken up their bows and swords; they are cruel and merciless. They sound like the roaring sea, as they ride their horses. They are ready for battle against Jerusalem.

<sup>24</sup>We have heard the news, say the people of Jerusalem, and our hands hang limp; we are seized by anguish and pain like a woman in labor.

<sup>25</sup>We don't dare go to the countryside or walk on the roads, because our enemies are armed and terror is all around us.



<sup>26</sup>The LORD says to his people, Put on sackcloth and roll in ashes. Mourn with bitter tears as you would for an only child, because the one who comes to destroy you will suddenly attack.

<sup>27</sup>Jeremiah, test my people, as you would test metal, and find out what they are like.

<sup>28</sup>They are all stubborn rebels, hard as bronze and iron. They are all corrupt, going around and spreading gossip.

<sup>29</sup>The furnace burns fiercely, but the waste metals do not melt and run off. It is useless to go on refining my people, because those who are evil are not taken away.

<sup>30</sup>They will be called worthless dross, because I, the LORD, have rejected them.

**7**<sup>1</sup>The LORD sent me to the gate of the Temple where the people of Judah went in to worship. He told me to stand there and announce what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, had to say to them: Change the way you are living and the things you are doing, and I will let you go on living here.

<sup>2</sup>(7: 1)

<sup>3</sup> (7:1)

<sup>4</sup> Stop believing those deceitful words, We are safe! This is the LORD's Temple, this is the LORD's Temple, this is the LORD's Temple!

<sup>5</sup> Change the way you are living and stop doing the things you are doing. Be fair in your treatment of one another.

<sup>6</sup> Stop taking advantage of aliens, orphans, and widows. Stop killing innocent people in this land. Stop worshiping other gods, for that will destroy you.

<sup>7</sup> If you change, I will let you go on living here in the land which I gave your ancestors as a permanent possession.

<sup>8</sup> Look, you put your trust in deceitful words.

<sup>9</sup> You steal, murder, commit adultery, tell lies under oath, offer sacrifices to Baal, and worship gods that you had not known before.

<sup>10</sup> You do these things I hate, and then you come and stand in my presence, in my own Temple, and say, We are safe!

<sup>11</sup> Do you think that my Temple is a hiding place for robbers? I have seen what you are doing.

<sup>12</sup>Go to Shiloh, the first place where I chose to be worshiped, and see what I did to it because of the sins of my people Israel.

<sup>13</sup>You have committed all these sins, and even though I spoke to you over and over again, you refused to listen. You would not answer when I called you.

<sup>14</sup>And so, what I did to Shiloh I will do to this Temple of mine, in which you trust. Here in this place that I gave to your ancestors and you, I will do the same thing that I did to Shiloh.

<sup>15</sup>I will drive you out of my sight as I drove out your relatives, the people of Israel. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD said, Jeremiah, do not pray for these people. Do not cry or pray on their behalf; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you.

<sup>17</sup>Don't you see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

<sup>18</sup>The children gather firewood, the men build fires, and the women mix dough to bake cakes for the goddess they call the Queen of Heaven. They also

pour out offerings of wine to other gods, in order to hurt me.

<sup>19</sup>But am I really the one they are hurting? No, they are hurting themselves and bringing shame on themselves.

<sup>20</sup>And so I, the Sovereign LORD, will pour out my fierce anger on this Temple. I will pour it out on people and animals alike, and even on the trees and the crops. My anger will be like a fire that no one can put out.

<sup>21</sup>My people, some sacrifices you burn completely on the altar, and some you are permitted to eat. But what I, the LORD, say is that you might as well eat them all.

<sup>22</sup>I gave your ancestors no commands about burnt offerings or any other kinds of sacrifices when I brought them out of Egypt.

<sup>23</sup>But I did command them to obey me, so that I would be their God and they would be my people. And I told them to live the way I had commanded them, so that things would go well for them.

<sup>24</sup>But they did not obey or pay any attention. Instead, they did whatever their stubborn and evil hearts told them

to do, and they became worse instead of better.

<sup>25</sup>From the day that your ancestors came out of Egypt until this very day I have kept on sending to you my servants, the prophets.

<sup>26</sup>Yet no one listened or paid any attention. Instead, you became more stubborn and rebellious than your ancestors.

<sup>27</sup>So, Jeremiah, you will speak all these words to my people, but they will not listen to you; you will call them, but they will not answer.

<sup>28</sup>You will tell them that their nation does not obey me, the LORD their God, or learn from their punishment. Faithfulness is dead. No longer is it even talked about.

<sup>29</sup>Mourn, people of Jerusalem; cut off your hair and throw it away. Sing a funeral song on the hilltops, because I, the LORD, am angry and have rejected my people.

<sup>30</sup>The people of Judah have done an evil thing. They have placed their idols, which I hate, in my Temple and have defiled it.

<sup>31</sup> In Hinnom Valley they have built an altar called Topheth, so that they can sacrifice their sons and daughters in the fire. I did not command them to do this -- it did not even enter my mind.

<sup>32</sup> And so, the time will come when it will no longer be called Topheth or Hinnom Valley, but Slaughter Valley. They will bury people there because there will be nowhere else to bury them.

<sup>33</sup> The corpses will be food for the birds and wild animals, and there will be no one to scare them off.

<sup>34</sup> The land will become a desert. In the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness and to the happy sounds of wedding feasts.

**8**<sup>1</sup> At that time the bones of the kings and of the officials of Judah, as well as the bones of the priests, of the prophets, and of the other people who lived in Jerusalem, will be taken out of their graves.

<sup>2</sup> Instead of being gathered and buried, their bones will be like manure lying on the ground. They will be spread out before the sun, the moon, and the stars,

which these people have loved and served, and which they have consulted and worshiped.

<sup>3</sup>And the people of this evil nation who survive, who live in the places where I have scattered them, will prefer to die rather than to go on living. I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD told me to say to his people, When someone falls down, doesn't he get back up? If someone misses the road, doesn't he turn back?

<sup>5</sup>Why then, my people, do you turn away from me without ever turning back? You cling to your idols and refuse to return to me.

<sup>6</sup>I listened carefully, but you did not speak the truth. Not one of you has been sorry for your wickedness; not one of you has asked, What have I done wrong? Each of you keep on going your own way, like a horse rushing into battle.

<sup>7</sup>Even storks know when it is time to return; doves, swallows, and thrushes know when it is time to migrate. But, my people, you do not know the laws by which I rule you.

<sup>8</sup>How can you say that you are wise and that you know my laws? Look, the laws have been changed by dishonest scribes.

<sup>9</sup>Your wise men are put to shame; they are confused and trapped. They have rejected my words; what wisdom do they have now?

<sup>10</sup>So I will give their fields to new owners and their wives to other men. Everyone, great and small, tries to make money dishonestly. Even prophets and priests cheat the people.

<sup>11</sup>They act as if my people's wounds were only scratches. All is well, they say, when all is not well.

<sup>12</sup>My people, were you ashamed because you did these disgusting things? No, you were not ashamed at all; you don't even know how to blush! And so you will fall as others have fallen; when I punish you, that will be the end of you. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>13</sup>I wanted to gather my people, as a farmer gathers a harvest; but they are like a vine with no grapes, like a fig tree with no figs; even the leaves



have withered. Therefore, I have allowed outsiders to take over the land.

<sup>14</sup>Why are we sitting still? God's people ask. Come on, we will run to the fortified cities and die there. The LORD our God has condemned us to die; he has given us poison to drink, because we have sinned against him.

<sup>15</sup>We hoped for peace and a time of healing, but it was no use; terror came instead.

<sup>16</sup>Our enemies are already in the city of Dan; we hear the snorting of their horses. The whole land trembles when their horses neigh. Our enemies have come to destroy our land and everything in it, our city and all its people.

<sup>17</sup>Watch out! the LORD says, I am sending snakes among you, poisonous snakes that cannot be charmed, and they will bite you.

<sup>18</sup>My sorrow cannot be healed; I am sick at heart.

<sup>19</sup>Listen! Throughout the land I hear my people crying out, Is the LORD no longer in Zion? Is Zion's king no longer there? The LORD, their king, replies, Why have you made me angry by worshiping

your idols and by bowing down to your useless foreign gods?

<sup>20</sup>The people cry out, The summer is gone, the harvest is over, but we have not been saved.

<sup>21</sup>My heart has been crushed because my people are crushed; I mourn; I am completely dismayed.

<sup>22</sup>Is there no medicine in Gilead? Are there no doctors there? Why, then, have my people not been healed?

**9**<sup>1</sup>I wish my head were a well of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I could cry day and night for my people who have been killed.

<sup>2</sup>I wish I had a place to stay in the desert where I could get away from my people. They are all unfaithful, a mob of traitors.

<sup>3</sup>They are always ready to tell lies; dishonesty instead of truth rules the land. The LORD says, My people do one evil thing after another and do not acknowledge me as their God.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone must be on guard against their friends, and no one can trust their relatives; for all relatives are as deceitful

as Jacob, and everyone slanders their friends.

<sup>5</sup>They all mislead their friends, and no one tells the truth; they have taught their tongues to lie and will not give up their sinning. They do one violent thing after another, and one deceitful act follows another. The LORD says that his people reject him.

<sup>6</sup>(9: 5)

<sup>7</sup>Because of this the LORD Almighty says, I will refine my people like metal and put them to the test. My people have done evil -- what else can I do with them?

<sup>8</sup>Their tongues are like deadly arrows; they always tell lies. Everyone speaks friendly words to their neighbors, but they are really setting a trap for them.

<sup>9</sup>Will I not punish them for these things? Will I not take revenge on a nation like this? I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>10</sup>I said, I will mourn for the mountains and weep for the pastures, because they have dried up, and no one travels through them. The sound of livestock is

no longer heard; birds and wild animals have fled and gone.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, I will make Jerusalem a pile of ruins, a place where jackals live; the cities of Judah will become a desert, a place where no one lives.

<sup>12</sup>I asked, LORD, why is the land devastated and dry as a desert, so that no one travels through it? Who is wise enough to understand this? To whom have you explained it so that they can tell others?

<sup>13</sup>The LORD answered, This has happened because my people have abandoned the teaching that I gave them. They have not obeyed me or done what I told them.

<sup>14</sup>Instead, they have been stubborn and have worshiped the idols of Baal as their ancestors taught them to do.

<sup>15</sup>So then, listen to what I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, will do: I will give my people bitter plants to eat and poison to drink.

<sup>16</sup>I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their ancestors have heard about, and I will send armies

against them until I have completely destroyed them.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD Almighty said, Think about what is happening! Call for the mourners to come, for the women who sing funeral songs.

<sup>18</sup>The people said, Tell them to hurry and sing a funeral song for us, until our eyes fill with tears, and our eyelids are wet from crying.

<sup>19</sup>Listen to the sound of crying in Zion: We are ruined! We are completely disgraced! We must leave our land; our homes have been torn down.

<sup>20</sup>I said, Listen to the LORD, you women, and pay attention to his words. Teach your daughters how to mourn, and your friends how to sing a funeral song.

<sup>21</sup>Death has come in through our windows and entered our palaces; it has cut down the children in the streets and the young men in the marketplaces.

<sup>22</sup>Dead bodies are scattered everywhere, like piles of manure on the fields, like grain cut and left behind by the reapers, grain that no one gathers. This is what the LORD has told me to say.

<sup>23</sup>The LORD says, The wise should not boast of their wisdom, nor the strong of their strength, nor the rich of their wealth.

<sup>24</sup>If any want to boast, they should boast that they know and understand me, because my love is constant, and I do what is just and right. These are the things that please me. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>25</sup>The LORD says, The time is coming when I will punish the people of Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and the desert people, who have their hair cut short. All these people are circumcised, but have not kept the covenant it symbolizes. None of these people and none of the people of Israel have kept my covenant.

<sup>26</sup>(9: 25)

**10**<sup>1</sup> People of Israel, listen to the message that the LORD has for you.

<sup>2</sup>He says, Do not follow the ways of other nations; do not be disturbed by unusual sights in the sky, even though other nations are terrified.

<sup>3</sup>The religion of these people is worthless. A tree is cut down in the forest; it is carved by the tools of the woodworker

<sup>4</sup>and decorated with silver and gold. It is fastened down with nails to keep it from falling over.

<sup>5</sup>Such idols are like scarecrows in a field of melons; they cannot speak; they have to be carried because they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them: they can cause you no harm, and they can do you no good.

<sup>6</sup>LORD, there is no one like you; you are mighty, and your name is great and powerful.

<sup>7</sup>Who would not honor you, the king of all nations? You deserve to be honored. There is no one like you among all the wise men of the nations or among any of their kings.

<sup>8</sup>All of them are stupid and foolish. What can they learn from wooden idols?

<sup>9</sup>Their idols are covered with silver from Spain and with gold from Uphaz, all the work of artists; they are dressed in violet and purple cloth woven by skilled weavers.

<sup>10</sup>But you, LORD, are the true God, you are the living God and the eternal king. When you are angry, the world trembles; the nations cannot endure your anger.

<sup>11</sup>(You people must tell them that the gods who did not make the earth and the sky will be destroyed. They will no longer exist anywhere on earth.)

<sup>12</sup>The LORD made the earth by his power; by his wisdom he created the world and stretched out the heavens.

<sup>13</sup>At his command the waters above the sky roar; he brings clouds from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning flash in the rain and sends the wind from his storeroom.

<sup>14</sup>At the sight of this, people feel stupid and senseless; those who make idols are disillusioned, because the gods they make are false and lifeless.

<sup>15</sup>They are worthless and should be despised; they will be destroyed when the LORD comes to deal with them.

<sup>16</sup>The God of Jacob is not like them; he is the one who made everything, and he has chosen Israel to be his very own people. The LORD Almighty is his name.



<sup>17</sup> People of Jerusalem, you are under siege! Gather up your belongings.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD is going to throw you out of this land; he is going to crush you until not one of you is left. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>19</sup> The people of Jerusalem cried out, How badly we are hurt! Our wounds will not heal. And we thought this was something we could endure!

<sup>20</sup> Our tents are ruined; the ropes that held them have broken. Our children have all gone away; there is no one left to put up our tents again; there is no one to hang their curtains.

<sup>21</sup> I answered, Our leaders are stupid; they do not ask the LORD for guidance. This is why they have failed, and our people have been scattered.

<sup>22</sup> Listen! News has come! There is a great commotion in a nation to the north; its army will turn the cities of Judah into a desert, a place where jackals live.

<sup>23</sup> LORD, I know that none of us are in charge of our own destiny; none of us have control over our own life.

<sup>24</sup> Correct your people, LORD, but do not be too hard on us or punish us when you are angry; that would be the end of us.

<sup>25</sup> Turn your anger on the nations that do not worship you and on the people who reject you. They have killed your people; they have destroyed us completely and left our country in ruins.

**11** <sup>1</sup> The LORD said to me,  
<sup>2</sup> Listen to the terms of the covenant. Tell the people of Judah and of Jerusalem

<sup>3</sup> that I, the LORD God of Israel, have placed a curse on everyone who does not obey the terms of this covenant.

<sup>4</sup> It is the covenant I made with their ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, the land that was like a blazing furnace to them. I told them to obey me and to do everything that I had commanded. I told them that if they obeyed, they would be my people and I would be their God.

<sup>5</sup> Then I would keep the promise I made to their ancestors that I would give them the rich and fertile land which they now have. I said, Yes, LORD.

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said to me, Go to the cities of Judah and to the streets of Jerusalem. Proclaim my message there and tell the people to listen to the terms of the covenant and to obey them.

<sup>7</sup>When I brought their ancestors out of Egypt, I solemnly warned them to obey me, and I have kept on warning the people until this day.

<sup>8</sup>But they did not listen or obey. Instead, everyone continued to be as stubborn and evil as ever. I had commanded them to keep the covenant, but they refused. So I brought on them all the punishments described in it.

<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to me, The people of Judah and of Jerusalem are plotting against me.

<sup>10</sup>They have gone back to the sins of their ancestors, who refused to do what I said; they have worshiped other gods. Both Israel and Judah have broken the covenant that I made with their ancestors.

<sup>11</sup>So now I, the LORD, warn them that I am going to bring destruction on them, and they will not escape. And when they

cry out to me for help, I will not listen to them.

<sup>12</sup>Then the people of Judah and of Jerusalem will go to the gods to whom they offer sacrifices and will cry out to them for help. But those gods will not be able to save them when this destruction comes.

<sup>13</sup>The people of Judah have as many gods as they have cities, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem have set up as many altars for sacrifices to that disgusting god Baal as there are streets in the city.

<sup>14</sup>Jeremiah, don't pray to me or plead with me on behalf of these people. When they are in trouble and call to me for help, I will not listen to them.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD says, The people I love are doing evil things. What right do they have to be in my Temple? Do they think they can prevent disaster by making promises and by offering animal sacrifices? Will they then rejoice?

<sup>16</sup>I once called them a leafy olive tree, full of beautiful fruit; but now, with a roar like thunder I will set its leaves on fire and break its branches.

<sup>17</sup>I, the LORD Almighty, planted Israel and Judah; but now I threaten them with disaster. They have brought this on themselves because they have done wrong; they have made me angry by offering sacrifices to Baal.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD informed me of the plots that my enemies were making against me.

<sup>19</sup>I was like a trusting lamb taken out to be killed, and I did not know that it was against me that they were planning evil things. They were saying, Let's chop down the tree while it is still healthy; let's kill him so that no one will remember him any more.

<sup>20</sup>Then I prayed, Almighty LORD, you are a just judge; you test people's thoughts and feelings. I have placed my cause in your hands; so let me watch you take revenge on these people.

<sup>21</sup>The people of Anathoth wanted me killed, and they told me that they would kill me if I kept on proclaiming the LORD's message.

<sup>22</sup>So the LORD Almighty said, I will punish them! Their young men will be

killed in war; their children will die of starvation.

<sup>23</sup>I have set a time for bringing disaster on the people of Anathoth, and when that time comes, none of them will survive.

**12**<sup>1</sup> LORD, if I argued my case with you, you would prove to be right. Yet I must question you about matters of justice. Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why do dishonest people succeed?

<sup>2</sup>You plant them, and they take root; they grow and bear fruit. They always speak well of you, yet they do not really care about you.

<sup>3</sup>But, LORD, you know me; you see what I do and how I love you. Drag these evil people away like sheep to be butchered; guard them until it is time for them to be slaughtered.

<sup>4</sup>How long will our land be dry, and the grass in every field be withered? Animals and birds are dying because of the wickedness of our people, people who say, God doesn't see what we are doing.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD said, Jeremiah, if you get tired racing against people, how can you

race against horses? If you can't even stand up in open country, how will you manage in the jungle by the Jordan?

<sup>6</sup>Even your relatives, members of your own family, have betrayed you; they join in the attacks against you. Do not trust them, even though they speak friendly words.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD says, I have abandoned Israel; I have rejected my chosen nation. I have given the people I love into the power of their enemies.

<sup>8</sup>My chosen people have turned against me; like a lion in the forest they have roared at me, and so I hate them.

<sup>9</sup>My chosen people are like a bird attacked from all sides by hawks. Call the wild animals to come and join in the feast!

<sup>10</sup>Many foreign rulers have destroyed my vineyard; they have trampled down my fields; they have turned my lovely land into a desert.

<sup>11</sup>They have made it a wasteland; it lies desolate before me. The whole land has become a desert, and no one cares.

<sup>12</sup>Across all the desert highlands people have come to plunder. I have sent war to

destroy the entire land; no one can live in peace.

<sup>13</sup>My people planted wheat, but gathered weeds; they have worked hard, but got nothing for it. Because of my fierce anger their crops have failed.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD says, I have something to say about Israel's neighbors who have ruined the land I gave to my people Israel. I will take those wicked people away from their countries like an uprooted plant, and I will rescue Judah from them.

<sup>15</sup>But after I have taken them away, I will have mercy on them; I will bring each nation back to its own land and to its own country.

<sup>16</sup>If with all their hearts they will accept the religion of my people and will swear, 'As the LORD lives' -- as they once taught my people to swear by Baal -- then they will also be a part of my people and will prosper.

<sup>17</sup>But if any nation will not obey, then I will completely uproot it and destroy it. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**13**<sup>1</sup>The LORD told me to go and buy myself some linen shorts and to



put them on; but he told me not to put them in water.

<sup>2</sup>So I bought them and put them on.

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD spoke to me again and said,

<sup>4</sup>Go to the Euphrates River and hide the shorts in a hole in the rocks.

<sup>5</sup>So I went and hid them near the Euphrates.

<sup>6</sup>Some time later the LORD told me to go back to the Euphrates and get the shorts.

<sup>7</sup>So I went back, and when I found the place where I had hidden them, I saw that they were ruined and were no longer any good.

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD spoke to me again. He said,

<sup>9</sup>This is how I will destroy the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup>These evil people have refused to obey me. They have been as stubborn and wicked as ever, and have worshiped and served other gods. So then, they will become like these shorts that are no longer any good.

<sup>11</sup>Just as shorts fit tightly around the waist, so I intended all the people of

Israel and Judah to hold tightly to me. I did this so that they would be my people and would bring praise and honor to my name; but they would not obey me.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD God said to me, Jeremiah, tell the people of Israel that every wine jar should be filled with wine. They will answer that they know every wine jar should be filled with wine.

<sup>13</sup>Then tell them that I, the LORD, am going to fill the people in this land with wine until they are drunk: the kings, who are David's descendants, the priests, the prophets, and all the people of Jerusalem.

<sup>14</sup>Then I will smash them like jars against one another, old and young alike. No pity, compassion, or mercy will stop me from killing them.

<sup>15</sup>People of Israel, the LORD has spoken! Be humble and listen to him.

<sup>16</sup>Honor the LORD, your God, before he brings darkness, and you stumble on the mountains; before he turns into deep darkness the light you hoped for.

<sup>17</sup>If you will not listen, I will cry in secret because of your pride; I will cry bitterly, and my tears will flow because

the LORD's people have been taken away as captives.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD said to me, Tell the king and his mother to come down from their thrones, because their beautiful crowns have fallen from their heads.

<sup>19</sup>The towns of southern Judah are under siege; no one can get through to them. All the people of Judah have been taken away into exile.

<sup>20</sup>Jerusalem, look! Your enemies are coming down from the north! Where are the people entrusted to your care, your people you were so proud of?

<sup>21</sup>What will you say when people you thought were your friends conquer you and rule over you? You will be in pain like a woman giving birth.

<sup>22</sup>If you ask why all this has happened to you -- why your clothes have been torn off and you have been raped -- it is because your sin is so terrible.

<sup>23</sup>Can people change the color of their skin, or a leopard remove its spots? If they could, then you that do nothing but evil could learn to do what is right.

<sup>24</sup>The LORD will scatter you like straw that is blown away by the desert wind.

<sup>25</sup>He has said that this will be your fate. This is what he has decided to do with you, because you have forgotten him and have trusted in false gods.

<sup>26</sup>The LORD himself will strip off your clothes and expose you to shame.

<sup>27</sup>He has seen you do the things he hates. He has seen you go after pagan gods on the hills and in the fields, like a man lusting after his neighbor's wife or like a stallion after a mare. People of Jerusalem, you are doomed! When will you ever be pure?

**14**<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to me concerning the drought,

<sup>2</sup>Judah is in mourning; its cities are dying, its people lie on the ground in sorrow, and Jerusalem cries out for help.

<sup>3</sup>The rich people send their servants for water; they go to the cisterns, but find no water; they come back with their jars empty. Discouraged and confused, they hide their faces.

<sup>4</sup>Because there is no rain and the ground is dried up, the farmers are sick at heart; they hide their faces.

<sup>5</sup>In the field the mother deer abandons her newborn fawn because there is no grass.

<sup>6</sup>The wild donkeys stand on the hilltops and pant for breath like jackals; their eyesight fails them because they have no food.

<sup>7</sup>My people cry out to me, Even though our sins accuse us, help us, LORD, as you have promised. We have turned away from you many times; we have sinned against you.

<sup>8</sup>You are Israel's only hope; you are the one who saves us from disaster. Why are you like a stranger in our land, like a traveler who stays for only one night?

<sup>9</sup>Why are you like someone taken by surprise, like a soldier powerless to help? Surely, LORD, you are with us! We are your people; do not abandon us.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says about these people, They love to run away from me, and they will not control themselves. So I am not pleased with them. I will remember the wrongs they have done and punish them because of their sins.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD said to me, Do not ask me to help these people.

<sup>12</sup>Even if they fast, I will not listen to their cry for help; and even if they offer me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not be pleased with them. Instead, I will kill them in war and by starvation and disease.

<sup>13</sup>Then I said, Sovereign LORD, you know that the prophets are telling the people that there will be no war or starvation, because you have promised, they say, that there will be only peace in our land.

<sup>14</sup>But the LORD replied, The prophets are telling lies in my name; I did not send them, nor did I give them any orders or speak one word to them. The visions they talk about have not come from me; their predictions are worthless things that they have imagined.

<sup>15</sup>I, the LORD, tell you what I am going to do to those prophets whom I did not send but who speak in my name and say war and starvation will not strike this land -- I will kill them in war and by starvation.

<sup>16</sup>The people to whom they have said these things will be killed in the same way. Their bodies will be thrown out into

the streets of Jerusalem, and there will be no one to bury them. This will happen to all of them -- including their wives, their sons, and their daughters. I will make them pay for their wickedness.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD commanded me to tell the people about my sorrow and to say: May my eyes flow with tears day and night, may I never stop weeping, for my people are deeply wounded and are badly hurt.

<sup>18</sup>When I go out in the fields, I see the bodies of men killed in war; when I go into the towns, I see people starving to death. Prophets and priests carry on their work, but they don't know what they are doing.

<sup>19</sup>LORD, have you completely rejected Judah? Do you hate the people of Zion? Why have you hurt us so badly that we cannot be healed? We looked for peace, but nothing good happened; we hoped for healing, but terror came instead.

<sup>20</sup>We have sinned against you, LORD; we confess our own sins and the sins of our ancestors.

<sup>21</sup>Remember your promises and do not despise us; do not bring disgrace on Jerusalem, the place of your glorious

throne. Do not break the covenant you made with us.

<sup>22</sup>None of the idols of the nations can send rain; the sky by itself cannot make showers fall. We have put our hope in you, O LORD our God, because you are the one who does these things.

**15**<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD said to me, Even if Moses and Samuel were standing here pleading with me, I would not show these people any mercy. Make them go away; make them get out of my sight.

<sup>2</sup>When they ask you where they should go, tell them that I have said: Some are doomed to die by disease -- that's where they will go! Others are doomed to die in war -- that's where they will go! Some are doomed to die of starvation -- that's where they will go! Others are doomed to be taken away as prisoners -- that's where they will go!

<sup>3</sup>I, the LORD, have decided that four terrible things will happen to them: they will be killed in war; their bodies will be dragged off by dogs; birds will eat them, and wild animals will devour what is left over.



<sup>4</sup>I will make all the people of the world horrified at them because of what Hezekiah's son Manasseh did in Jerusalem when he was king of Judah.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD says, Who will pity you, people of Jerusalem, and who will grieve over you? Who will stop long enough to ask how you are?

<sup>6</sup>You people have rejected me; you have turned your backs on me. So I reached out and crushed you because I was tired of controlling my anger.

<sup>7</sup>In every town in the land I threw you to the wind like straw. I destroyed you, my people, I killed your children because you did not stop your evil ways.

<sup>8</sup>There are more widows in your land than grains of sand by the sea. I killed your young men in their prime and made their mothers suffer. I suddenly struck them with anguish and terror.

<sup>9</sup>The mother who lost her seven children has fainted, gasping for breath. Her daylight has turned to darkness; she is disgraced and sick at heart. I will let your enemies kill those of you who are still alive. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>10</sup>What an unhappy man I am! Why did my mother bring me into the world? I have to quarrel and argue with everyone in the land. I have not lent any money or borrowed any; yet everyone curses me.

<sup>11</sup>LORD, may all their curses come true if I have not served you well, if I have not pleaded with you on behalf of my enemies when they were in trouble and distress.

<sup>12</sup>(No one can break iron, especially the iron from the north that is mixed with bronze.)

<sup>13</sup>The LORD said to me, I will send enemies to carry away the wealth and treasures of my people, in order to punish them for the sins they have committed throughout the land.

<sup>14</sup>I will make them serve their enemies in a land they know nothing about, because my anger is like fire, and it will burn forever.

<sup>15</sup>Then I said, LORD, you understand. Remember me and help me. Let me have revenge on those who persecute me. Do not be so patient with them that they succeed in killing me. Remember that it is for your sake that I am insulted.

<sup>16</sup>You spoke to me, and I listened to every word. I belong to you, LORD God Almighty, and so your words filled my heart with joy and happiness.

<sup>17</sup>I did not spend my time with other people, laughing and having a good time. In obedience to your orders I stayed by myself and was filled with anger.

<sup>18</sup>Why do I keep on suffering? Why are my wounds incurable? Why won't they heal? Do you intend to disappoint me like a stream that goes dry in the summer?

<sup>19</sup>To this the LORD replied, If you return, I will take you back, and you will be my servant again. If instead of talking nonsense you proclaim a worthwhile message, you will be my prophet again. The people will come back to you, and you will not need to go to them.

<sup>20</sup>I will make you like a solid bronze wall as far as they are concerned. They will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. I will be with you to protect you and keep you safe.

<sup>21</sup>I will rescue you from the power of wicked and violent people. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**16**<sup>1</sup> Again the LORD spoke to me and said,

<sup>2</sup> Do not marry or have children in a place like this.

<sup>3</sup> I will tell you what is going to happen to the children who are born here and to their parents.

<sup>4</sup> They will die of terrible diseases, and no one will mourn for them or bury them. Their bodies will lie like piles of manure on the ground. They will be killed in war or die of starvation, and their bodies will be food for the birds and the wild animals.

<sup>5</sup> You must not enter a house where there is mourning. Do not grieve for anyone. I will no longer bless my people with peace or show them love and mercy.

<sup>6</sup> The rich and the poor will die in this land, but no one will bury them or mourn for them. Not one of you will gash yourself or shave your head to show your grief.

<sup>7</sup> No one will eat or drink with anyone to offer comfort when a loved one dies. No one will show sympathy, not even for someone who has lost a father or mother.

<sup>8</sup>Do not enter a house where people are feasting. Do not sit down with them to eat and drink.

<sup>9</sup>Listen to what I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, have to say. I will silence the sounds of joy and gladness and the happy sounds of wedding feasts. The people here will live to see this happen.

<sup>10</sup>When you tell them all this, they will ask you why I have decided to punish them so harshly. They will ask what crime they are guilty of and what sin they have committed against the LORD their God.

<sup>11</sup>Then tell them that the LORD has said, Your ancestors turned away from me and worshiped and served other gods. They abandoned me and did not obey my teachings.

<sup>12</sup>But you have done even worse than your ancestors. All of you are stubborn and evil, and you do not obey me.

<sup>13</sup>So then, I will throw you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your ancestors have ever known. And there you will serve other gods day and night, and I will show you no mercy.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD says, The time is coming when people will no longer swear by me as the living God who brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

<sup>15</sup>Instead, they will swear by me as the living God who brought the people of Israel out of a northern land and out of all the other countries where I had scattered them. I will bring them back to their own country, to the land that I gave their ancestors. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD says, I am sending for many fishermen to come and catch these people. Then I will send for many hunters to hunt them down on every mountain and hill and in the caves among the rocks.

<sup>17</sup>I see everything they do. Nothing is hidden from me; their sins do not escape my sight.

<sup>18</sup>I will make them pay double for their sin and wickedness, because they have defiled my land with idols that are as lifeless as corpses, and have filled it with their false gods.

<sup>19</sup>LORD, you are the one who protects me and gives me strength; you help me

in times of trouble. Nations will come to you from the ends of the earth and say, Our ancestors had nothing but false gods, nothing but useless idols.

<sup>20</sup>Can people make their own gods? No, if they did, those would not really be gods.

<sup>21</sup>So then, says the LORD, once and for all I will make the nations know my power and my might; they will know that I am the LORD.

**17** <sup>1</sup>The LORD says, People of Judah, your sin is written with an iron pen; it is engraved on your hearts with a diamond point and carved on the corners of your altars.

<sup>2</sup>Your people worship at the altars and the symbols that have been set up for the goddess Asherah by every green tree and on the hilltops

<sup>3</sup>and on the mountains in the open country. I will have your enemies take away your wealth and your treasures because of all the sins you have committed throughout your land.

<sup>4</sup>You will have to give up the land I gave you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land you know nothing

about, because my anger is like a fire, and it will burn forever.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD says, I will condemn those who turn away from me and put their trust in human beings, in the strength of mortals.

<sup>6</sup>He is like a bush in the desert, which grows in the dry wasteland, on salty ground where nothing else grows. Nothing good ever happens to him.

<sup>7</sup>But I will bless the person who puts his trust in me.

<sup>8</sup>He is like a tree growing near a stream and sending out roots to the water. It is not afraid when hot weather comes, because its leaves stay green; it has no worries when there is no rain; it keeps on bearing fruit.

<sup>9</sup>Who can understand the human heart? There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to be healed.

<sup>10</sup>I, the LORD, search the minds and test the hearts of people. I treat each of them according to the way they live, according to what they do.

<sup>11</sup>The person who gets money dishonestly is like a bird that hatches eggs it didn't lay. In the prime of life he



will lose his riches, and in the end he is nothing but a fool.

<sup>12</sup>Our Temple is like a glorious throne, standing on a high mountain from the beginning.

<sup>13</sup>LORD, you are Israel's hope; all who abandon you will be put to shame. They will disappear like names written in the dust, because they have abandoned you, the LORD, the spring of fresh water.

<sup>14</sup>LORD, heal me and I will be completely well; rescue me and I will be perfectly safe. You are the one I praise!

<sup>15</sup>The people say to me, Where are those threats the LORD made against us? Let him carry them out now!

<sup>16</sup>But, LORD, I never urged you to bring disaster on them; I did not wish a time of trouble for them. LORD, you know this; you know what I have said.

<sup>17</sup>Do not be a terror to me; you are my place of safety when trouble comes.

<sup>18</sup>Bring disgrace on those who persecute me, but spare me, LORD. Fill them with terror, but do not terrify me. Bring disaster on them and break them to pieces.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD said to me, Jeremiah, go and announce my message at the People's Gate, through which the kings of Judah enter and leave the city; then go to all the other gates of Jerusalem.

<sup>20</sup>Tell the kings and all the people of Judah and everyone who lives in Jerusalem and enters these gates, to listen to what I say.

<sup>21</sup>Tell them that if they love their lives, they must not carry any load on the Sabbath; they must not carry anything in through the gates of Jerusalem

<sup>22</sup>or carry anything out of their houses on the Sabbath. They must not work on the Sabbath; they must observe it as a sacred day, as I commanded their ancestors.

<sup>23</sup>Their ancestors did not listen to me or pay any attention. Instead, they became stubborn; they would not obey me or learn from me.

<sup>24</sup>Tell these people that they must obey all my commands. They must not carry any load in through the gates of this city on the Sabbath. They must observe the Sabbath as a sacred day and must not do any work at all.

<sup>25</sup> Then their kings and princes will enter the gates of Jerusalem and have the same royal power that David had. Together with the people of Judah and of Jerusalem, they will ride in chariots and on horses, and the city of Jerusalem will always be filled with people.

<sup>26</sup> People will come from the towns of Judah and from the villages around Jerusalem; they will come from the territory of Benjamin, from the foothills, from the mountains, and from southern Judah. They will bring to my Temple burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, as well as thank offerings.

<sup>27</sup> But they must obey me and observe the Sabbath as a sacred day. They must not carry any load through the gates of Jerusalem on that day, for if they do, I will set the gates of Jerusalem on fire. Fire will burn down the palaces of Jerusalem, and no one will be able to put it out.

**18** <sup>1</sup> The LORD said to me,  
<sup>2</sup> Go down to the potter's house,  
where I will give you my message.

<sup>3</sup> So I went there and saw the potter working at his wheel.

<sup>4</sup> Whenever a piece of pottery turned out imperfect, he would take the clay and make it into something else.

<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD said to me,

<sup>6</sup> Don't I have the right to do with you people of Israel what the potter did with the clay? You are in my hands just like clay in the potter's hands.

<sup>7</sup> If at any time I say that I am going to uproot, break down, or destroy any nation or kingdom,

<sup>8</sup> but then that nation turns from its evil, I will not do what I said I would.

<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, if I say that I am going to plant or build up any nation or kingdom,

<sup>10</sup> but then that nation disobeys me and does evil, I will not do what I said I would.

<sup>11</sup> Now then, tell the people of Judah and of Jerusalem that I am making plans against them and getting ready to punish them. Tell them to stop living sinful lives -- to change their ways and the things they are doing.

<sup>12</sup>They will answer, No, why should we? We will all be just as stubborn and evil as we want to be.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD says, Ask every nation if such a thing has ever happened before. The people of Israel have done a terrible thing!

<sup>14</sup>Are Lebanon's rocky heights ever without snow? Do its cool mountain streams ever run dry?

<sup>15</sup>Yet my people have forgotten me; they burn incense to idols. They have stumbled in the way they should go; they no longer follow the old ways; they walk on unmarked paths.

<sup>16</sup>They have made this land a thing of horror, to be despised forever. All who pass by will be shocked at what they see; they will shake their heads in amazement.

<sup>17</sup>I will scatter my people before their enemies, like dust blown by the east wind. I will turn my back on them; I will not help them when the disaster comes.

<sup>18</sup>Then the people said, Let's do something about Jeremiah! There will always be priests to instruct us, the wise to give us counsel, and prophets

to proclaim God's message. Let's bring charges against him and stop listening to what he says.

<sup>19</sup>So I prayed, LORD, hear what I am saying and listen to what my enemies are saying about me.

<sup>20</sup>Is evil the payment for good? Yet they have dug a pit for me to fall in. Remember how I came to you and spoke on their behalf, so that you would not deal with them in anger.

<sup>21</sup>But now, LORD, let their children starve to death; let them be killed in war. Let the women lose their husbands and children; let the men die of disease and the young men be killed in battle.

<sup>22</sup>Send a mob to plunder their homes without warning; make them cry out in terror. They have dug a pit for me to fall in and have set traps to catch me.

<sup>23</sup>But, LORD, you know all their plots to kill me. Do not forgive their evil or pardon their sin. Throw them down in defeat and deal with them while you are angry.

**19**<sup>1</sup>The LORD told me to go and buy a clay jar. He also told me to take

some of the elders of the people and some of the older priests,

<sup>2</sup>and to go through Potsherd Gate out to Hinnom Valley. There I was to proclaim the message that he would give me.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD told me to say, Kings of Judah and people of Jerusalem, listen to what I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, have to say. I am going to bring such a disaster on this place that everyone who hears about it will be stunned.

<sup>4</sup>I am going to do this because the people have abandoned me and defiled this place by offering sacrifices here to other gods -- gods that neither they nor their ancestors nor the kings of Judah have known anything about. They have filled this place with the blood of innocent people,

<sup>5</sup>and they have built altars for Baal in order to burn their children in the fire as sacrifices. I never commanded them to do this; it never even entered my mind.

<sup>6</sup>So then, the time will come when this place will no longer be called Topheth or

Hinnom Valley. Instead, it will be known as Slaughter Valley.

<sup>7</sup>In this place I will frustrate all the plans of the people of Judah and Jerusalem. I will let their enemies triumph over them and kill them in battle. I will give their corpses to the birds and the wild animals as food.

<sup>8</sup>I will bring such terrible destruction on this city that everyone who passes by will be shocked and amazed.

<sup>9</sup>The enemy will surround the city and try to kill its people. The siege will be so terrible that the people inside the city will eat one another and even their own children.

<sup>10</sup>Then the LORD told me to break the jar in front of those who had gone with me

<sup>11</sup>and to tell them that the LORD Almighty had said, I will break this people and this city, and it will be like this broken clay jar that cannot be put together again. People will bury their dead even in Topheth because there will be nowhere else to bury them.

<sup>12</sup>I promise that I will make this city and its inhabitants like Topheth.



<sup>13</sup>The houses of Jerusalem, the houses of the kings of Judah, and indeed all the houses on whose roofs incense has been burned to the stars and where wine has been poured out as an offering to other gods -- they will all be as unclean as Topheth.

<sup>14</sup>Then I left Topheth, where the LORD had sent me to proclaim his message. I went and stood in the court of the Temple and told all the people

<sup>15</sup>that the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, had said, I am going to bring on this city and on every nearby town all the punishment that I said I would, because you are stubborn and will not listen to what I say.

**20**<sup>1</sup>When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, who was the chief officer of the Temple, heard me proclaim these things,

<sup>2</sup>he had me beaten and placed in chains near the upper Benjamin Gate in the Temple.

<sup>3</sup>The next morning, after Pashhur had released me from the chains, I said to him, The LORD did not name you

Pashhur. The name he has given you is Terror Everywhere.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD himself has said, I am going to make you a terror to yourself and to your friends, and you will see them all killed by the swords of their enemies. I am going to put all the people of Judah under the power of the king of Babylonia; he will take some away as prisoners to his country and put others to death.

<sup>5</sup>I will also let their enemies plunder all the wealth of this city and seize all its possessions and property, even the treasures of the kings of Judah, and carry everything off to Babylonia.

<sup>6</sup>As for you, Pashhur, you and all your family will also be captured and taken off to Babylonia. There you will die and be buried, along with all your friends to whom you have told so many lies.

<sup>7</sup>LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived. You are stronger than I am, and you have overpowered me. Everyone makes fun of me; they laugh at me all day long.

<sup>8</sup>Whenever I speak, I have to cry out and shout, Violence! Destruction! LORD,

I am ridiculed and scorned all the time because I proclaim your message.

<sup>9</sup>But when I say, I will forget the LORD and no longer speak in his name, then your message is like a fire burning deep within me. I try my best to hold it in, but can no longer keep it back.

<sup>10</sup>I hear everybody whispering, Terror is everywhere! So let's report him to the authorities! Even my close friends wait for my downfall. Perhaps he can be tricked, they say; then we can catch him and get revenge.

<sup>11</sup>But you, LORD, are on my side, strong and mighty, and those who persecute me will fail. They will be disgraced forever, because they cannot succeed. Their disgrace will never be forgotten.

<sup>12</sup>But, Almighty LORD, you test people justly; you know what is in their hearts and minds. So let me see you take revenge on my enemies, for I have placed my cause in your hands.

<sup>13</sup>Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD! He rescues the oppressed from the power of evil people.

<sup>14</sup>Curse the day I was born! Forget the day my mother gave me birth!

<sup>15</sup>Curse the one who made my father glad by bringing him the news, It's a boy! You have a son!

<sup>16</sup>May he be like those cities that the LORD destroyed without mercy. May he hear cries of pain in the morning and the battle alarm at noon,

<sup>17</sup>for not killing me before I was born. Then my mother's womb would have been my grave.

<sup>18</sup>Why was I born? Was it only to have trouble and sorrow, to end my life in disgrace?

**21** <sup>1</sup>King Zedekiah of Judah sent to me Pashhur son of Malchiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah with this request:

<sup>2</sup>Please speak to the LORD for us, because King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia and his army are besieging the city. Maybe the LORD will perform one of his miracles for us and force Nebuchadnezzar to retreat.

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD spoke to me, and I told those who had been sent to me

<sup>4</sup> to tell Zedekiah that the LORD, the God of Israel, had said, Zedekiah, I am going to defeat your army that is fighting against the king of Babylonia and his army. I will pile up your soldiers' weapons in the center of the city.

<sup>5</sup> I will fight against you with all my might, my anger, my wrath, and my fury.

<sup>6</sup> I will kill everyone living in this city; people and animals alike will die of a terrible disease.

<sup>7</sup> But as for you, your officials, and the people who survive the war, the famine, and the disease -- I will let all of you be captured by King Nebuchadnezzar and by your enemies, who want to kill you. Nebuchadnezzar will put you to death. He will not spare any of you or show mercy or pity to any of you. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>8</sup> Then the LORD told me to say to the people, Listen! I, the LORD, am giving you a choice between the way that leads to life and the way that leads to death.

<sup>9</sup> Anyone who stays in the city will be killed in war or by starvation or disease. But those who go out and surrender to the Babylonians, who are now attacking

the city, will not be killed; they will at least escape with their life.

<sup>10</sup>I have made up my mind not to spare this city, but to destroy it. It will be given over to the king of Babylonia, and he will burn it to the ground. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD told me to give this message to the royal house of Judah, the descendants of David: Listen to what I, the LORD, am saying. See that justice is done every day. Protect the person who is being cheated from the one who is cheating him. If you don't, the evil you are doing will make my anger burn like a fire that cannot be put out.

<sup>12</sup>(21:11)

<sup>13</sup>You, Jerusalem, are sitting high above the valleys, like a rock rising above the plain. But I will fight against you. You say that no one can attack you or break through your defenses.

<sup>14</sup>But I will punish you for what you have done. I will set your palace on fire, and the fire will burn down everything around it. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**22**<sup>1</sup>The LORD told me to go to the palace of the king of Judah, the

descendant of David, and there tell the king, his officials, and the people of Jerusalem to listen to what the LORD had said:

<sup>2</sup> (22: 1)

<sup>3</sup> I, the LORD, command you to do what is just and right. Protect the person who is being cheated from the one who is cheating him. Do not mistreat or oppress aliens, orphans, or widows; and do not kill innocent people in this holy place.

<sup>4</sup> If you really do as I have commanded, then David's descendants will continue to be kings. And they, together with their officials and their people, will continue to pass through the gates of this palace in chariots and on horses.

<sup>5</sup> But if you do not obey my commands, then I swear to you that this palace will fall into ruins. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>6</sup> To me, Judah's royal palace is as beautiful as the land of Gilead and as the Lebanon Mountains; but I will make it a desolate place where no one lives.

<sup>7</sup> I am sending men to destroy it. They will all bring their axes, cut down its beautiful cedar pillars, and throw them into the fire.

<sup>8</sup>Afterward many foreigners will pass by and ask one another why I, the LORD, have done such a thing to this great city.

<sup>9</sup>Then they will answer that it is because you have abandoned your covenant with me, your God, and have worshiped and served other gods.

<sup>10</sup>People of Judah, do not weep for King Josiah; do not mourn his death. But weep bitterly for Joahaz, his son; they are taking him away, never to return, never again to see the land where he was born.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says concerning Josiah's son Joahaz, who succeeded his father as king of Judah, He has gone away from here, never to return.

<sup>12</sup>He will die in the country where they have taken him, and he will never again see this land.

<sup>13</sup>Doomed is the one who builds his house by injustice and enlarges it by dishonesty; who makes his people work for nothing and does not pay their wages.

<sup>14</sup>Doomed is the one who says, I will build myself a mansion with spacious rooms upstairs. So he puts windows



in his house, panels it with cedar, and paints it red.

<sup>15</sup> Does it make you a better king if you build houses of cedar, finer than those of others? Your father enjoyed a full life. He was always just and fair, and he prospered in everything he did.

<sup>16</sup> He gave the poor a fair trial, and all went well with him. That is what it means to know the LORD.

<sup>17</sup> But you can only see your selfish interests; you kill the innocent and violently oppress your people. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>18</sup> So then, the LORD says about Josiah's son Jehoiakim, king of Judah, No one will mourn his death or say, How terrible, my friend, how terrible! No one will weep for him or cry, My lord! My king!

<sup>19</sup> With the funeral honors of a donkey, he will be dragged away and thrown outside Jerusalem's gates.

<sup>20</sup> People of Jerusalem, go to Lebanon and shout, go to the land of Bashan and cry; call out from the mountains of Moab, because all your allies have been defeated.

<sup>21</sup> The LORD spoke to you when you were prosperous, but you refused to listen. That is what you've done all your life; you never would obey the LORD.

<sup>22</sup> Your leaders will be blown away by the wind, your allies taken as prisoners of war, your city disgraced and put to shame because of all the evil you have done.

<sup>23</sup> You rest secure among the cedars brought from Lebanon; but how pitiful you'll be when pains strike you, pains like those of a woman in labor.

<sup>24</sup> The LORD said to King Jehoiachin, son of King Jehoiakim of Judah, As surely as I am the living God, even if you were the signet ring on my right hand, I would pull you off

<sup>25</sup> and give you to people you are afraid of, people who want to kill you. I will give you to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his soldiers.

<sup>26</sup> I am going to force you and your mother into exile. You will go to a country where neither of you was born, and both of you will die there.

<sup>27</sup> You will long to see this country again, but you will never return.

<sup>28</sup>I said, Has King Jehoiachin become like a broken jar that is thrown away and that no one wants? Is that why he and his children have been taken into exile to a land they know nothing about?

<sup>29</sup>O land, land, land! Listen to what the LORD has said:

<sup>30</sup>This man is condemned to lose his children, to be a man who will never succeed. He will have no descendants who will rule in Judah as David's successors. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**23**<sup>1</sup> How terrible will be the LORD's judgment on those rulers who destroy and scatter his people!

<sup>2</sup>This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the rulers who were supposed to take care of his people: You have not taken care of my people; you have scattered them and driven them away. Now I am going to punish you for the evil you have done.

<sup>3</sup>I will gather the rest of my people from the countries where I have scattered them, and I will bring them back to their homeland. They will have many children and increase in number.

<sup>4</sup> I will appoint rulers to take care of them. My people will no longer be afraid or terrified, and I will not punish them again. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD says, The time is coming when I will choose as king a righteous descendant of David. That king will rule wisely and do what is right and just throughout the land.

<sup>6</sup> When he is king, the people of Judah will be safe, and the people of Israel will live in peace. He will be called The LORD Our Salvation.

<sup>7</sup> The time is coming, says the LORD, when people will no longer swear by me as the living God who brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

<sup>8</sup> Instead, they will swear by me as the living God who brought the people of Israel out of a northern land and out of all the other countries where I had scattered them. Then they will live in their own land.

<sup>9</sup> My heart is crushed, and I am trembling. Because of the LORD, because of his holy words, I am like a man who is drunk, someone who has had too much wine.

<sup>10</sup>The land is full of people unfaithful to the LORD; they live wicked lives and misuse their power. Because of the LORD's curse the land mourns and the pastures are dry.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, The prophets and the priests are godless; I have caught them doing evil in the Temple itself.

<sup>12</sup>The paths they follow will be slippery and dark; I will make them stumble and fall. I am going to bring disaster on them; the time of their punishment is coming. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>13</sup>I have seen the sin of Samaria's prophets: they have spoken in the name of Baal and have led my people astray.

<sup>14</sup>But I have seen the prophets in Jerusalem do even worse: they commit adultery and tell lies; they help people to do wrong, so that no one stops doing what is evil. To me they are all as bad as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

<sup>15</sup>So then, this is what I, the LORD Almighty, say about the prophets of Jerusalem: I will give them bitter plants to eat and poison to drink, because they have spread ungodliness throughout the land.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD Almighty said to the people of Jerusalem, Do not listen to what the prophets say; they are filling you with false hopes. They tell you what they have imagined and not what I have said.

<sup>17</sup>To the people who refuse to listen to what I have said, they keep saying that all will go well with them. And they tell everyone who is stubborn that disaster will never touch them.

<sup>18</sup>I said, None of these prophets has ever known the LORD's secret thoughts. None of them has ever heard or understood his message, or ever listened or paid attention to what he said.

<sup>19</sup>His anger is a storm, a furious wind that will rage over the heads of the wicked,

<sup>20</sup>and it will not end until he has done everything he intends to do. In days to come his people will understand this clearly.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD said, I did not send these prophets, but even so they went. I did not give them any message, but still they spoke in my name.

<sup>22</sup>If they had known my secret thoughts, then they could have proclaimed my message to my people and could have made them give up the evil lives they live and the wicked things they do.

<sup>23</sup>I am a God who is everywhere and not in one place only.

<sup>24</sup>No one can hide where I cannot see them. Do you not know that I am everywhere in heaven and on earth?

<sup>25</sup>I know what those prophets have said who speak lies in my name and claim that I have given them my messages in their dreams.

<sup>26</sup>How much longer will those prophets mislead my people with the lies they have invented?

<sup>27</sup>They think that the dreams they tell will make my people forget me, just as their ancestors forgot me and turned to Baal.

<sup>28</sup>The prophet who has had a dream should say it is only a dream, but the prophet who has heard my message should proclaim that message faithfully. What good is straw compared with wheat?

<sup>29</sup> My message is like a fire and like a hammer that breaks rocks in pieces.

<sup>30</sup> I am against those prophets who take each other's words and proclaim them as my message.

<sup>31</sup> I am also against those prophets who speak their own words and claim they came from me.

<sup>32</sup> Listen to what I, the LORD, say! I am against the prophets who tell their dreams that are full of lies. They tell these dreams and lead my people astray with their lies and their boasting. I did not send them or order them to go, and they are of no help at all to the people. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>33</sup> The LORD said to me, Jeremiah, when one of my people or a prophet or a priest asks you, What is the LORD's message? you are to say, You are a burden to the LORD, and he is going to get rid of you.

<sup>34</sup> If any of my people or a prophet or a priest even uses the words the LORD's burden, I will punish them and their families.

<sup>35</sup> Instead, each one of them should ask their friends and their relatives, What



answer has the LORD given? What has the LORD said?

<sup>36</sup>So they must no longer use the words the LORD's burden, because if any of them do, I will make my message a real burden to them. The people have perverted the words of their God, the living God, the LORD Almighty.

<sup>37</sup>Jeremiah, ask the prophets, What answer did the LORD give you? What did the LORD say?

<sup>38</sup>And if they disobey my command and use the words the LORD's burden, then tell them that

<sup>39</sup>I will certainly pick them up and throw them far away from me, both them and the city that I gave to them and their ancestors.

<sup>40</sup>I will bring on them everlasting shame and disgrace that will never be forgotten.

**24**<sup>1</sup>The LORD showed me two baskets of figs placed in front of the Temple. (This was after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia had taken away Jehoiakim's son, King Jehoiachin of Judah, as a prisoner from Jerusalem to Babylonia, together with the leaders of

Judah, the craftworkers, and the skilled workers.)

<sup>2</sup>The first basket contained good figs, those that ripen early; the other one contained bad figs, too bad to eat.

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said to me, Jeremiah, what do you see? I answered, Figs. The good ones are very good, and the bad ones are very bad, too bad to eat.

<sup>4</sup>So the LORD said to me,

<sup>5</sup>I, the LORD, the God of Israel, consider that the people who were taken away to Babylonia are like these good figs, and I will treat them with kindness.

<sup>6</sup>I will watch over them and bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not pull them up.

<sup>7</sup>I will give them the desire to know that I am the LORD. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God, because they will return to me with all their heart.

<sup>8</sup>As for King Zedekiah of Judah, the politicians around him, and the rest of the people of Jerusalem who have stayed in this land or moved to Egypt -- I, the LORD, will treat them all like these figs that are too bad to be eaten.

<sup>9</sup>I will bring such a disaster on them that all the nations of the world will be terrified. People will make fun of them, make jokes about them, ridicule them, and use their name as a curse everywhere I scatter them.

<sup>10</sup>I will bring war, starvation, and disease on them until there is not one of them left in the land that I gave to them and their ancestors.

**25**<sup>1</sup>In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, I received a message from the LORD concerning all the people of Judah. (This was the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia.)

<sup>2</sup>I said to all the people of Judah and of Jerusalem,

<sup>3</sup>For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year that Josiah son of Amon was king of Judah until this very day, the LORD has spoken to me, and I have never failed to tell you what he said. But you have paid no attention.

<sup>4</sup>You would not listen or pay attention, even though the LORD has continued to send you his servants the prophets.

<sup>5</sup>They told you to turn from your wicked way of life and from the evil things you are doing, so that you could go on living in the land that the LORD gave you and your ancestors as a permanent possession.

<sup>6</sup>They told you not to worship and serve other gods and not to make the LORD angry by worshiping the idols you had made. If you had obeyed the LORD, then he would not have punished you.

<sup>7</sup>But the LORD himself says that you refused to listen to him. Instead, you made him angry with your idols and have brought his punishment on yourselves.

<sup>8</sup>So then, because you would not listen to him, the LORD Almighty says,

<sup>9</sup>I am going to send for all the peoples from the north and for my servant, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia. I am going to bring them to fight against Judah and its inhabitants and against all the neighboring nations. I am going to destroy this nation and its neighbors and leave them in ruins forever, a terrible and shocking sight. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>10</sup>I will silence their shouts of joy and gladness and the happy sounds of wedding feasts. They will have no oil for their lamps, and there will be no more grain.

<sup>11</sup>This whole land will be left in ruins and will be a shocking sight, and the neighboring nations will serve the king of Babylonia for seventy years.

<sup>12</sup>After that I will punish Babylonia and its king for their sin. I will destroy that country and leave it in ruins forever.

<sup>13</sup>I will punish Babylonia with all the disasters that I threatened to bring on the nations when I spoke through Jeremiah -- all the disasters recorded in this book.

<sup>14</sup>I will pay the Babylonians back for what they have done, and many nations and great kings will make slaves of them.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD, the God of Israel, said to me, Here is a wine cup filled with my anger. Take it to all the nations to whom I send you, and make them drink from it.

<sup>16</sup>When they drink from it, they will stagger and go out of their minds

because of the war I am sending against them.

<sup>17</sup> So I took the cup from the LORD's hand, gave it to all the nations to whom the LORD had sent me, and made them drink from it.

<sup>18</sup> Jerusalem and all the towns of Judah, together with its kings and leaders, were made to drink from it, so that they would become a desert, a terrible and shocking sight, and so that people would use their name as a curse -- as they still do.

<sup>19</sup> Here is the list of all the others who had to drink from the cup: the king of Egypt, his officials and leaders; all the Egyptians and all the foreigners in Egypt; all the kings of the land of Uz; all the kings of the Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and what remains of Ashdod; all the people of Edom, Moab, and Ammon; all the kings of Tyre and Sidon; all the kings of the Mediterranean lands; the cities of Dedan, Tema, and Buz; all the people who cut their hair short; all the kings of Arabia; all the kings of the desert tribes; all the kings of Zimri, Elam, and Media; all the kings of the north, far and near, one

after another. Every nation on the face of the earth had to drink from it. Last of all, the king of Babylonia will drink from it.

<sup>20</sup> (25: 19)

<sup>21</sup> (25: 19)

<sup>22</sup> (25: 19)

<sup>23</sup> (25: 19)

<sup>24</sup> (25: 19)

<sup>25</sup> (25: 19)

<sup>26</sup> (25: 19)

<sup>27</sup> Then the LORD said to me, Tell the people that I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, am commanding them to drink until they are drunk and vomit, until they fall down and cannot get up, because of the war that I am sending against them.

<sup>28</sup> And if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink from it, then tell them that the LORD Almighty has said that they will still have to drink from it.

<sup>29</sup> I will begin my work of destruction in my own city. Do they think they will go unpunished? No, they will be punished, for I am going to send war on all the people on earth. I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>30</sup>You, Jeremiah, must proclaim everything I have said. You must tell these people, The LORD will roar from heaven and thunder from the heights of heaven. He will roar against his people; he will shout like a man treading grapes. Everyone on earth will hear him,

<sup>31</sup>and the sound will echo to the ends of the earth. The LORD has a case against the nations. He will bring all people to trial and put the wicked to death. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>32</sup>The LORD Almighty says that disaster is coming on one nation after another, and a great storm is gathering at the far ends of the earth.

<sup>33</sup>On that day the bodies of those whom the LORD has killed will lie scattered from one end of the earth to the other. No one will mourn for them, and they will not be taken away and buried. They will lie on the ground like piles of manure.

<sup>34</sup>Cry, you leaders, you shepherds of my people, cry out loud! Mourn and roll in the dust. The time has come for you to be slaughtered, and you will be butchered like rams.



<sup>35</sup> There will be no way for you to escape.

<sup>36</sup> You moan and cry out in distress because the LORD in his anger has destroyed your nation and left your peaceful country in ruins.

<sup>37</sup> (25: 36)

<sup>38</sup> The LORD has abandoned his people like a lion that leaves its cave. The horrors of war and the LORD's fierce anger have turned the country into a desert.

**26** <sup>1</sup> Soon after Jehoiakim son of Josiah became king of Judah, <sup>2</sup> the LORD said to me, Stand in the court of the Temple and proclaim all I have commanded you to say to the people who come from the towns of Judah to worship there. Do not leave out anything.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the people will listen and give up their evil ways. If they do, then I will change my mind about the destruction I plan to bring on them for all their wicked deeds.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD told me to say to the people, I, the LORD, have said that you

must obey me by following the teaching that I gave you,

<sup>5</sup>and by paying attention to the words of my servants, the prophets, whom I have kept on sending to you. You have never obeyed what they said.

<sup>6</sup>If you continue to disobey, then I will do to this Temple what I did to Shiloh, and all the nations of the world will use the name of this city as a curse.

<sup>7</sup>The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard me saying these things in the Temple,

<sup>8</sup>and as soon as I had finished all that the LORD had commanded me to speak, they grabbed me and shouted, You ought to be killed for this!

<sup>9</sup>Why have you said in the LORD's name that this Temple will become like Shiloh and that this city will be destroyed and no one will live in it? Then the people crowded around me.

<sup>10</sup>When the leaders of Judah heard what had happened, they hurried from the royal palace to the Temple and took their places at the New Gate.

<sup>11</sup>Then the priests and the prophets said to the leaders and to the people,

This man deserves to be sentenced to death because he has spoken against our city. You heard him with your own ears.

<sup>12</sup>Then I said, The LORD sent me to proclaim everything that you heard me say against this Temple and against this city.

<sup>13</sup>You must change the way you are living and the things you are doing, and must obey the LORD your God. If you do, he will change his mind about the destruction that he said he would bring on you.

<sup>14</sup>As for me, I am in your power! Do with me whatever you think is fair and right.

<sup>15</sup>But be sure of this: if you kill me, you and the people of this city will be guilty of killing an innocent man, because it is the LORD who sent me to give you this warning.

<sup>16</sup>Then the leaders and the people said to the priests and the prophets, This man spoke to us in the name of the LORD our God; he should not be put to death.

<sup>17</sup> After that, some of the elders stood up and said to the people who had gathered,

<sup>18</sup> When Hezekiah was king of Judah, the prophet Micah of Moresheth told all the people that the LORD Almighty had said, Zion will be plowed like a field; Jerusalem will become a pile of ruins, and the Temple hill will become a forest.

<sup>19</sup> King Hezekiah and the people of Judah did not put Micah to death. Instead, Hezekiah honored the LORD and tried to win his favor. And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he said he would bring on them. Now we are about to bring a terrible disaster on ourselves.

<sup>20</sup> (There was another man, Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim, who spoke in the name of the LORD against this city and nation just as Jeremiah did.)

<sup>21</sup> When King Jehoiakim and his soldiers and officials heard what Uriah had said, the king tried to have him killed. But Uriah heard about it; so he fled in terror and escaped to Egypt.

<sup>22</sup> King Jehoiakim, however, sent Elnathan son of Achbor and some other men to Egypt to get Uriah.

<sup>23</sup> They brought him back to King Jehoiakim, who had him killed and his body thrown into the public burial ground.)

<sup>24</sup> But because I had the support of Ahikam son of Shaphan, I was not handed over to the people and killed.

**27** <sup>1</sup> Soon after Josiah's son Zedekiah became king of Judah, the LORD told me

<sup>2</sup> to make myself a yoke out of leather straps and wooden crossbars and to put it on my neck.

<sup>3</sup> Then the LORD told me to send a message to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon through their ambassadors who had come to Jerusalem to see King Zedekiah.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, told me to command them to tell their kings that the LORD had said:

<sup>5</sup> By my great power and strength I created the world, human beings, and all the animals that live on the earth; and I give it to anyone I choose.

<sup>6</sup>I am the one who has placed all these nations under the power of my servant, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, and I have made even the wild animals serve him.

<sup>7</sup>All nations will serve him, and they will serve his son and his grandson until the time comes for his own nation to fall. Then his nation will serve powerful nations and great kings.

<sup>8</sup>But if any nation or kingdom will not submit to his rule, then I will punish that nation by war, starvation, and disease until I have let Nebuchadnezzar destroy it completely.

<sup>9</sup>Do not listen to your prophets or to those who claim they can predict the future, either by dreams or by calling up the spirits of the dead or by magic. They all tell you not to submit to the king of Babylonia.

<sup>10</sup>They are deceiving you and will cause you to be taken far away from your country. I will drive you out, and you will be destroyed.

<sup>11</sup>But if any nation submits to the king of Babylonia and serves him, then I will

let it stay on in its own land, to farm it and live there. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>12</sup>I said the same thing to King Zedekiah of Judah, Submit to the king of Babylonia. Serve him and his people, and you will live.

<sup>13</sup>Why should you and your people die in war or of starvation or disease? That is what the LORD has said will happen to any nation that does not submit to the king of Babylonia.

<sup>14</sup>Do not listen to the prophets who tell you not to surrender to him. They are deceiving you.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD himself has said that he did not send them and that they are lying to you in his name. And so he will drive you out, and you will be killed, you and the prophets who are telling you these lies.

<sup>16</sup>Then I told the priests and the people that the LORD had said: Do not listen to the prophets who say that the Temple treasures will soon be brought back from Babylonia. They are lying to you.

<sup>17</sup>Don't listen to them! Submit to the king of Babylonia and you will live! Why should this city become a pile of ruins?

<sup>18</sup>If they are really prophets and if they have my message, let them ask me, the LORD Almighty, not to allow the treasures that remain in the Temple and in the royal palace to be taken to Babylonia.

<sup>19</sup>(When King Nebuchadnezzar took away to Babylonia the king of Judah, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, and the leading men of Judah and Jerusalem, he left the columns, the bronze tank, the carts, and some of the other Temple treasures.)

<sup>20</sup>(27: 19)

<sup>21</sup>Listen to what I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, say about the treasures that are left in the Temple and in the royal palace in Jerusalem:

<sup>22</sup>They will be taken to Babylonia and will remain there until I turn my attention to them. Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**28**<sup>1</sup>That same year, in the fifth month of the fourth year that Zedekiah was king, Hananiah son of Azzur, a prophet from the town of Gibeon, spoke to me in the Temple. In



the presence of the priests and of the people he told me

<sup>2</sup> that the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, had said: I have broken the power of the king of Babylonia.

<sup>3</sup> Within two years I will bring back to this place all the Temple treasures that King Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylonia.

<sup>4</sup> I will also bring back the king of Judah, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, along with all of the people of Judah who went into exile in Babylonia. Yes, I will break the power of the king of Babylonia. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>5</sup> Then in the presence of the priests and of all the people who were standing in the Temple, I said to Hananiah,

<sup>6</sup> Wonderful! I hope the LORD will do this! I certainly hope he will make your prophecy come true and will bring back from Babylonia all the Temple treasures and all the people who were taken away as prisoners.

<sup>7</sup> But listen to what I say to you and to the people.

<sup>8</sup> The prophets who spoke long ago, before my time and yours, predicted that

war, starvation, and disease would come to many nations and powerful kingdoms.

<sup>9</sup>But a prophet who predicts peace can only be recognized as a prophet whom the LORD has truly sent when that prophet's predictions come true.

<sup>10</sup>Then Hananiah took the yoke off my neck, broke it in pieces,

<sup>11</sup>and said in the presence of all the people, The LORD has said that this is how he will break the yoke that King Nebuchadnezzar has put on the neck of all the nations; and he will do this within two years. Then I left.

<sup>12</sup>Some time after this the LORD told me

<sup>13</sup>to go and tell Hananiah: The LORD has said that you may be able to break a wooden yoke, but he will replace it with an iron yoke.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, has said that he will put an iron yoke on all these nations and that they will serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia. The LORD has said that he will make even the wild animals serve Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>15</sup>Then I told Hananiah this, and added, Listen, Hananiah! The LORD did not send

you, and you are making these people believe a lie.

<sup>16</sup>And so the LORD himself says that he is going to get rid of you. Before this year is over you will die because you have told the people to rebel against the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>And Hananiah died in the seventh month of that same year.

**29**<sup>1</sup>I wrote a letter to the priests, the prophets, the leaders of the people, and to all the others whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken away as prisoners from Jerusalem to Babylonia.

<sup>2</sup>I wrote it after King Jehoiachin, his mother, the palace officials, the leaders of Judah and of Jerusalem, the engravers, and the skilled workers had been taken into exile.

<sup>3</sup>I gave the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom King Zedekiah of Judah was sending to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia. It said:

<sup>4</sup>The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those people whom he allowed Nebuchadnezzar to take away as prisoners from Jerusalem to Babylonia:

<sup>5</sup> Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what you grow in them.

<sup>6</sup> Marry and have children. Then let your children get married, so that they also may have children. You must increase in numbers and not decrease.

<sup>7</sup> Work for the good of the cities where I have made you go as prisoners. Pray to me on their behalf, because if they are prosperous, you will be prosperous too.

<sup>8</sup> I, the LORD, the God of Israel, warn you not to let yourselves be deceived by the prophets who live among you or by any others who claim they can predict the future. Do not pay any attention to their dreams.

<sup>9</sup> They are telling you lies in my name. I did not send them. I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD says, When Babylonia's seventy years are over, I will show my concern for you and keep my promise to bring you back home.

<sup>11</sup> I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.

<sup>12</sup>Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me, and I will answer you.

<sup>13</sup>You will seek me, and you will find me because you will seek me with all your heart.

<sup>14</sup>Yes, I say, you will find me, and I will restore you to your land. I will gather you from every country and from every place to which I have scattered you, and I will bring you back to the land from which I had sent you away into exile. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>15</sup>You say that the LORD has given you prophets in Babylonia.

<sup>16</sup>Listen to what the LORD says about the king who rules the kingdom that David ruled and about the people of this city, that is, your relatives who were not taken away as prisoners with you.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD Almighty says, I am bringing war, starvation, and disease on them, and I will make them like figs that are too rotten to be eaten.

<sup>18</sup>I will pursue them with war, starvation, and disease, and all the nations of the world will be horrified at what they see. Everywhere I scatter

them, people will be shocked and terrified at what has happened to them. People will make fun of them and use their name as a curse.

<sup>19</sup>This will happen to them because they did not obey the message that I kept on sending to them through my servants the prophets. They refused to listen.

<sup>20</sup>All of you whom I sent into exile in Babylonia, listen to what I, the LORD, say.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, has spoken about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are telling you lies in his name. He has said that he will hand them over to the power of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, who will put them to death before your eyes.

<sup>22</sup>When the people who were taken away as prisoners from Jerusalem to Babylonia want to bring a curse on someone, they will say, May the LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylonia roasted alive!

<sup>23</sup>This will be their fate because they are guilty of terrible sins -- they have

committed adultery and have told lies in the LORD's name. This was against the LORD's will; he knows what they have done, and he is a witness against them. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>24</sup>The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, gave me a message for Shemaiah of Nehelam, who had sent a letter in his own name to all the people of Jerusalem and to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah and to all the other priests. In this letter Shemaiah wrote to Zephaniah:

<sup>25</sup> (29: 24)

<sup>26</sup>The LORD made you a priest in place of Jehoiada, and you are now the chief officer in the Temple. It is your duty to see that every crazy person who pretends to be a prophet is placed in chains with an iron collar around the neck.

<sup>27</sup>Why haven't you done this to Jeremiah of Anathoth, who has been speaking as a prophet to the people?

<sup>28</sup>He must be stopped because he told the people in Babylonia that they would be prisoners there a long time and should build houses, settle down, plant gardens, and eat what they grow.

<sup>29</sup> Zephaniah read the letter to me,

<sup>30</sup> and then the LORD told me

<sup>31</sup> to send to all the prisoners in Babylon this message about Shemaiah: I, the LORD, will punish Shemaiah and all of his descendants. I did not send him, but he spoke to you as if he were a prophet, and he made you believe lies. He will have no descendants among you. He will not live to see the good things that I am going to do for my people, because he told them to rebel against me. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>32</sup> (29: 31)

**30** <sup>1</sup> The LORD, the God of Israel, <sup>2</sup> said to me, Write down in a book everything that I have told you, <sup>3</sup> because the time is coming when I will restore my people, Israel and Judah. I will bring them back to the land that I gave their ancestors, and they will take possession of it again. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD says to the people of Israel and Judah,

<sup>5</sup> I heard a cry of terror, a cry of fear and not of peace.



<sup>6</sup> Now stop and think! Can a man give birth to a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why is everyone so pale?

<sup>7</sup> A terrible day is coming; no other day can compare with it -- a time of distress for my people, but they will survive.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD Almighty says, When that day comes, I will break the yoke that is around their neck and remove their chains, and they will no longer be the slaves of foreigners.

<sup>9</sup> Instead, they will serve me, the LORD their God, and a descendant of David, whom I will enthrone as king.

<sup>10</sup> My people, do not be afraid; people of Israel, do not be terrified. I will rescue you from that faraway land, from the land where you are prisoners. You will come back home and live in peace; you will be secure, and no one will make you afraid.

<sup>11</sup> I will come to you and save you. I will destroy all the nations where I have scattered you, but I will not destroy you. I will not let you go unpunished; but

when I punish you, I will be fair. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD says to his people, Your wounds are incurable, your injuries cannot be healed.

<sup>13</sup>There is no one to take care of you, no remedy for your sores, no hope of healing for you.

<sup>14</sup>All your lovers have forgotten you; they no longer care about you. I have attacked you like an enemy; your punishment has been harsh because your sins are many and your wickedness is great.

<sup>15</sup>Complain no more about your injuries; there is no cure for you. I punished you like this because your sins are many and your wickedness is great.

<sup>16</sup>But now, all who devour you will be devoured, and all your enemies will be taken away as prisoners. All who oppress you will be oppressed, and all who plunder you will be plundered.

<sup>17</sup>I will make you well again; I will heal your wounds, though your enemies say, Zion is an outcast; no one cares about her. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD says, I will restore my people to their land and have mercy on every family; Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and its palace restored.

<sup>19</sup>The people who live there will sing praise; they will shout for joy. By my blessing they will increase in numbers; my blessing will bring them honor.

<sup>20</sup>I will restore the nation's ancient power and establish it firmly again; I will punish all who oppress them.

<sup>21</sup>Their ruler will come from their own nation, their prince from their own people. He will approach me when I invite him, for who would dare come uninvited? They will be my people, and I will be their God. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>22</sup> (30: 21)

<sup>23</sup>The LORD's anger is a storm, a furious wind that will rage over the heads of the wicked. It will not end until he has done all that he intends to do. In days to come his people will understand this clearly.

<sup>24</sup> (30: 23)

**31** <sup>1</sup>The LORD says, The time is coming when I will be the God of

all the tribes of Israel, and they will be my people.

<sup>2</sup>In the desert I showed mercy to those people who had escaped death. When the people of Israel longed for rest,

<sup>3</sup>I appeared to them from far away. People of Israel, I have always loved you, so I continue to show you my constant love.

<sup>4</sup>Once again I will rebuild you. Once again you will take up your tambourines and dance joyfully.

<sup>5</sup>Once again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria, and those who plant them will eat what the vineyards produce.

<sup>6</sup>Yes, the time is coming when sentries will call out on the hills of Ephraim, Let's go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD says, Sing with joy for Israel, the greatest of the nations. Sing your song of praise, The LORD has saved his people; he has rescued all who are left.

<sup>8</sup>I will bring them from the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. The blind and the lame will come with them, pregnant women and those about

to give birth. They will come back a great nation.

<sup>9</sup>My people will return weeping, praying as I lead them back. I will guide them to streams of water, on a smooth road where they will not stumble. I am like a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my oldest son.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says, Nations, listen to me and proclaim my words on the far-off shores. I scattered my people, but I will gather them and guard them as a shepherd guards his flock.

<sup>11</sup>I have set Israel's people free and have saved them from a mighty nation.

<sup>12</sup>They will come and sing for joy on Mount Zion and be delighted with my gifts -- gifts of grain and wine and olive oil, gifts of sheep and cattle. They will be like a well-watered garden; they will have everything they need.

<sup>13</sup>Then the young women will dance and be happy, and men, young and old, will rejoice. I will comfort them and turn their mourning into joy, their sorrow into gladness.

<sup>14</sup>I will fill the priests with the richest food and satisfy all the needs of my people. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD says, A sound is heard in Ramah, the sound of bitter weeping. Rachel is crying for her children; they are gone, and she refuses to be comforted.

<sup>16</sup>Stop your crying and wipe away your tears. All that you have done for your children will not go unrewarded; they will return from the enemy's land.

<sup>17</sup>There is hope for your future; your children will come back home. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>18</sup>I hear the people of Israel say in grief, LORD, we were like an untamed animal, but you taught us to obey. Bring us back; we are ready to return to you, the LORD our God.

<sup>19</sup>We turned away from you, but soon we wanted to return. After you had punished us, we hung our heads in grief. We were ashamed and disgraced because we sinned when we were young.'

<sup>20</sup>Israel, you are my dearest child, the one I love best. Whenever I mention

your name, I think of you with love. My heart goes out to you; I will be merciful.

<sup>21</sup> Set up signs and mark the road; find again the way by which you left. Come back, people of Israel, come home to the towns you left.

<sup>22</sup> How long will you hesitate, faithless people? I have created something new and different, as different as a woman protecting a man.

<sup>23</sup> The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says, When I restore the people to their land, they will once again say in the land of Judah and in its towns, May the LORD bless the sacred hill of Jerusalem, the holy place where he lives.

<sup>24</sup> People will live in Judah and in all its towns, and there will be farmers, and shepherds with their flocks.

<sup>25</sup> I will refresh those who are weary and will satisfy with food everyone who is weak from hunger.

<sup>26</sup> So then, people will say, I went to sleep and woke up refreshed.

<sup>27</sup> I, the LORD, say that the time is coming when I will fill the land of Israel and Judah with people and animals.

<sup>28</sup>And just as I took care to uproot, to pull down, to overthrow, to destroy, and to demolish them, so I will take care to plant them and to build them up.

<sup>29</sup>When that time comes, people will no longer say, The parents ate the sour grapes, But the children got the sour taste.

<sup>30</sup>Instead, those who eat sour grapes will have their own teeth set on edge; and everyone will die because of their own sin.

<sup>31</sup>The LORD says, The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

<sup>32</sup>It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. Although I was like a husband to them, they did not keep that covenant.

<sup>33</sup>The new covenant that I will make with the people of Israel will be this: I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.



<sup>34</sup>None of them will have to teach a neighbor to know the LORD, because all will know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>35</sup>The LORD provides the sun for light by day, the moon and the stars to shine at night. He stirs up the sea and makes it roar; his name is the LORD Almighty.

<sup>36</sup>He promises that as long as the natural order lasts, so long will Israel be a nation.

<sup>37</sup>If one day the sky could be measured and the foundations of the earth explored, only then would he reject the people of Israel because of all they have done. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>38</sup>The time is coming, says the LORD, when all of Jerusalem will be rebuilt as my city, from Hananel Tower west to the Corner Gate.

<sup>39</sup>And the boundary line will continue from there on the west to the hill of Gareb and then around to Goah.

<sup>40</sup>The entire valley, where the dead are buried and garbage is dumped, and all the fields above Kidron Brook as far

as the Horse Gate to the east, will be sacred to me. The city will never again be torn down or destroyed.

**32**<sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to me in the tenth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, which was also the eighteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia.

<sup>2</sup> At that time the army of the king of Babylonia was attacking Jerusalem, and I was locked up in the courtyard of the royal palace.

<sup>3</sup> King Zedekiah had imprisoned me there and had accused me of announcing that the LORD had said, I am going to let the king of Babylonia capture this city,

<sup>4</sup> and King Zedekiah will not escape. He will be handed over to the king of Babylonia; he will see him face-to-face and will speak to him in person.

<sup>5</sup> Zedekiah will be taken to Babylonia, and he will remain there until I deal with him. Even if he fights the Babylonians, he will not be successful. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD told me

<sup>7</sup> that Hanamel, my uncle Shallum's son, would come to me with the request

to buy his field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin, because I was his nearest relative and had the right to buy it for myself.

<sup>8</sup>Then, just as the LORD had said, Hanamel came to me there in the courtyard and asked me to buy the field. So I knew that the LORD had really spoken to me.

<sup>9</sup>I bought the field from Hanamel and weighed out the money to him; the price came to seventeen pieces of silver.

<sup>10</sup>I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the money on scales.

<sup>11</sup>Then I took both copies of the deed of purchase -- the sealed copy containing the contract and its conditions, and the open copy --

<sup>12</sup>and gave them to Baruch, the son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah. I gave them to him in the presence of Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed of purchase and of the people who were sitting in the courtyard.

<sup>13</sup>Before them all I said to Baruch,

<sup>14</sup>The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, has ordered you to take these deeds,

both the sealed deed of purchase and the open copy, and to place them in a clay jar, so that they may be preserved for years to come.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, has said that houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought in this land.

<sup>16</sup>After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch, I prayed,

<sup>17</sup>Sovereign LORD, you made the earth and the sky by your great power and might; nothing is too difficult for you.

<sup>18</sup>You have shown constant love to thousands, but you also punish people for the sins of their parents. You are a great and powerful God; you are the LORD Almighty.

<sup>19</sup>You make wise plans and do mighty things; you see everything that people do, and you reward them according to their actions.

<sup>20</sup>Long ago you performed miracles and wonders in Egypt, and you have continued to perform them to this day, both in Israel and among all the other nations, so that you are now known everywhere.

<sup>21</sup> By means of miracles and wonders that terrified our enemies, you used your power and might to bring your people Israel out of Egypt.

<sup>22</sup> You gave them this rich and fertile land, as you had promised their ancestors.

<sup>23</sup> But when they came into this land and took possession of it, they did not obey your commands or live according to your teaching; they did nothing that you had ordered them to do. And so you brought all this destruction on them.

<sup>24</sup> The Babylonians have built siege mounds around the city to capture it, and they are attacking. War, starvation, and disease will make the city fall into their hands. You can see that all you have said has come true.

<sup>25</sup> Yet, Sovereign LORD, you are the one who ordered me to buy the field in the presence of witnesses, even though the city is about to be captured by the Babylonians.

<sup>26</sup> Then the LORD said to me,

<sup>27</sup> I am the LORD, the God of all people. Nothing is too difficult for me.

<sup>28</sup>I am going to give this city over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia and his army; they will capture it

<sup>29</sup>and set it on fire. They will burn it down, together with the houses where people have made me angry by burning incense to Baal on the rooftops and by pouring out wine offerings to other gods.

<sup>30</sup>From the very beginning of their history the people of Israel and the people of Judah have displeased me and made me angry by what they have done.

<sup>31</sup>The people of this city have made me angry and furious from the day it was built. I have decided to destroy it

<sup>32</sup>because of all the evil that has been done by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, together with their kings and leaders, their priests and prophets.

<sup>33</sup>They turned their backs on me; and though I kept on teaching them, they would not listen and learn.

<sup>34</sup>They even placed their disgusting idols in the Temple built for my worship, and they have defiled it.

<sup>35</sup>They have built altars to Baal in Hinnom Valley, to sacrifice their sons and daughters to the god Molech. I did

not command them to do this, and it did not even enter my mind that they would do such a thing and make the people of Judah sin.

<sup>36</sup>The LORD, the God of Israel, said to me, Jeremiah, the people are saying that war, starvation, and disease will make this city fall into the hands of the king of Babylonia. Now listen to what else I have to say.

<sup>37</sup>I am going to gather the people from all the countries where I have scattered them in my anger and fury, and I am going to bring them back to this place and let them live here in safety.

<sup>38</sup>Then they will be my people, and I will be their God.

<sup>39</sup>I will give them a single purpose in life: to honor me for all time, for their own good and the good of their descendants.

<sup>40</sup>I will make an eternal covenant with them. I will never stop doing good things for them, and I will make them fear me with all their heart, so that they will never turn away from me.

<sup>41</sup> I will take pleasure in doing good things for them, and I will establish them permanently in this land.

<sup>42</sup> Just as I have brought this disaster on these people, so I am going to give them all the good things that I have promised.

<sup>43</sup> The people are saying that this land will be like a desert where neither people nor animals live, and that it will be given over to the Babylonians. But fields will once again be bought in this land.

<sup>44</sup> People will buy them, and the deeds will be signed, sealed, and witnessed. This will take place in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah, and in the towns in the hill country, in the foothills, and in southern Judah. I will restore the people to their land. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**33** <sup>1</sup> While I was still in prison in the courtyard, the LORD's message came to me again.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD, who made the earth, who formed it and set it in place, spoke to me. He whose name is the LORD said,



<sup>3</sup>Call to me, and I will answer you; I will tell you wonderful and marvelous things that you know nothing about.

<sup>4</sup>I, the LORD, the God of Israel, say that the houses of Jerusalem and the royal palace of Judah will be torn down as a result of the siege and the attack.

<sup>5</sup>Some will fight against the Babylonians, who will fill the houses with the corpses of those whom I am going to strike down in my anger and fury. I have turned away from this city because of the evil things that its people have done.

<sup>6</sup>But I will heal this city and its people and restore them to health. I will show them abundant peace and security.

<sup>7</sup>I will make Judah and Israel prosperous, and I will rebuild them as they were before.

<sup>8</sup>I will purify them from the sins that they have committed against me, and I will forgive their sins and their rebellion.

<sup>9</sup>Jerusalem will be a source of joy, honor, and pride to me; and every nation in the world will fear and tremble when they hear about the good things that I do for the people of Jerusalem and about the prosperity that I bring to the city.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD said, People are saying that this place is like a desert, that it has no people or animals living in it. And they are right; the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem are empty; no people or animals live there. But in these places you will hear again

<sup>11</sup>the shouts of gladness and joy and the happy sounds of wedding feasts. You will hear people sing as they bring thank offerings to my Temple; they will say, Give thanks to the LORD Almighty, because he is good and his love is eternal. I will make this land as prosperous as it was before. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD Almighty said, In this land that is like a desert and where no people or animals live, there will once again be pastures where shepherds can take their sheep.

<sup>13</sup>In the towns in the hill country, in the foothills, and in southern Judah, in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, and in the towns of Judah, shepherds will once again count their sheep. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD said, The time is coming when I will fulfill the promise that I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

<sup>15</sup>At that time I will choose as king a righteous descendant of David. That king will do what is right and just throughout the land.

<sup>16</sup>The people of Judah and of Jerusalem will be rescued and will live in safety. The city will be called The LORD Our Salvation.

<sup>17</sup>I, the LORD, promise that there will always be a descendant of David to be king of Israel

<sup>18</sup>and that there will always be priests from the tribe of Levi to serve me and to offer burnt offerings, grain offerings, and sacrifices.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD said to me,

<sup>20</sup>I have made a covenant with the day and with the night, so that they always come at their proper times; and that covenant can never be broken.

<sup>21</sup>In the same way I have made a covenant with my servant David that he would always have a descendant to be king, and I have made a covenant with the priests from the tribe of Levi that

they would always serve me; and those covenants can never be broken.

<sup>22</sup>I will increase the number of descendants of my servant David and the number of priests from the tribe of Levi, so that it will be as impossible to count them as it is to count the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore.

<sup>23</sup>The LORD said to me,

<sup>24</sup>Have you noticed how people are saying that I have rejected Israel and Judah, the two families that I chose? And so they look with contempt on my people and no longer consider them a nation.

<sup>25</sup>But I, the LORD, have a covenant with day and night, and I have made the laws that control earth and sky.

<sup>26</sup>And just as surely as I have done this, so I will maintain my covenant with Jacob's descendants and with my servant David. I will choose one of David's descendants to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will be merciful to my people and make them prosperous again.

**34**<sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to me when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia and his army, supported by troops from all the nations and races that were subject to him, were attacking Jerusalem and its nearby towns.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD, the God of Israel, told me to go and say to King Zedekiah of Judah, I, the LORD, will hand this city over to the king of Babylonia, and he will burn it down.

<sup>3</sup> You will not escape; you will be captured and handed over to him. You will see him face-to-face and talk to him in person; then you will go to Babylonia.

<sup>4</sup> Zedekiah, listen to what I say about you. You will not be killed in battle.

<sup>5</sup> You will die in peace, and as people burned incense when they buried your ancestors, who were kings before you, in the same way they will burn incense for you. They will mourn over you and say, Our king is dead! I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>6</sup> Then I gave this message to King Zedekiah in Jerusalem

<sup>7</sup> while the army of the king of Babylonia was attacking the city. The army was

also attacking Lachish and Azekah, the only other fortified cities left in Judah.

<sup>8</sup>King Zedekiah and the people of Jerusalem had made an agreement to set free

<sup>9</sup>their Hebrew slaves, both male and female, so that no one would have an Israelite as a slave.

<sup>10</sup>All the people and their leaders agreed to free their slaves and never to enslave them again. They did set them free,

<sup>11</sup>but later they changed their minds, took them back, and forced them to become slaves again.

<sup>12</sup>Then the LORD,

<sup>13</sup>the God of Israel, told me to say to the people: I made a covenant with your ancestors when I rescued them from Egypt and set them free from slavery. I told them that

<sup>14</sup>every seven years they were to set free any Hebrew slave who had served them for six years. But your ancestors would not pay any attention to me or listen to what I said.

<sup>15</sup>Just a few days ago you changed your minds and did what pleased me. All of

you agreed to set all Israelites free, and you made a covenant in my presence, in the Temple where I am worshiped.

<sup>16</sup>But then you changed your minds again and dishonored me. All of you took back the slaves whom you had set free as they desired, and you forced them into slavery again.

<sup>17</sup>So now, I, the LORD, say that you have disobeyed me; you have not given all Israelites their freedom. Very well, then, I will give you freedom: the freedom to die by war, disease, and starvation. I will make every nation in the world horrified at what I do to you.

<sup>18</sup>The officials of Judah and of Jerusalem, together with the palace officials, the priests, and all the leaders, made a covenant with me by walking between the two halves of a bull that they had cut in two. But they broke the covenant and did not keep its terms. So I will do to these people what they did to the bull.

<sup>19</sup>(34: 18)

<sup>20</sup>I will hand them over to their enemies, who want to kill them, and

their corpses will be eaten by birds and wild animals.

<sup>21</sup> I will also hand over King Zedekiah of Judah and his officials to those who want to kill them. I will hand them over to the Babylonian army, which has stopped its attack against you.

<sup>22</sup> I will give the order, and they will return to this city. They will attack it, capture it, and burn it down. I will make the towns of Judah like a desert where no one lives. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**35** <sup>1</sup> When Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD said to me,

<sup>2</sup> Go to the members of the Rechabite clan and talk to them. Then bring them into one of the rooms in the Temple and offer them some wine.

<sup>3</sup> So I took the entire Rechabite clan -- Jaazaniah (the son of another Jeremiah, who was Habazziniah's son) and all his brothers and sons --

<sup>4</sup> and brought them to the Temple. I took them into the room of the disciples of the prophet Hanan son of Igdaliah. This room was above the room of Maaseiah son of Shallum, an important



official in the Temple, and near the rooms of the other officials.

<sup>5</sup>Then I placed cups and bowls full of wine before the Rechabites, and I said to them, Have some wine.

<sup>6</sup>But they answered, We do not drink wine. Our ancestor Jonadab son of Rechab told us that neither we nor our descendants were ever to drink any wine.

<sup>7</sup>He also told us not to build houses or farm the land and not to plant vineyards or buy them. He commanded us always to live in tents, so that we might remain in this land where we live like strangers.

<sup>8</sup>We have obeyed all the instructions that Jonadab gave us. We ourselves never drink wine, and neither do our wives, our sons, or our daughters.

<sup>9</sup>We do not build houses for homes -- we live in tents -- and we own no vineyards, fields, or grain. We have fully obeyed everything that our ancestor Jonadab commanded us.

<sup>10</sup>(35: 9)

<sup>11</sup>But when King Nebuchadnezzar invaded the country, we decided to come to Jerusalem to get away from the

Babylonian and Syrian armies. That is why we are living in Jerusalem.

<sup>12</sup>Then the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, told me to go and say to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, I, the LORD, ask you why you refuse to listen to me and to obey my instructions.

<sup>13</sup>(35: 12)

<sup>14</sup>Jonadab's descendants have obeyed his command not to drink wine, and to this very day none of them drink any. But I have kept on speaking to you, and you have not obeyed me.

<sup>15</sup>I have continued to send you all my servants the prophets, and they have told you to give up your evil ways and to do what is right. They warned you not to worship and serve other gods, so that you could go on living in the land that I gave you and your ancestors. But you would not listen to me or pay any attention to me.

<sup>16</sup>Jonadab's descendants have obeyed the command that their ancestor gave them, but you people have not obeyed me.

<sup>17</sup>So now, I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, will bring on you

people of Judah and of Jerusalem all the destruction that I promised. I will do this because you would not listen when I spoke to you, and you would not answer when I called you.

<sup>18</sup>Then I told the Rechabite clan that the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, had said, You have obeyed the command that your ancestor Jonadab gave you; you have followed all his instructions, and you have done everything he commanded you.

<sup>19</sup>So I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, promise that Jonadab son of Rechab will always have a male descendant to serve me.

**36**<sup>1</sup>In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD said to me,

<sup>2</sup>Get a scroll and write on it everything that I have told you about Israel and Judah and all the nations. Write everything that I have told you from the time I first spoke to you, when Josiah was king, up to the present.

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about all the destruction that I intend to bring on them, they will turn

from their evil ways. Then I will forgive their wickedness and their sins.

<sup>4</sup>So I called Baruch son of Neriah and dictated to him everything that the LORD had said to me. And Baruch wrote it all down on a scroll.

<sup>5</sup>Then I gave Baruch the following instructions: I am no longer allowed to go into the Temple.

<sup>6</sup>But I want you to go there the next time the people are fasting. You are to read the scroll aloud, so that they will hear everything that the LORD has said to me and that I have dictated to you. Do this where everyone can hear you, including the people of Judah who have come in from their towns.

<sup>7</sup>Perhaps they will pray to the LORD and turn from their evil ways, because the LORD has threatened this people with his terrible anger and fury.

<sup>8</sup>So Baruch read the LORD's words in the Temple exactly as I had told him to do.

<sup>9</sup>In the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah, the people fasted to gain the LORD's favor. The fast was kept by all who lived in

Jerusalem and by all who came there from the towns of Judah.

<sup>10</sup>Then, while all the people were listening, Baruch read from the scroll everything that I had said. He did this in the Temple, from the room of Gemariah son of Shaphan, the court secretary. His room was in the upper court near the entrance of the New Gate of the Temple.

<sup>11</sup>Micaiah, the son of Gemariah and grandson of Shaphan, heard Baruch read from the scroll what the LORD had said.

<sup>12</sup>Then he went to the royal palace, to the room of the court secretary, where all the officials were in session. Elishama, the court secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials were there.

<sup>13</sup>Micaiah told them everything that he had heard Baruch read to the people.

<sup>14</sup>Then the officials sent Jehudi (the son of Nethaniah, grandson of Shelemiah, and great-grandson of Cushi) to tell Baruch to bring the scroll that he had read to the people. Baruch brought them the scroll.

<sup>15</sup> Sit down, they said, and read the scroll to us. So Baruch did.

<sup>16</sup> After he had read it, they turned to one another in alarm and said to Baruch, We must report this to the king.

<sup>17</sup> Then they asked him, Tell us, now, how did you come to write all this? Did Jeremiah dictate it to you?

<sup>18</sup> Baruch answered, Jeremiah dictated every word of it to me, and I wrote it down in ink on this scroll.

<sup>19</sup> Then they told him, You and Jeremiah must go and hide. Don't let anyone know where you are.

<sup>20</sup> The officials put the scroll in the room of Elishama, the court secretary, and went to the king's court, where they reported everything to the king.

<sup>21</sup> Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. He took it from the room of Elishama and read it to the king and all the officials who were standing around him.

<sup>22</sup> It was winter and the king was sitting in his winter palace in front of the fire.

<sup>23</sup> As soon as Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king cut them off with a small knife and threw them

into the fire. He kept doing this until the entire scroll was burned up.

<sup>24</sup> But neither the king nor any of his officials who heard all this was afraid or showed any sign of sorrow.

<sup>25</sup> Although Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah begged the king not to burn the scroll, he paid no attention to them.

<sup>26</sup> Then he ordered Prince Jerahmeel, together with Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel, to arrest me and my secretary Baruch. But the LORD had hidden us.

<sup>27</sup> After King Jehoiakim had burned the scroll that I had dictated to Baruch, the LORD told me

<sup>28</sup> to take another scroll and write on it everything that had been on the first one.

<sup>29</sup> The LORD told me to say to the king, You have burned the scroll, and you have asked Jeremiah why he wrote that the king of Babylonia would come and destroy this land and kill its people and its animals.

<sup>30</sup> So now, I, the LORD, say to you, King Jehoiakim, that no descendant of yours will ever rule over David's kingdom. Your

corpse will be thrown out where it will be exposed to the sun during the day and to the frost at night.

<sup>31</sup> I will punish you, your descendants, and your officials because of the sins all of you commit. Neither you nor the people of Jerusalem and of Judah have paid any attention to my warnings, and so I will bring on all of you the disaster that I have threatened.

<sup>32</sup> Then I took another scroll and gave it to my secretary Baruch, and he wrote down everything that I dictated. He wrote everything that had been on the first scroll and similar messages that I dictated to him.

**37** <sup>1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia made Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah in the place of Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim.

<sup>2</sup> But neither Zedekiah nor his officials nor the people obeyed the message which the LORD had given me.

<sup>3</sup> King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to ask me to pray to the LORD our God on behalf of our nation.



<sup>4</sup>I had not yet been put in prison and was still moving about freely among the people.

<sup>5</sup>The Babylonian army had been besieging Jerusalem, but when they heard that the Egyptian army had crossed the Egyptian border, they retreated.

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD, the God of Israel, told me

<sup>7</sup>to say to Zedekiah, The Egyptian army is on its way to help you, but it will return home.

<sup>8</sup>Then the Babylonians will come back, attack the city, capture it, and burn it down.

<sup>9</sup>I, the LORD, warn you not to deceive yourselves into thinking that the Babylonians will not come back, because they will.

<sup>10</sup>Even if you defeat the whole Babylonian army, so that only wounded men are left, lying in their tents, they would still get up and burn this city to the ground.

<sup>11</sup>The Babylonian army retreated from Jerusalem because the Egyptian army was approaching.

<sup>12</sup> So I started to leave Jerusalem and go to the territory of Benjamin to take possession of my share of the family property.

<sup>13</sup> But when I reached the Benjamin Gate, the officer in charge of the soldiers on duty there, a man by the name of Irijah, the son of Shelemiah and grandson of Hananiah, stopped me and said, You are deserting to the Babylonians!

<sup>14</sup> I answered, That's not so! I'm not deserting. But Irijah would not listen to me. Instead, he arrested me and took me to the officials.

<sup>15</sup> They were furious with me and had me beaten and locked up in the house of Jonathan, the court secretary, whose house had been made into a prison.

<sup>16</sup> I was put in an underground cell and kept there a long time.

<sup>17</sup> Later on King Zedekiah sent for me, and there in the palace he asked me privately, Is there any message from the LORD? There is, I answered, and added, You will be handed over to the king of Babylonia.

<sup>18</sup>Then I asked, What crime have I committed against you or your officials or this people, to make you put me in prison?

<sup>19</sup>What happened to your prophets who told you that the king of Babylonia would not attack you or the country?

<sup>20</sup>And now, Your Majesty, I beg you to listen to me and do what I ask. Please do not send me back to the prison in Jonathan's house. If you do, I will surely die there.

<sup>21</sup>So King Zedekiah ordered me to be locked up in the palace courtyard. I stayed there, and each day I was given a loaf of bread from the bakeries until all the bread in the city was gone.

**38**<sup>1</sup> Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malchiah heard that I was telling the people that

<sup>2</sup>the LORD had said, Whoever stays on in the city will die in war or of starvation or disease. But those who go out and surrender to the Babylonians will not be killed; they will at least escape with their life.

<sup>3</sup>I was also telling them that the LORD had said, I am going to give the city to the Babylonian army, and they will capture it.

<sup>4</sup>Then the officials went to the king and said, This man must be put to death. By talking like this he is making the soldiers in the city lose their courage, and he is doing the same thing to everyone else left in the city. He is not trying to help the people; he only wants to hurt them.

<sup>5</sup>King Zedekiah answered, Very well, then, do what you want to with him; I can't stop you.

<sup>6</sup>So they took me and let me down by ropes into Prince Malchiah's well, which was in the palace courtyard. There was no water in the well, only mud, and I sank down in it.

<sup>7</sup>However, Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, a eunuch who worked in the royal palace, heard that they had put me in the well. At that time the king was holding court at the Benjamin Gate.

<sup>8</sup>So Ebedmelech went there and said to the king,

<sup>9</sup>Your Majesty, what these men have done is wrong. They have put Jeremiah

in the well, where he is sure to die of starvation, since there is no more food in the city.

<sup>10</sup>Then the king ordered Ebedmelech to take with him three men and to pull me out of the well before I died.

<sup>11</sup>So Ebedmelech went with the men to the palace storeroom and got some worn-out clothing which he let down to me by ropes.

<sup>12</sup>He told me to put the rags under my arms, so that the ropes wouldn't hurt me. I did this,

<sup>13</sup>and they pulled me up out of the well. After that I was kept in the courtyard.

<sup>14</sup>On another occasion King Zedekiah had me brought to him at the third entrance to the Temple, and he said, I am going to ask you a question, and I want you to tell me the whole truth.

<sup>15</sup>I answered, If I tell you the truth, you will put me to death, and if I give you advice, you won't pay any attention.

<sup>16</sup>So King Zedekiah promised me in secret, I swear by the living God, the God who gave us life, that I will not put you to death or hand you over to the men who want to kill you.

<sup>17</sup> Then I told Zedekiah that the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, had said, If you surrender to the king of Babylonia's officers, your life will be spared, and this city will not be burned down. Both you and your family will be spared.

<sup>18</sup> But if you do not surrender, then this city will be handed over to the Babylonians, who will burn it down, and you will not escape from them.

<sup>19</sup> But the king answered, I am afraid of our own people who have deserted to the Babylonians. I may be handed over to them and tortured.

<sup>20</sup> I said, You will not be handed over to them. I beg you to obey the LORD's message; then all will go well with you, and your life will be spared.

<sup>21</sup> But the LORD has shown me in a vision what will happen if you refuse to surrender.

<sup>22</sup> In it I saw all the women left in Judah's royal palace being led out to the king of Babylonia's officers. Listen to what they were saying as they went: The king's best friends misled him, they overruled him. And now that his feet

have sunk in the mud, his friends have left him.

<sup>23</sup>Then I added, All your women and children will be taken out to the Babylonians, and you yourself will not escape from them. You will be taken prisoner by the king of Babylonia, and this city will be burned to the ground.

<sup>24</sup>Zedekiah replied, Don't let anyone know about this conversation, and your life will not be in danger.

<sup>25</sup>If the officials hear that I have talked with you, they will come and ask you what we said. They will promise not to put you to death if you tell them everything.

<sup>26</sup>Just tell them you were begging me not to send you back to prison to die there.

<sup>27</sup>Then all the officials came and questioned me, and I told them exactly what the king had told me to say. There was nothing else they could do, because no one had overheard the conversation.

<sup>28</sup>And I was kept in the palace courtyard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

**39**<sup>1</sup>In the tenth month of the ninth year that Zedekiah was

king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia came with his whole army and attacked Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>On the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year as king, the city walls were broken through.

<sup>3</sup>(When Jerusalem was captured, all the high officials of the king of Babylonia came and took their places at the Middle Gate, including Nergal Sharezer, Samgar Nebo, Sarsechim, and another Nergal Sharezer.)

<sup>4</sup>When King Zedekiah and all his soldiers saw what was happening, they tried to escape from the city during the night. They left by way of the royal garden, went through the gateway connecting the two walls, and escaped in the direction of the Jordan Valley.

<sup>5</sup>But the Babylonian army pursued them and captured Zedekiah in the plains near Jericho. Then they took him to King Nebuchadnezzar, who was in the city of Riblah in the territory of Hamath, and there Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him.

<sup>6</sup>At Riblah he put Zedekiah's sons to death while Zedekiah was looking on,



and he also had the officials of Judah executed.

<sup>7</sup>After that, he had Zedekiah's eyes put out and had him placed in chains to be taken to Babylonia.

<sup>8</sup>Meanwhile, the Babylonians burned down the royal palace and the houses of the people and tore down the walls of Jerusalem.

<sup>9</sup>Finally Nebuzaradan, the commanding officer, took away as prisoners to Babylonia the people who were left in the city, together with those who had deserted to him.

<sup>10</sup>He left in the land of Judah some of the poorest people, who owned no property, and he gave them vineyards and fields.

<sup>11</sup>But King Nebuchadnezzar commanded Nebuzaradan, the commanding officer, to give the following order:

<sup>12</sup>Go and find Jeremiah and take good care of him. Do not harm him, but do for him whatever he wants.

<sup>13</sup>So Nebuzaradan, together with the high officials Nebushazban and Nergal

Sharezer and all the other officers of the king of Babylonia,

<sup>14</sup> had me brought from the palace courtyard. They put me under the care of Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, who was to see that I got home safely. And so I stayed there among the people.

<sup>15</sup> While I was still imprisoned in the palace courtyard, the LORD told me

<sup>16</sup> to tell Ebedmelech the Ethiopian that the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, had said, Just as I said I would, I am going to bring upon this city destruction and not prosperity. And when this happens, you will be there to see it.

<sup>17</sup> But I, the LORD, will protect you, and you will not be handed over to the people you are afraid of.

<sup>18</sup> I will keep you safe, and you will not be put to death. You will escape with your life because you have put your trust in me. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**40**<sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to me after Nebuzaradan, the commanding officer, had set me free at Ramah. I had been taken there in chains, along with all the other people from Jerusalem and

Judah who were being taken away as prisoners to Babylonia.

<sup>2</sup>The commanding officer took me aside and said, The LORD your God threatened this land with destruction,

<sup>3</sup>and now he has done what he said he would. All this happened because your people sinned against the LORD and disobeyed him.

<sup>4</sup>Now, I am taking the chains off your wrists and setting you free. If you want to go to Babylonia with me, you may do so, and I will take care of you. But if you don't want to go, you don't have to. You have the whole country to choose from, and you may go wherever you wish.

<sup>5</sup>When I did not answer, Nebuzaradan said, Go back to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylonia has made governor of the towns of Judah. You may stay with him and live among the people, or you may go anywhere you think you should. Then he gave me a present and some food to take with me, and let me go on my way.

<sup>6</sup>I went to stay with Gedaliah in Mizpah and lived among the people who were left in the land.

<sup>7</sup>Some of the Judean officers and soldiers had not surrendered. They heard that the king of Babylonia had made Gedaliah governor of the land and had placed him in charge of all those who had not been taken away to Babylonia -- the poorest people in the land.

<sup>8</sup>So Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai from Netophah, and Jezaniah from Maacah went with their men to Gedaliah at Mizpah.

<sup>9</sup>Gedaliah said to them, I give you my word that there is no need for you to be afraid to surrender to the Babylonians. Settle in this land, serve the king of Babylonia, and all will go well with you.

<sup>10</sup>I myself will stay in Mizpah and be your representative when the Babylonians come here. But you can gather and store up wine, fruit, and olive oil, and live in the villages you occupy.

<sup>11</sup>Meanwhile, all the Israelites who were in Moab, Ammon, Edom, and

other countries, heard that the king of Babylonia had allowed some Israelites to stay on in Judah and that he had made Gedaliah their governor.

<sup>12</sup>So they left the places where they had been scattered, and returned to Judah. They came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and there they gathered in large amounts of wine and fruit.

<sup>13</sup>After this, Johanan and the leaders of the soldiers who had not surrendered came to Gedaliah at Mizpah

<sup>14</sup>and said to him, Don't you know that King Baalis of Ammon has sent Ishmael to murder you? But Gedaliah did not believe it.

<sup>15</sup>Then Johanan said privately to him, Let me go and kill Ishmael, and no one will know who did it. Why should he be allowed to murder you? That would cause all the Jews who have gathered around you to be scattered, and it would bring disaster on all the people who are left in Judah.

<sup>16</sup>But Gedaliah answered, Don't do it! What you are saying about Ishmael is not true!

**41** <sup>1</sup>In the seventh month of that year, Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama, a member of the royal family and one of the king's chief officers, went to Mizpah with ten men to see Governor Gedaliah. While they were all eating a meal together,

<sup>2</sup>Ishmael and the ten men with him pulled out their swords and killed Gedaliah.

<sup>3</sup>Ishmael also killed all the Israelites who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah and the Babylonian soldiers who happened to be there.

<sup>4</sup>The next day, before anyone knew about Gedaliah's murder,

<sup>5</sup>eighty men arrived from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria. They had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes, and gashed themselves. They were taking grain and incense to offer in the Temple.

<sup>6</sup>So Ishmael went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he came to them, he said, Please come in to see Gedaliah.

<sup>7</sup>As soon as they were inside the city, Ishmael and his men killed them and threw their bodies in a well.

<sup>8</sup>But there were ten men in the group who said to Ishmael, Please don't kill us! We have wheat, barley, olive oil, and honey hidden in the fields. So he spared them.

<sup>9</sup>The well into which Ishmael threw the bodies of the men he had killed was the large one that King Asa had dug when he was being attacked by King Baasha of Israel. Ishmael filled the well with the bodies.

<sup>10</sup>Then he made prisoners of the king's daughters and all the rest of the people in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the commanding officer had placed under the care of Gedaliah. Ishmael took them prisoner and started off in the direction of the territory of Ammon.

<sup>11</sup>Johanan and all the army leaders with him heard of the crime that Ishmael had committed.

<sup>12</sup>So they went after him with their men and overtook him near the large pool at Gibeon.

<sup>13</sup>When Ishmael's prisoners saw Johanan and the leaders of the forces with him, they were glad,

<sup>14</sup>and turned and ran to them.

<sup>15</sup>But Ishmael and eight of his men got away from Johanan and escaped to the land of Ammon.

<sup>16</sup>Then Johanan and the leaders of the forces with him took charge of the people whom Ishmael had taken away as prisoners from Mizpah after murdering Gedaliah -- soldiers, women, children, and eunuchs.

<sup>17</sup>They were afraid of the Babylonians because Ishmael had murdered Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylonia had made governor of the land. So they set out for Egypt, in order to get away from the Babylonians. On the way they stopped at Chimham near Bethlehem.

<sup>18</sup>(41:17)

**42**<sup>1</sup>Then all the army leaders, including Johanan son of Kareah and Azariah son of Hoshai, came with people of every class

<sup>2</sup>and said to me, Please do what we ask you! Pray to the LORD our God for us. Pray for all of us who have survived.



Once there were many of us; but now only a few of us are left, as you can see.

<sup>3</sup>Pray that the LORD our God will show us the way we should go and what we should do.

<sup>4</sup>I answered, Very well, then. I will pray to the LORD our God, just as you have asked, and whatever he says, I will tell you. I will not keep back anything from you.

<sup>5</sup>Then they said to me, May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not obey all the commands that the LORD our God gives you for us.

<sup>6</sup>Whether it pleases us or not, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are asking you to pray. All will go well with us if we obey him.

<sup>7</sup>Ten days later the LORD spoke to me;

<sup>8</sup>so I called together Johanan, all the army leaders who were with him, and all the other people.

<sup>9</sup>I said to them, The LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me with your request has said,

<sup>10</sup>If you are willing to go on living in this land, then I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not

pull you up. The destruction I brought on you has caused me great sorrow.

<sup>11</sup> Stop being afraid of the king of Babylonia. I am with you, and I will rescue you from his power.

<sup>12</sup> Because I am merciful, I will make him have mercy on you and let you go back home. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>13</sup> But you people who are left in Judah must not disobey the LORD your God and refuse to live in this land. You must not say, No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we won't face war any more or hear the call to battle or go hungry. If you say this, then the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says, If you are determined to go and live in Egypt,

<sup>14</sup> (42: 13)

<sup>15</sup> (42: 13)

<sup>16</sup> then the war that you fear will overtake you, and the hunger you dread will follow you, and you will die there in Egypt.

<sup>17</sup> All the people who are determined to go and live in Egypt will die either in war or of starvation or disease. Not one of them will survive, not one will escape

the disaster that I am going to bring on them.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD, the God of Israel, says, Just as my anger and fury were poured out on the people of Jerusalem, so my fury will be poured out on you if you go to Egypt. You will be a horrifying sight; people will make fun of you and use your name as a curse. You will never see this place again.

<sup>19</sup>Then I continued, The LORD has told you people who are left in Judah not to go to Egypt. And so I warn you now

<sup>20</sup>that you are making a fatal mistake. You asked me to pray to the LORD our God for you, and you promised that you would do everything that he commands.

<sup>21</sup>And now I have told you, but you are disobeying everything that the LORD our God sent me to tell you.

<sup>22</sup>So then, remember this: you will die in war or of starvation or disease in the land where you want to go and live.

**43**<sup>1</sup>I finished telling the people everything that the LORD their God had sent me to tell them.

<sup>2</sup>Then Azariah son of Hoshaiah and Johanan son of Kareah and all the other

arrogant men said to me, You are lying. The LORD our God did not send you to tell us not to go and live in Egypt.

<sup>3</sup>Baruch son of Neriah has stirred you up against us, so that the Babylonians will gain power over us and can either kill us or take us away to Babylonia.

<sup>4</sup>So neither Johanan nor any of the army officers nor any of the people would obey the LORD's command to remain in the land of Judah.

<sup>5</sup>Then Johanan and all the army officers took everybody left in Judah away to Egypt, together with all the people who had returned from the nations where they had been scattered:

<sup>6</sup>the men, the women, the children, and the king's daughters. They took everyone whom Nebuzaradan the commanding officer had left under the care of Gedaliah, including Baruch and me.

<sup>7</sup>They disobeyed the LORD's command and went into Egypt as far as the city of Tahpanhes.

<sup>8</sup>There the LORD said to me,

<sup>9</sup>Get some large stones and bury them in the mortar of the pavement in front of

the entrance to the government building here in the city, and let some of the Israelites see you do it.

<sup>10</sup>Then tell them that I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, am going to bring my servant King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia to this place, and he will put his throne over these stones that you buried, and will spread the royal tent over them.

<sup>11</sup>Nebuchadnezzar will come and defeat Egypt. Those people who are doomed to die of disease will die of disease, those doomed to be taken away as prisoners will be taken away as prisoners, and those doomed to be killed in war will be killed in war.

<sup>12</sup>I will set fire to the temples of Egypt's gods, and the king of Babylonia will either burn their gods or carry them off. As shepherds pick their clothes clean of lice, so the king of Babylonia will pick the land of Egypt clean and then leave victorious.

<sup>13</sup>He will destroy the sacred stone monuments at Heliopolis in Egypt and will burn down the temples of the Egyptian gods.

**44**<sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to me concerning all the Israelites living in Egypt, in the cities of Migdol, Tahpanhes, and Memphis, and in the southern part of the country.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, said, You yourselves have seen the destruction I brought on Jerusalem and all the other cities of Judah. Even now they are still in ruins, and no one lives in them

<sup>3</sup> because their people had done evil and had made me angry. They offered sacrifices to other gods and served gods that neither they nor you nor your ancestors ever worshiped.

<sup>4</sup> I kept sending you my servants the prophets, who told you not to do this terrible thing that I hate.

<sup>5</sup> But you would not listen or pay any attention. You would not give up your evil practice of sacrificing to other gods.

<sup>6</sup> So I poured out my anger and fury on the towns of Judah and on the streets of Jerusalem, and I set them on fire. They were left in ruins and became a horrifying sight, as they are today.

<sup>7</sup> And so I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, now ask why you are doing such an evil thing to yourselves. Do you want to bring destruction on men and women, children and babies, so that none of your people will be left?

<sup>8</sup> Why do you make me angry by worshiping idols and by sacrificing to other gods here in Egypt, where you have come to live? Are you doing this just to destroy yourselves, so that every nation on earth will make fun of you and use your name as a curse?

<sup>9</sup> Have you forgotten all the wicked things that have been done in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem by your ancestors, by the kings of Judah and their wives, and by you and your wives?

<sup>10</sup> But to this day you have not humbled yourselves. You have not honored me or lived according to all the laws that I gave you and your ancestors.

<sup>11</sup> So then, I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, will turn against you and destroy all Judah.

<sup>12</sup> As for the people of Judah who are left and are determined to go and live

in Egypt, I will see to it that all of them are destroyed. All of them, great and small, will die in Egypt, either in war or of starvation. They will be a horrifying sight; people will make fun of them and use their name as a curse.

<sup>13</sup>I will punish those who live in Egypt, just as I punished Jerusalem -- with war, starvation, and disease.

<sup>14</sup>None of the people of Judah who are left and have come to Egypt to live will escape or survive. Not one of them will return to Judah, where they long to live once again. No one will return except a few refugees.

<sup>15</sup>Then all the men who knew that their wives offered sacrifices to other gods, and all the women who were standing there, including the Israelites who lived in southern Egypt -- a large crowd in all -- said to me,

<sup>16</sup>We refuse to listen to what you have told us in the name of the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>We will do everything that we said we would. We will offer sacrifices to our goddess, the Queen of Heaven, and we will pour out wine offerings to her, just as we and our ancestors, our king and



our leaders, used to do in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. Then we had plenty of food, we were prosperous, and had no troubles.

<sup>18</sup>But ever since we stopped sacrificing to the Queen of Heaven and stopped pouring out wine offerings to her, we have had nothing, and our people have died in war and of starvation.

<sup>19</sup>And the women added, When we baked cakes shaped like the Queen of Heaven, offered sacrifices to her, and poured out wine offerings to her, our husbands approved of what we were doing.

<sup>20</sup>Then I said to all the men and the women who had answered me in this way,

<sup>21</sup>As for the sacrifices which you and your ancestors, your kings and your leaders, and the people of the land offered in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem -- do you think that the LORD did not know about them or that he forgot them?

<sup>22</sup>This very day your land lies in ruins and no one lives in it. It has become a horrifying sight, and people use its

name as a curse because the LORD could no longer endure your wicked and evil practices.

<sup>23</sup>This present disaster has come on you because you offered sacrifices to other gods and sinned against the LORD by not obeying all his commands.

<sup>24</sup>I told all the people, especially the women, what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, was saying to the people of Judah living in Egypt: Both you and your wives have made solemn promises to the Queen of Heaven. You promised that you would offer sacrifices to her and pour out wine offerings to her, and you have kept your promises. Very well, then! Keep your promises! Carry out your vows!

<sup>25</sup> (44: 24)

<sup>26</sup>But now listen to the vow that I, the LORD, have made in my mighty name to all you Israelites in Egypt: Never again will I let any of you use my name to make a vow by saying, I swear by the living Sovereign LORD!

<sup>27</sup>I will see to it that you will not prosper, but will be destroyed. All of you

will die, either in war or of disease, until not one of you is left.

<sup>28</sup>But a few of you will escape death and return from Egypt to Judah. Then the survivors will know whose words have come true, mine or theirs.

<sup>29</sup>I, the LORD, will give you proof that I will punish you in this place and that my promise to bring destruction on you will come true.

<sup>30</sup>I will hand over King Hophra of Egypt to his enemies who want to kill him, just as I handed over King Zedekiah of Judah to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, who was his enemy and wanted to kill him.

**45** <sup>1</sup>In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, Baruch wrote down what I had dictated to him. Then I told him

<sup>2</sup>that the LORD, the God of Israel, had said, Baruch,

<sup>3</sup>you are saying, I give up! The LORD has added sorrow to my troubles. I am worn out from groaning, and I can't find any rest!

<sup>4</sup>But I, the LORD, am tearing down what I have built and pulling up what I

have planted. I will do this to the entire earth.

<sup>5</sup>Are you looking for special treatment for yourself? Don't do it. I am bringing disaster on all people, but you will at least escape with your life, wherever you go. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**46** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me about the nations,

<sup>2</sup>beginning with Egypt. This is what he said about the army of King Neco of Egypt, which King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia defeated at Carchemish near the Euphrates River in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah:

<sup>3</sup>The Egyptian officers shout, Get your shields ready and march into battle!

<sup>4</sup>Harness your horses and mount them! Fall in line and put on your helmets! Sharpen your spears! Put on your armor!'

<sup>5</sup>But what do I see? asks the LORD. They are turning back in terror. Their soldiers are beaten back; overcome with fear, they run as fast as they can and do not look back.

<sup>6</sup>Those who run fast cannot get away; the soldiers cannot escape. In the north, by the Euphrates, they stumble and fall.

<sup>7</sup>Who is this that rises like the Nile, like a river flooding its banks?

<sup>8</sup>It is Egypt, rising like the Nile, like a river flooding its banks. Egypt said, I will rise and cover the world; I will destroy cities and the people who live there.

<sup>9</sup>Command the horses to go and the chariots to roll! Send out the soldiers: men from Ethiopia and Libya, carrying shields, and skilled archers from Lydia.

<sup>10</sup>This is the day of the Sovereign LORD Almighty: today he will take revenge; today he will punish his enemies. His sword will eat them until it is full, and drink their blood until it is satisfied. Today the Almighty sacrifices his victims in the north, by the Euphrates.

<sup>11</sup>People of Egypt, go to Gilead and look for medicine! All your medicine has proved useless; nothing can heal you.

<sup>12</sup>Nations have heard of your shame; everyone has heard you cry. One soldier trips over another, and both of them fall to the ground.

<sup>13</sup>When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia came to attack Egypt, the LORD spoke to me. He said,

<sup>14</sup>Proclaim it in the towns of Egypt, in Migdol, Memphis, and Tahpanhes: Get ready to defend yourselves; all you have will be destroyed in war!

<sup>15</sup>Why has your mighty god Apis fallen? The LORD has struck him down!

<sup>16</sup>Your soldiers have stumbled and fallen; each one says to the other, Hurry! Let's go home to our people and escape the enemy's sword!'

<sup>17</sup>Give the king of Egypt a new name -- Noisy Braggart Who Missed His Chance.

<sup>18</sup>I, the LORD Almighty, am king. I am the living God. As Mount Tabor towers above the mountains and Mount Carmel stands high above the sea, so will be the strength of the one who attacks you.

<sup>19</sup>Get ready to be taken prisoner, you people of Egypt! Memphis will be made a desert, a ruin where no one lives.

<sup>20</sup>Egypt is like a splendid cow, attacked by a stinging fly from the north.

<sup>21</sup>Even her hired soldiers are helpless as calves. They did not stand and fight; all of them turned and ran. The day of

their doom had arrived, the time of their destruction.

<sup>22</sup> Egypt runs away, hissing like a snake, as the enemy's army approaches. They attack her with axes, like people cutting down trees

<sup>23</sup> and destroying a thick forest. Their soldiers are too many to count; they outnumber the locusts.

<sup>24</sup> The people of Egypt are put to shame; they are conquered by the people of the north. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>25</sup> The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says, I am going to punish Amon, the god of Thebes, together with Egypt and its gods and kings. I am going to take the king of Egypt and all who put their trust in him,

<sup>26</sup> and hand them over to those who want to kill them, to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia and his army. But later on, people will live in Egypt again, as they did in times past. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>27</sup> My people, do not be afraid, people of Israel, do not be terrified. I will rescue you from that faraway land, from the

land where you are prisoners. You will come back home and live in peace; you will be secure, and no one will make you afraid.

<sup>28</sup>I will come to you and save you. I will destroy all the nations where I have scattered you, but I will not destroy you. I will not let you go unpunished; but when I punish you, I will be fair. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**47** <sup>1</sup>Before the king of Egypt attacked Gaza, the LORD spoke to me about Philistia.

<sup>2</sup>He said: Look! Waters are rising in the north and will rush like a river in flood. They will cover the land and everything on it, cities and the people who live there. People will call out for help; everyone on earth will cry bitterly.

<sup>3</sup>They will hear the hoofbeats of horses, the clatter of chariots, the rumble of wheels. Parents will not turn back for their children; their hands will hang limp at their sides.

<sup>4</sup>The time has come to destroy Philistia, to cut off from Tyre and Sidon all the help that remains. I, the LORD, will destroy



the Philistines, all who came from the shores of Crete.

<sup>5</sup>Great sorrow has come to the people of Gaza, and Ashkelon's people are silent. How long will the rest of Philistia mourn?

<sup>6</sup>You cry out, Sword of the LORD! How long will you go on slashing? Go back to your scabbard, stay there and rest!

<sup>7</sup>But how can it rest, when I have given it work to do? I have commanded it to attack Ashkelon and the people who live on the coast.

**48**<sup>1</sup>This is what the LORD Almighty said about Moab: Pity the people of Nebo -- their town is destroyed! Kiriathaim is captured, its mighty fortress torn down, and its people put to shame;

<sup>2</sup>the splendor of Moab is gone. The enemy have captured Heshbon and plot to destroy the nation of Moab. The town of Madmen will be silenced; armies will march against it.

<sup>3</sup>The people of Horonaim cry out, Violence! Destruction!

<sup>4</sup>Moab has been destroyed; listen to the children crying.

<sup>5</sup>Hear the sound of their sobs along the road up to Luhith, the cries of distress on the way down to Horonaim.

<sup>6</sup>Quick, run for your lives! they say. Run like a wild desert donkey!

<sup>7</sup>Moab, you trusted in your strength and your wealth, but now even you will be conquered; your god Chemosh will go into exile, along with his princes and priests.

<sup>8</sup>Not a town will escape the destruction; both valley and plain will be ruined. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>9</sup>Set up a tombstone for Moab; it will soon be destroyed. Its towns will be left in ruins, and no one will live there again.

<sup>10</sup>(Curse those who do not do the LORD's work with all their heart! Curse those who do not slash and kill!)

<sup>11</sup>The LORD said, Moab has always lived secure and has never been taken into exile. Moab is like wine left to settle undisturbed and never poured from jar to jar. Its flavor has never been ruined, and it tastes as good as ever.

<sup>12</sup>So now, the time is coming when I will send people to pour Moab out like

wine. They will empty its wine jars and break them in pieces.

<sup>13</sup>Then the Moabites will be disillusioned with their god Chemosh, just as the Israelites were disillusioned with Bethel, a god in whom they trusted.

<sup>14</sup>Men of Moab, why do you claim to be heroes, brave soldiers tested in war?

<sup>15</sup>Moab and its cities are destroyed; its finest young men have been slaughtered. I am the king, the LORD Almighty, and I have spoken.

<sup>16</sup>Moab's doom approaches; its ruin is coming soon.

<sup>17</sup>Mourn for that nation, you that live nearby, all of you that know its fame. Say, Its powerful rule has been broken; its glory and might are no more.

<sup>18</sup>You that live in Dibon, come down from your place of honor and sit on the ground in the dust; Moab's destroyer is here and has left its forts in ruins.

<sup>19</sup>You that live in Aroer, stand by the road and wait; ask those who are running away, find out from them what has happened.

<sup>20</sup>Moab has fallen, they will answer, weep for it; it is disgraced. Announce

along the Arnon River that Moab is destroyed!'

<sup>21</sup> Judgment has come on the cities of the plateau: on Holon, Jahzah, Mephaath,

<sup>22</sup> Dibon, Nebo, Beth Diblathaim,

<sup>23</sup> Kiriathaim, Bethgamul, Bethmeon,

<sup>24</sup> Kerioth, and Bozrah. Judgment has come on all the cities of Moab, far and near.

<sup>25</sup> Moab's might has been crushed; its power has been destroyed. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>26</sup> The LORD said, Make Moab drunk, because it has rebelled against me. Moab will roll in its own vomit, and people will laugh.

<sup>27</sup> Moab, remember how you made fun of the people of Israel? You treated them as though they had been caught with a gang of robbers.

<sup>28</sup> You people who live in Moab, leave your towns! Go and live on the cliffs! Be like the dove that makes its nest in the sides of a ravine.

<sup>29</sup> Moab is very proud! I have heard how proud, arrogant, and conceited the

people are, how much they think of themselves.

<sup>30</sup>I, the LORD, know of their arrogance. Their boasts amount to nothing, and the things they do will not last.

<sup>31</sup>And so I will weep for everyone in Moab and for the people of Kir Heres.

<sup>32</sup>I will cry for the people of Sibmah, even more than for the people of Jazer. City of Sibmah, you are like a vine whose branches reach across the Dead Sea and go as far as Jazer. But now your summer fruits and your grapes have been destroyed.

<sup>33</sup>Happiness and joy have been taken away from the fertile land of Moab. I have made the wine stop flowing from the wine presses; there is no one to make the wine and shout for joy.

<sup>34</sup>The people of Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, and their cry can be heard as far as Jahaz; it can be heard by the people in Zoar, and it is heard as far as Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah. Even Nimrim Brook has dried up.

<sup>35</sup>I will stop the people of Moab from making burnt offerings at their places of

worship and from offering sacrifices to their gods. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>36</sup> So my heart mourns for Moab and for the people of Kir Heres, like someone playing a funeral song on a flute, because everything they owned is gone.

<sup>37</sup> All of them have shaved their heads and cut off their beards. They have all made gashes on their hands, and everyone is wearing sackcloth.

<sup>38</sup> On all the housetops of Moab and in all its public squares there is nothing but mourning, because I have broken Moab like a jar that no one wants.

<sup>39</sup> Moab has been shattered! Cry out! Moab has been disgraced. It is in ruins, and all the surrounding nations make fun of it. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>40</sup> The LORD has promised that a nation will swoop down on Moab like an eagle with its outspread wings,

<sup>41</sup> and the towns and fortresses will be captured. On that day Moab's soldiers will be as frightened as a woman in labor.

<sup>42</sup> Moab will be destroyed and will no longer be a nation, because it rebelled against me.

<sup>43</sup>Terror, pits, and traps are waiting for the people of Moab. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>44</sup>Whoever tries to escape the terror will fall into the pits, and whoever climbs out of the pits will be caught in the traps, because the LORD has set the time for Moab's destruction.

<sup>45</sup>Helpless refugees try to find protection in Heshbon, the city that King Sihon once ruled, but it is in flames. Fire has burned up the frontiers and the mountain heights of the war-loving people of Moab.

<sup>46</sup>Pity the people of Moab! The people who worshiped Chemosh have been destroyed, and their sons and daughters have been taken away as prisoners.

<sup>47</sup>But in days to come the LORD will make Moab prosperous again. All of this is what the LORD has said will happen to Moab.

**49**<sup>1</sup>This is what the LORD said about Ammon: Where are the men of Israel? Is there no one to defend their land? Why have they let the people who worship Molech take the territory of the tribe of Gad and settle there?

<sup>2</sup>But the time is coming when I will make the people of the capital city of Rabbah hear the noise of battle, and it will be left in ruins and its villages burned to the ground. Then Israel will take its land back from those who took it from them.

<sup>3</sup>People of Heshbon, cry out! Ai is destroyed! Women of Rabbah, go into mourning! Put on sackcloth and mourn. Run about in confusion. Your god Molech will be taken into exile, together with his priests and princes.

<sup>4</sup>Why do you unfaithful people boast? Your strength is failing. Why do you trust in your power and say that no one would dare attack you?

<sup>5</sup>I will bring terror on you from every side. You will all run away. Each one will run for his life, and there will be no one to bring your troops together again.

<sup>6</sup>But later on I will make Ammon prosperous again. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>7</sup>This is what the LORD Almighty said about Edom: Have the people of Edom lost their good judgment? Can their



advisers no longer tell them what to do? Has all their wisdom disappeared?

<sup>8</sup>People of Dedan, turn and run! Hide! I am going to destroy Esau's descendants because the time has come for me to punish them.

<sup>9</sup>When people pick grapes, they leave a few on the vines, and when robbers come at night, they take only what they want.

<sup>10</sup>But I have stripped Esau's descendants completely and uncovered their hiding places, so that they can no longer hide. All the people of Edom are destroyed. Not one of them is left.

<sup>11</sup>Leave your orphans with me, and I will take care of them. Your widows can depend on me.

<sup>12</sup>If even those who did not deserve to be punished had to drink from the cup of punishment, do you think that you will go unpunished? No, you must drink from the cup!

<sup>13</sup>I myself have sworn that the city of Bozrah will become a horrifying sight and a desert; people will make fun of it and use its name as a curse. All the

nearby villages will be in ruins forever. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>14</sup>I said, Edom, I have received a message from the LORD. He has sent a messenger to tell the nations to assemble their armies and to get ready to attack you.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD is going to make you weak, and no one will respect you.

<sup>16</sup>Your pride has deceived you. No one fears you as much as you think they do. You live on the rocky cliffs, high on top of the mountain; but even though you live as high up as an eagle, the LORD will bring you down. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD said, The destruction that will come on Edom will be so terrible that everyone who passes by will be shocked and terrified.

<sup>18</sup>The same thing will happen to Edom that happened to Sodom and Gomorrah, when they and the nearby towns were destroyed. No one will ever live there again. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>19</sup>Like a lion coming out of the thick woods along the Jordan River up to the green pasture land, I will come and make the Edomites run away suddenly

from their country. Then the leader I choose will rule the nation. Who can be compared to me? Who would dare challenge me? What ruler could oppose me?

<sup>20</sup> So listen to the plan that I have made against the people of Edom, and to what I intend to do to the people of the city of Teman. Even their children will be dragged off, and everyone will be horrified.

<sup>21</sup> When Edom falls, there will be such a noise that the entire earth will shake, and the cries of alarm will be heard as far away as the Gulf of Aqaba.

<sup>22</sup> The enemy will attack Bozrah like an eagle swooping down with outspread wings. On that day Edom's soldiers will be as frightened as a woman in labor.

<sup>23</sup> This is what the LORD said about Damascus: The people in the cities of Hamath and Arpad are worried and troubled because they have heard bad news. Anxiety rolls over them like a sea, and they cannot rest.

<sup>24</sup> The people of Damascus are weak and have fled in terror. They are in pain and misery like a woman in labor.

<sup>25</sup>The famous city that used to be happy is completely deserted.

<sup>26</sup>On that day her young men will be killed in the city streets, and all her soldiers destroyed.

<sup>27</sup>I will set the walls of Damascus on fire and will burn down King Benhadad's palaces. I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>28</sup>This is what the LORD said about the tribe of Kedar and the districts controlled by Hazor, which were conquered by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia: Attack the people of Kedar and destroy that tribe of eastern people!

<sup>29</sup>Seize their tents and their flocks, their tent curtains and everything in their tents. Take their camels and tell the people, Terror is all around you!

<sup>30</sup>People of Hazor, I, the LORD, warn you to run far away and hide. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia has plotted against you, and this is what he says,

<sup>31</sup>Come on! We'll attack those people that feel safe and secure! Their city has no gates or locks and is completely unprotected.

<sup>32</sup>Take their camels and all their livestock! I will scatter in every direction those people who cut their hair short, and I will bring disaster on them from every side.

<sup>33</sup>Hazor will be made a desert forever, a place where only jackals live. No one will ever live there again. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>34</sup>Soon after Zedekiah became king of Judah, the LORD Almighty spoke to me about the country of Elam.

<sup>35</sup>He said, I will kill all the archers who have made Elam so powerful.

<sup>36</sup>I will make winds blow against Elam from all directions, and I will scatter her people everywhere, until there is no country where her refugees have not gone.

<sup>37</sup>I will make the people of Elam afraid of their enemies, who want to kill them. In my great anger I will destroy the people of Elam and send armies against them until I have wiped them out.

<sup>38</sup>I will destroy their kings and leaders, and set up my throne there.

<sup>39</sup>But later on I will make the people of Elam prosperous again. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**50**<sup>1</sup>This is the message that the LORD gave me about the city of Babylon and its people:

<sup>2</sup>Tell the news to the nations! Proclaim it! Give the signal and announce the news! Do not keep it a secret! Babylon has fallen! Her god Marduk has been shattered! Babylon's idols are put to shame; her disgusting images are crushed!

<sup>3</sup>A nation from the north has come to attack Babylonia and will make it a desert. People and animals will run away, and no one will live there.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD says, When that time comes, the people of both Israel and Judah will come weeping, looking for me, their God.

<sup>5</sup>They will ask the way to Zion and then go in that direction. They will make an eternal covenant with me and never break it.

<sup>6</sup>My people are like sheep whose shepherds have let them get lost in the mountains. They have wandered like

sheep from one mountain to another, and they have forgotten where their home is.

<sup>7</sup>They are attacked by all who find them. Their enemies say, They sinned against the LORD, and so what we have done is not wrong. Their ancestors trusted in the LORD, and they themselves should have remained faithful to him.

<sup>8</sup>People of Israel, run away from Babylonia! Leave the country! Be the first to leave!

<sup>9</sup>I am going to stir up a group of strong nations in the north and make them attack Babylonia. They will line up in battle against the country and conquer it. They are skillful hunters, shooting arrows that never miss the mark.

<sup>10</sup>Babylonia will be looted, and those who loot it will take everything they want. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, People of Babylonia, you plundered my nation. You are happy and glad, going about like a cow threshing grain or like a neighing horse,

<sup>12</sup>but your own great city will be humiliated and disgraced. Babylonia will

be the least important nation of all; it will become a dry and waterless desert.

<sup>13</sup>Because of my anger no one will live in Babylon; it will be left in ruins, and all who pass by will be shocked and amazed.

<sup>14</sup>Archers, line up for battle against Babylon and surround it. Shoot all your arrows at Babylon, because it has sinned against me, the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>Raise the war cry all around the city! Now Babylon has surrendered. Its walls have been broken through and torn down. I am taking my revenge on the Babylonians. So take your revenge on them, and treat them as they have treated others.

<sup>16</sup>Do not let seeds be planted in that country nor let a harvest be gathered. Every foreigner living there will be afraid of the attacking army and will go back home.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD says, The people of Israel are like sheep, chased and scattered by lions. First, they were attacked by the emperor of Assyria, and then King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia gnawed on their bones.



<sup>18</sup>Because of this, I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, will punish King Nebuchadnezzar and his country, just as I punished the emperor of Assyria.

<sup>19</sup>I will restore the people of Israel to their land. They will eat the food that grows on Mount Carmel and in the region of Bashan, and they will eat all they want of the crops that grow in the territories of Ephraim and Gilead.

<sup>20</sup>When that time comes, no sin will be found in Israel and no wickedness in Judah, because I will forgive those people whose lives I have spared. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD says, Attack the people of Merathaim and of Pekod. Kill and destroy them. Do everything I command you. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>22</sup>The noise of battle is heard in the land, and there is great destruction.

<sup>23</sup>Babylonia hammered the whole world to pieces, and now that hammer is shattered! All the nations are shocked at what has happened to that country.

<sup>24</sup>Babylonia, you fought against me, and you have been caught in the trap

I set for you, even though you did not know it.

<sup>25</sup>I have opened the place where my weapons are stored, and in my anger I have taken them out, because I, the Sovereign LORD Almighty, have work to do in Babylonia.

<sup>26</sup>Attack it from every side and break open the places where its grain is stored! Pile up the loot like piles of grain! Destroy the country! Leave nothing at all!

<sup>27</sup>Kill all their soldiers! Slaughter them! The people of Babylonia are doomed! The time has come for them to be punished!

<sup>28</sup>(Refugees escape from Babylonia and come to Jerusalem, and they tell how the LORD our God took revenge for what the Babylonians had done to his Temple.)

<sup>29</sup>Tell the archers to attack Babylon. Send out everyone who knows how to use the bow and arrow. Surround the city and don't let anyone escape. Pay it back for all it has done, and treat it as it has treated others, because it acted with pride against me, the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>30</sup>So its young men will be killed in the city streets, and all its soldiers will be

destroyed on that day. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>31</sup> Babylonia, you are filled with pride, so I, the Sovereign LORD Almighty, am against you! The time has come for me to punish you.

<sup>32</sup> Your proud nation will stumble and fall, and no one will help you up. I will set your cities on fire, and everything around will be destroyed.

<sup>33</sup> The LORD Almighty says, The people of Israel and of Judah are oppressed. All who captured them are guarding them closely and will not let them go.

<sup>34</sup> But the one who will rescue them is strong -- his name is the LORD Almighty. He himself will take up their cause and will bring peace to the earth, but trouble to the people of Babylonia.

<sup>35</sup> The LORD says, Death to Babylonia! Death to its people, to its rulers, to its people of wisdom.

<sup>36</sup> Death to its lying prophets -- what fools they are! Death to its soldiers -- how terrified they are!

<sup>37</sup> Destroy its horses and chariots! Death to its hired soldiers -- how weak

they are! Destroy its treasures; plunder and loot.

<sup>38</sup>Bring a drought on its land and dry up its rivers. Babylonia is a land of terrifying idols that have made fools of the people.

<sup>39</sup>And so Babylon will be haunted by demons and evil spirits, and by unclean birds. Never again will people live there, not for all time to come.

<sup>40</sup>The same thing will happen to Babylon that happened to Sodom and Gomorrah, when I destroyed them and the nearby towns. No one will ever live there again. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>41</sup>People are coming from a country in the north, a mighty nation far away; many kings are preparing for war.

<sup>42</sup>They have taken their bows and swords; they are cruel and merciless. They sound like the roaring sea, as they ride their horses. They are ready for battle against Babylonia.

<sup>43</sup>The king of Babylonia hears the news, and his hands hang limp. He is seized by anguish, by pain like a woman in labor.

<sup>44</sup>Like a lion coming out of the thick woods along the Jordan up to the green pasture land, I, the LORD, will come

and make the Babylonians run away suddenly from their city. Then the leader I choose will rule the nation. Who can be compared to me? Who would dare challenge me? What ruler could oppose me?

<sup>45</sup> So listen to the plan that I have made against the city of Babylon and to what I intend to do to its people. Even their children will be dragged off, and everyone will be horrified.

<sup>46</sup> When Babylon falls, there will be such a noise that the entire earth will shake, and the cries of alarm will be heard by the other nations.

**51** <sup>1</sup> The LORD says, I am bringing a destructive wind against Babylonia and its people.

<sup>2</sup> I will send foreigners to destroy Babylonia like a wind that blows straw away. When that day of destruction comes, they will attack from every side and leave the land bare.

<sup>3</sup> Don't give its soldiers time to shoot their arrows or to put on their armor. Do not spare the young men! Destroy the whole army!

<sup>4</sup>They will be wounded and die in the streets of their cities.

<sup>5</sup>I, the LORD God Almighty, have not abandoned Israel and Judah, even though they have sinned against me, the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>6</sup>Run away from Babylonia! Run for your lives! Do not be killed because of Babylonia's sin. I am now taking my revenge and punishing it as it deserves.

<sup>7</sup>Babylonia was like a gold cup in my hand, making the whole world drunk. The nations drank its wine and went out of their minds.

<sup>8</sup>Babylonia has suddenly fallen and is destroyed! Mourn over it! Get medicine for its wounds, and maybe it can be healed.

<sup>9</sup>Foreigners living there said, We tried to help Babylonia, but it was too late. Let's leave now and go back home. God has punished Babylonia with all his might and has destroyed it completely.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says, My people shout, The LORD has shown that we are in the right. Let's go and tell the people in Jerusalem what the LORD our God has done.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD has stirred up the kings of Media, because he intends to destroy Babylonia. That is how he will take revenge for the destruction of his Temple. The attacking officers command, Sharpen your arrows! Get your shields ready!

<sup>12</sup> Give the signal to attack Babylon's walls. Strengthen the guard! Post the sentries! Place troops in ambush! The LORD has done what he said he would do to the people of Babylonia.

<sup>13</sup> That country has many rivers and rich treasures, but its time is up, and its thread of life is cut.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD Almighty has sworn by his own life that he will bring many men to attack Babylonia like a swarm of locusts, and they will shout with victory.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD made the earth by his power; by his wisdom he created the world and stretched out the heavens.

<sup>16</sup> At his command the waters above the sky roar; he brings clouds from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning flash in the rain and sends the wind from his storeroom.

<sup>17</sup> At the sight of this, people feel stupid and senseless; those who make idols are disillusioned because the gods they make are false and lifeless.

<sup>18</sup> They are worthless and should be despised; they will be destroyed when the LORD comes to deal with them.

<sup>19</sup> The God of Jacob is not like them; he is the one who made everything, and he has chosen Israel to be his very own people. The LORD Almighty is his name.

<sup>20</sup> The LORD says, Babylonia, you are my hammer, my weapon of war. I used you to crush nations and kingdoms,

<sup>21</sup> to shatter horses and riders, to shatter chariots and their drivers,

<sup>22</sup> to kill men and women, to slay old and young, to kill boys and girls,

<sup>23</sup> to slaughter shepherds and their flocks, to slaughter farmers and their plow horses, to crush rulers and high officials.

<sup>24</sup> The LORD says, You will see me repay Babylonia and its people for all the evil they did to Jerusalem.

<sup>25</sup> Babylonia, you are like a mountain that destroys the whole world, but I, the LORD, am your enemy. I will take hold of



you, level you to the ground, and leave you in ashes.

<sup>26</sup>None of the stones from your ruins will ever be used again for building. You will be like a desert forever. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>27</sup>Give the signal to attack! Blow the trumpet so that the nations can hear! Prepare the nations for war against Babylonia! Tell the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz to attack. Appoint an officer to lead the attack. Bring up the horses like a swarm of locusts.

<sup>28</sup>Prepare the nations for war against Babylonia. Send for the kings of Media, their leaders and officials, and the armies of all the countries they control.

<sup>29</sup>The earth trembles and shakes because the LORD is carrying out his plan to make Babylonia a desert, where no one lives.

<sup>30</sup>The Babylonian soldiers have stopped fighting and remain in their forts. They have lost their courage and have become helpless. The city gates are broken down, and the houses are on fire.

<sup>31</sup> Messenger after messenger runs to tell the king of Babylonia that his city has been broken into from every side.

<sup>32</sup> The enemy have captured the river crossing and have set the fortresses on fire. The Babylonian soldiers have panicked.

<sup>33</sup> Soon the enemy will cut them down and trample them like grain on a threshing place. I, the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, have spoken.

<sup>34</sup> The king of Babylonia cut Jerusalem up and ate it. He emptied the city like a jar; like a monster he swallowed it. He took what he wanted and threw the rest away.

<sup>35</sup> Let the people of Zion say, May Babylonia be held responsible for the violence done to us! Let the people of Jerusalem say, May Babylonia be held responsible for what we have suffered!

<sup>36</sup> And so the LORD said to the people of Jerusalem, I will take up your cause and will make your enemies pay for what they did to you. I will dry up the source of Babylonia's water and make its rivers go dry.

<sup>37</sup> That country will become a pile of ruins where wild animals live. It will be a horrible sight; no one will live there, and all who see it will be terrified.

<sup>38</sup> The Babylonians all roar like lions and growl like lion cubs.

<sup>39</sup> Are they greedy? I will prepare them a feast and make them drunk and happy. They will go to sleep and never wake up.

<sup>40</sup> I will take them to be slaughtered, like lambs, goats, and rams. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>41</sup> The LORD says about Babylon: The city that the whole world praised has been captured! What a horrifying sight Babylon has become to the nations!

<sup>42</sup> The sea has rolled over Babylon and covered it with roaring waves.

<sup>43</sup> The towns have become a horrifying sight and are like a waterless desert, where no one lives or even travels.

<sup>44</sup> I will punish Bel, the god of Babylonia, and make him give up his stolen goods; the nations will not worship him any more. Babylon's walls have fallen.

<sup>45</sup> People of Israel, run away from there! Run for your life from my fierce anger.

<sup>46</sup>Do not lose courage or be afraid because of the rumors you hear. Every year a different rumor spreads -- rumors of violence in the land and of one king fighting another.

<sup>47</sup>And so the time is coming when I will deal with Babylon's idols. The whole country will be put to shame, and all its people will be killed.

<sup>48</sup>Everything on earth and in the sky will shout for joy when Babylon falls to the people who come from the north to destroy it.

<sup>49</sup>Babylon caused the death of people all over the world, and now Babylon will fall because it caused the death of so many Israelites. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>50</sup>The LORD says to his people in Babylon: You have escaped death! Now go! Don't wait! Though you are far from home, think about me, your LORD, and remember Jerusalem.

<sup>51</sup>You say, We've been disgraced and made ashamed; we feel completely helpless because foreigners have taken over the holy places in the Temple.

<sup>52</sup> So then, I say that the time is coming when I will deal with Babylon's idols, and the wounded will groan throughout the country.

<sup>53</sup> Even if Babylon could climb to the sky and build a strong fortress there, I would still send people to destroy it. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>54</sup> The LORD says, Listen to the sound of crying in Babylon, of mourning for the destruction in the land.

<sup>55</sup> I am destroying Babylon and putting it to silence. The armies rush in like roaring waves and attack with noisy shouts.

<sup>56</sup> They have come to destroy Babylon; its soldiers are captured, and their bows are broken. I am a God who punishes evil, and I will treat Babylon as it deserves.

<sup>57</sup> I will make its rulers drunk -- men of wisdom, leaders, and soldiers. They will go to sleep and never wake up. I, the king, have spoken; I am the LORD Almighty.

<sup>58</sup> The walls of mighty Babylon will be thrown to the ground, and its towering gates burned down. The work of the

nations is all for nothing; their efforts go up in flames. I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.

<sup>59</sup> King Zedekiah's personal attendant was Seraiah, the son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah. In the fourth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, Seraiah was going to Babylonia with him, and I gave him some instructions.

<sup>60</sup> I wrote in a book an account of all the destruction that would come on Babylonia, as well as all these other things about Babylonia.

<sup>61</sup> I told Seraiah, When you get to Babylon, be sure to read aloud to the people everything that is written here.

<sup>62</sup> Then pray, LORD, you have said that you would destroy this place, so that there would be no living creatures in it, neither people nor animals, and it would be like a desert forever.

<sup>63</sup> Seraiah, when you finish reading this book to the people, then tie it to a rock and throw it into the Euphrates River

<sup>64</sup> and say, This is what will happen to Babylonia -- it will sink and never rise again because of the destruction that the

LORD is going to bring on it. The words of Jeremiah end here.

**52**<sup>1</sup> Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of the Jeremiah who lived in the city of Libnah.

<sup>2</sup> King Zedekiah sinned against the LORD, just as King Jehoiakim had done.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD became so angry with the people of Jerusalem and Judah that he banished them from his sight. Zedekiah rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia,

<sup>4</sup> 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,

<sup>5</sup> and kept it under siege until Zedekiah's eleventh year.

<sup>6</sup> 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,

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> But the Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah, captured him in the plains near Jericho, and all his soldiers deserted him.

<sup>9</sup> Zedekiah was taken to King Nebuchadnezzar, who was in the city of Riblah in the territory of Hamath, and there Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him.

<sup>10</sup> At Riblah he put Zedekiah's sons to death while Zedekiah was looking on and he also had the officials of Judah executed.

<sup>11</sup> After that, he had Zedekiah's eyes put out and had him placed in chains and taken to Babylon. Zedekiah remained in prison in Babylon until the day he died.

<sup>12</sup> On the tenth 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.

<sup>13</sup>He burned down the Temple, the palace, and the houses of all the important people in Jerusalem;

<sup>14</sup>and his soldiers tore down the city walls.

<sup>15</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>But he left in Judah some of the poorest people, who owned no property, and he put them to work in the vineyards and fields.

<sup>17</sup>The 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.

<sup>18</sup>They 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.

<sup>19</sup>They took away everything that was made of gold or silver: the small bowls, the pans used for carrying live coals, the bowls for holding the blood from the sacrifices, the ash containers, the lampstands, the bowls used for incense, and the bowls used for pouring out wine offerings.

<sup>20</sup>The bronze objects that King Solomon had made for the Temple -- the two columns, the carts, the large tank, and the twelve bulls that supported it -- were too heavy to weigh.

<sup>21</sup>The two columns were identical: each one was 27 feet high and 18 feet around. They were hollow, and the metal was 3 inches thick. On top of each column was a bronze capital 7 1/2 feet high, and all around it was a grillwork decorated with pomegranates, all of which was also made of bronze.

<sup>22</sup>(52: 21)

<sup>23</sup>On the grillwork of each column there were a hundred pomegranates in all, and ninety-six of these were visible from the ground.

<sup>24</sup>In 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.

<sup>25</sup>From the city he took the officer who had been in command of the troops, seven 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.

<sup>26</sup>Nebuzaradan took them to the king of Babylonia, who was in the city of Riblah

<sup>27</sup>in 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.

<sup>28</sup>This is the record of the people that Nebuchadnezzar took away as prisoners: in his seventh year as king he carried away 3,023;

<sup>29</sup>in his eighteenth year, 832 from Jerusalem;

<sup>30</sup>and in his twenty-third year, 745 -- taken away by Nebuzaradan. In all, 4,600 people were taken away.

<sup>31</sup> In the year that Evil-merodach became king of Babylonia, he showed kindness to King Jehoiachin of Judah by releasing him from prison. This happened on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh year after Jehoiachin had been taken away as a prisoner.

<sup>32</sup> Evil-merodach treated him kindly and gave him a position of greater honor than he gave the other kings who were exiles with him in Babylonia.

<sup>33</sup> So Jehoiachin was permitted to change from his prison clothes and to dine at the king's table for the rest of his life.

<sup>34</sup> Each day for as long as he lived, he was given a regular allowance for his needs.

# Lamentations

**1** <sup>1</sup> How lonely lies Jerusalem, once so full of people! Once honored by the world, she is now like a widow; The noblest of cities has fallen into slavery.

<sup>2</sup> All night long she cries; tears run down her cheeks. Of all her former friends, not one is left to comfort her. Her allies have betrayed her and are all against her now.

<sup>3</sup> Judah's people are helpless slaves, forced away from home. They live in other lands, with no place to call their own -- Surrounded by enemies, with no way to escape.

<sup>4</sup> No one comes to the Temple now to worship on the holy days. The young women who sang there suffer, and the priests can only groan. The city gates stand empty, and Zion is in agony.

<sup>5</sup> Her enemies succeeded; they hold her in their power. The LORD has made her suffer for all her many sins; Her children have been captured and taken away.

<sup>6</sup>The splendor of Jerusalem is a thing of the past. Her leaders are like deer that are weak from hunger, whose strength is almost gone as they flee from the hunters.

<sup>7</sup>A lonely ruin now, Jerusalem recalls her ancient splendor. When she fell to the enemy, there was no one to help her; Her conquerors laughed at her downfall.

<sup>8</sup>Her honor is gone; she is naked and held in contempt. She groans and hides her face in shame. Jerusalem made herself filthy with terrible sin.

<sup>9</sup>Her uncleanness was easily seen, but she showed no concern for her fate. Her downfall was terrible; no one can comfort her. Her enemies have won, and she cries to the LORD for mercy.

<sup>10</sup>The enemies robbed her of all her treasures. She saw them enter the Temple itself, where the LORD had forbidden Gentiles to go.

<sup>11</sup>Her people groan as they look for something to eat; They exchange their treasures for food to keep themselves alive. Look at me, LORD, the city cries; see me in my misery.

<sup>12</sup>Look at me! she cries to everyone who passes by. No one has ever had pain like mine, Pain that the LORD brought on me in the time of his anger.

<sup>13</sup>He sent fire from above, a fire that burned inside me. He set a trap for me and brought me to the ground. Then he abandoned me and left me in constant pain.

<sup>14</sup>He took note of all my sins and tied them all together; He hung them around my neck, and I grew weak beneath the weight. The Lord gave me to my foes, and I was helpless against them.

<sup>15</sup>The Lord laughed at all my strongest soldiers; He sent an army to destroy my young men. He crushed my people like grapes in a wine press.

<sup>16</sup>That is why my eyes are overflowing with tears. No one can comfort me; no one can give me courage. The enemy has conquered me; my people have nothing left.

<sup>17</sup>I stretch out my hands, but no one will help me. The LORD has called enemies against me from every side; They treat me like some filthy thing.

<sup>18</sup>But the LORD is just, for I have disobeyed him. Listen to me, people everywhere; look at me in my pain. My young men and women have been taken away captive.

<sup>19</sup>I called to my allies, but they refused to help me. The priests and the leaders died in the city streets, Looking for food to keep themselves alive.

<sup>20</sup>Look, O LORD, at my agony, at the anguish of my soul! My heart is broken in sorrow for my sins. There is murder in the streets; even indoors there is death.

<sup>21</sup>Listen to my groans; there is no one to comfort me. My enemies are glad that you brought disaster on me. Bring the day you promised; make my enemies suffer as I do.

<sup>22</sup>Condemn them for all their wickedness; Punish them as you punished me for my sins. I groan in misery, and I am sick at heart.

**2**<sup>1</sup>The Lord in his anger has covered Zion with darkness. Its heavenly splendor he has turned into ruins. On the day of his anger he abandoned even his Temple.



<sup>2</sup>The Lord destroyed without mercy every village in Judah And tore down the forts that defended the land. He brought disgrace on the kingdom and its rulers.

<sup>3</sup>In his fury he shattered the strength of Israel; He refused to help us when the enemy came. He raged against us like fire, destroying everything.

<sup>4</sup>He aimed his arrows at us like an enemy; He killed all those who were our joy and delight. Here in Jerusalem we felt his burning anger.

<sup>5</sup>Like an enemy, the Lord has destroyed Israel; He has left her forts and palaces in ruins. He has brought on the people of Judah unending sorrow.

<sup>6</sup>He smashed to pieces the Temple where we worshiped him; He has put an end to holy days and Sabbaths. King and priest alike have felt the force of his anger.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord rejected his altar and deserted his holy Temple; He allowed the enemy to tear down its walls. They shouted in victory where once we had worshiped in joy.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD was determined that the walls of Zion should fall; He

measured them off to make sure of total destruction. The towers and walls now lie in ruins together.

<sup>9</sup>The gates lie buried in rubble, their bars smashed to pieces. The king and the noblemen now are in exile. The Law is no longer taught, and the prophets have no visions from the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>Jerusalem's old men sit on the ground in silence, With dust on their heads and sackcloth on their bodies. Young women bow their heads to the ground.

<sup>11</sup>My eyes are worn out with weeping; my soul is in anguish. I am exhausted with grief at the destruction of my people. Children and babies are fainting in the streets of the city.

<sup>12</sup>Hungry and thirsty, they cry to their mothers; They fall in the streets as though they were wounded, And slowly die in their mothers' arms.

<sup>13</sup>O Jerusalem, beloved Jerusalem, what can I say? How can I comfort you? No one has ever suffered like this. Your disaster is boundless as the ocean; there is no possible hope.

<sup>14</sup>Your prophets had nothing to tell you but lies; Their preaching deceived you

by never exposing your sin. They made you think you did not need to repent.

<sup>15</sup>People passing by the city look at you in scorn. They shake their heads and laugh at Jerusalem's ruins: Is this that lovely city? Is this the pride of the world?

<sup>16</sup>All your enemies mock you and glare at you with hate. They curl their lips and sneer, We have destroyed it! This is the day we have waited for!

<sup>17</sup>The LORD has finally done what he threatened to do: He has destroyed us without mercy, as he warned us long ago. He gave our enemies victory, gave them joy at our downfall.

<sup>18</sup>O Jerusalem, let your very walls cry out to the Lord! Let your tears flow like rivers night and day; Wear yourself out with weeping and grief!

<sup>19</sup>All through the night get up again and again to cry out to the Lord; Pour out your heart and beg him for mercy on your children -- Children starving to death on every street corner!

<sup>20</sup>Look, O LORD! Why are you punishing us like this? Women are eating the bodies of the children they loved! Priests

and prophets are being killed in the Temple itself!

<sup>21</sup> Young and old alike lie dead in the streets, Young men and women, killed by enemy swords. You slaughtered them without mercy on the day of your anger.

<sup>22</sup> You invited my enemies to hold a carnival of terror all around me, And no one could escape on that day of your anger. They murdered my children, whom I had raised and loved.

**3**<sup>1</sup> I am one who knows what it is to be punished by God.

<sup>2</sup> He drove me deeper and deeper into darkness

<sup>3</sup> And beat me again and again with merciless blows.

<sup>4</sup> He has left my flesh open and raw, and has broken my bones.

<sup>5</sup> He has shut me in a prison of misery and anguish.

<sup>6</sup> He has forced me to live in the stagnant darkness of death.

<sup>7</sup> He has bound me in chains; I am a prisoner with no hope of escape.

<sup>8</sup> I cry aloud for help, but God refuses to listen;

<sup>9</sup>I stagger as I walk; stone walls block me wherever I turn.

<sup>10</sup>He waited for me like a bear; he pounced on me like a lion.

<sup>11</sup>He chased me off the road, tore me to pieces, and left me.

<sup>12</sup>He drew his bow and made me the target for his arrows.

<sup>13</sup>He shot his arrows deep into my body.

<sup>14</sup>People laugh at me all day long; I am a joke to them all.

<sup>15</sup>Bitter suffering is all he has given me for food and drink.

<sup>16</sup>He rubbed my face in the ground and broke my teeth on rocks.

<sup>17</sup>I have forgotten what health and peace and happiness are.

<sup>18</sup>I do not have much longer to live; my hope in the LORD is gone.

<sup>19</sup>The thought of my pain, my homelessness, is bitter poison.

<sup>20</sup>I think of it constantly, and my spirit is depressed.

<sup>21</sup>Yet hope returns when I remember this one thing:

<sup>22</sup>The LORD's unfailing love and mercy still continue,

<sup>23</sup> Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise.

<sup>24</sup> The LORD is all I have, and so in him I put my hope.

<sup>25</sup> The LORD is good to everyone who trusts in him,

<sup>26</sup> So it is best for us to wait in patience -- to wait for him to save us --

<sup>27</sup> And it is best to learn this patience in our youth.

<sup>28</sup> When we suffer, we should sit alone in silent patience;

<sup>29</sup> We should bow in submission, for there may still be hope.

<sup>30</sup> Though beaten and insulted, we should accept it all.

<sup>31</sup> The Lord is merciful and will not reject us forever.

<sup>32</sup> He may bring us sorrow, but his love for us is sure and strong.

<sup>33</sup> He takes no pleasure in causing us grief or pain.

<sup>34</sup> The Lord knows when our spirits are crushed in prison;

<sup>35</sup> He knows when we are denied the rights he gave us;

<sup>36</sup> When justice is perverted in court, he knows.

<sup>37</sup> The will of the Lord alone is always carried out.

<sup>38</sup> Good and evil alike take place at his command.

<sup>39</sup> Why should we ever complain when we are punished for our sin?

<sup>40</sup> Let us examine our ways and turn back to the LORD.

<sup>41</sup> Let us open our hearts to God in heaven and pray,

<sup>42</sup> We have sinned and rebelled, and you, O LORD, have not forgiven us.

<sup>43</sup> You pursued us and killed us; your mercy was hidden by your anger,

<sup>44</sup> By a cloud of fury too thick for our prayers to get through.

<sup>45</sup> You have made us the garbage dump of the world.

<sup>46</sup> We are insulted and mocked by all our enemies.

<sup>47</sup> We have been through disaster and ruin; we live in danger and fear.

<sup>48</sup> My eyes flow with rivers of tears at the destruction of my people.

<sup>49</sup> My tears will pour out in a ceaseless stream

<sup>50</sup> Until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees us.

<sup>51</sup> My heart is grieved when I see what has happened to the women of the city.

<sup>52</sup> I was trapped like a bird by enemies who had no cause to hate me.

<sup>53</sup> They threw me alive into a pit and closed the opening with a stone.

<sup>54</sup> Water began to close over me, and I thought death was near.

<sup>55</sup> From the bottom of the pit, O LORD, I cried out to you,

<sup>56</sup> And when I begged you to listen to my cry, you heard.

<sup>57</sup> You answered me and told me not to be afraid.

<sup>58</sup> You came to my rescue, Lord, and saved my life.

<sup>59</sup> Judge in my favor; you know the wrongs done against me.

<sup>60</sup> You know how my enemies hate me and how they plot against me.

<sup>61</sup> You have heard them insult me, O LORD; you know all their plots.

<sup>62</sup> All day long they talk about me and make their plans.

<sup>63</sup> From morning till night they make fun of me.

<sup>64</sup> Punish them for what they have done, O LORD;



<sup>65</sup> Curse them and fill them with despair!

<sup>66</sup> Hunt them down and wipe them off the earth!

**4** <sup>1</sup> Our glittering gold has grown dull; the stones of the Temple lie scattered in the streets.

<sup>2</sup> Zion's young people were as precious to us as gold, but now they are treated like common clay pots.

<sup>3</sup> Even a mother wolf will nurse her cubs, but my people are like ostriches, cruel to their young.

<sup>4</sup> They let their babies die of hunger and thirst; children are begging for food that no one will give them.

<sup>5</sup> People who once ate the finest foods die starving in the streets; those raised in luxury are pawing through garbage for food.

<sup>6</sup> My people have been punished even more than the inhabitants of Sodom, which met a sudden downfall at the hands of God.

<sup>7</sup> Our princes were undefiled and pure as snow, vigorous and strong, glowing with health.

<sup>8</sup>Now they lie unknown in the streets, their faces blackened in death; their skin, dry as wood, has shriveled on their bones.

<sup>9</sup>Those who died in the war were better off than those who died later, who starved slowly to death, with no food to keep them alive.

<sup>10</sup>The disaster that came to my people brought horror; loving mothers boiled their own children for food.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD turned loose the full force of his fury; he lit a fire in Zion that burned it to the ground.

<sup>12</sup>No one anywhere, not even rulers of foreign nations, believed that any invader could enter Jerusalem's gates.

<sup>13</sup>But it happened, because her prophets sinned and her priests were guilty of causing the death of innocent people.

<sup>14</sup>Her leaders wandered through the streets as though blind, so stained with blood that no one would touch them.

<sup>15</sup>Get away! people shouted. You're defiled! Don't touch me! So they wandered from nation to nation, welcomed by no one.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD had no more concern for them; he scattered them himself. He showed no regard for our priests and leaders.

<sup>17</sup>For help that never came, we looked until we could look no longer. We kept waiting for help from a nation that had none to give.

<sup>18</sup>The enemy was watching for us; we could not even walk in the streets. Our days were over; the end had come.

<sup>19</sup>Swifter than eagles swooping from the sky, they chased us down. They tracked us down in the hills; they took us by surprise in the desert.

<sup>20</sup>They captured the source of our life, the king the LORD had chosen, the one we had trusted to protect us from every invader.

<sup>21</sup>Laugh on, people of Edom and Uz; be glad while you can. Your disaster is coming too; you too will stagger naked in shame.

<sup>22</sup>Zion has paid for her sin; the LORD will not keep us in exile any longer. But Edom, the LORD will punish you; he will expose your guilty acts.

**5**<sup>1</sup> Remember, O LORD, what has happened to us. Look at us, and see our disgrace.

<sup>2</sup> Our property is in the hands of strangers; foreigners are living in our homes.

<sup>3</sup> Our fathers have been killed by the enemy, and now our mothers are widows.

<sup>4</sup> We must pay for the water we drink; we must buy the wood we need for fuel.

<sup>5</sup> Driven hard like donkeys or camels, we are tired, but are allowed no rest.

<sup>6</sup> To get food enough to stay alive, we went begging to Egypt and Assyria.

<sup>7</sup> Our ancestors sinned, but now they are gone, and we are suffering for their sins.

<sup>8</sup> Our rulers are no better than slaves, and no one can save us from their power.

<sup>9</sup> Murderers roam through the countryside; we risk our lives when we look for food.

<sup>10</sup> Hunger has made us burn with fever until our skin is as hot as an oven.

<sup>11</sup> Our wives have been raped on Mount Zion itself; in every Judean village our daughters have been forced to submit.

<sup>12</sup>Our leaders have been taken and hanged; our elders are shown no respect.

<sup>13</sup>Our young men are forced to grind grain like slaves; boys go staggering under heavy loads of wood.

<sup>14</sup>The old people no longer sit at the city gate, and the young people no longer make music.

<sup>15</sup>Happiness has gone out of our lives; grief has taken the place of our dances.

<sup>16</sup>Nothing is left of all we were proud of. We sinned, and now we are doomed.

<sup>17</sup>We are sick at our very hearts and can hardly see through our tears,

<sup>18</sup>because Mount Zion lies lonely and deserted, and wild jackals prowl through its ruins.

<sup>19</sup>But you, O LORD, are king forever and will rule to the end of time.

<sup>20</sup>Why have you abandoned us so long? Will you ever remember us again?

<sup>21</sup>Bring us back to you, LORD! Bring us back! Restore our ancient glory.

<sup>22</sup>Or have you rejected us forever? Is there no limit to your anger?

# Ezekiel

**1** <sup>1</sup> On the fifth day of the fourth month of the thirtieth year, I, Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, was living with the Jewish exiles by the Chebar River in Babylonia. The sky opened, and I saw a vision of God.

<sup>2</sup> (It was the fifth year since King Jehoiachin had been taken into exile.)

<sup>3</sup> There in Babylonia beside the Chebar River, I heard the LORD speak to me, and I felt his power.

<sup>4</sup> I looked up and saw a windstorm coming from the north. Lightning was flashing from a huge cloud, and the sky around it was glowing. Where the lightning was flashing, something shone like bronze.

<sup>5</sup> At the center of the storm I saw what looked like four living creatures in human form,

<sup>6</sup> but each of them had four faces and four wings.

<sup>7</sup> Their legs were straight, and they had hoofs like those of a bull. They shone like polished bronze.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to their four faces and four wings, they each had four human hands, one under each wing.

<sup>9</sup> Two wings of each creature were spread out so that the creatures formed a square, with their wing tips touching. When they moved, they moved as a group without turning their bodies.

<sup>10</sup> Each living creature had four different faces: a human face in front, a lion's face at the right, a bull's face at the left, and an eagle's face at the back.

<sup>11</sup> Two wings of each creature were raised so that they touched the tips of the wings of the creatures next to it, and their other two wings were folded against their bodies.

<sup>12</sup> Each creature faced all four directions, and so the group could go wherever they wished, without having to turn.

<sup>13</sup> Among the creatures there was something that looked like a blazing torch, constantly moving. The fire

would blaze up and shoot out flashes of lightning.

<sup>14</sup>The creatures themselves darted back and forth with the speed of lightning.

<sup>15</sup>As I was looking at the four creatures I saw four wheels touching the ground, one beside each of them.

<sup>16</sup>All four wheels were alike; each one shone like a precious stone, and each had another wheel intersecting it at right angles,

<sup>17</sup>so that the wheels could move in any of the four directions.

<sup>18</sup>The rims of the wheels were covered with eyes.

<sup>19</sup>Whenever the creatures moved, the wheels moved with them, and if the creatures rose up from the earth, so did the wheels.

<sup>20</sup>The creatures went wherever they wished, and the wheels did exactly what the creatures did, because the creatures controlled them.

<sup>21</sup>So every time the creatures moved or stopped or rose in the air, the wheels did exactly the same.



<sup>22</sup> Above the heads of the creatures there was something that looked like a dome made of dazzling crystal.

<sup>23</sup> There under the dome stood the creatures, each stretching out two wings toward the ones next to it and covering its body with the other two wings.

<sup>24</sup> I heard the noise their wings made in flight; it sounded like the roar of the sea, like the noise of a huge army, like the voice of Almighty God. When they stopped flying, they folded their wings,

<sup>25</sup> but there was still a sound coming from above the dome over their heads.

<sup>26</sup> Above the dome there was something that looked like a throne made of sapphire, and sitting on the throne was a figure that looked like a human being.

<sup>27</sup> The figure seemed to be shining like bronze in the middle of a fire. It shone all over with a bright light

<sup>28</sup> that had in it all the colors of the rainbow. This was the dazzling light which shows the presence of the LORD. When I saw this, I fell face downward on the ground. Then I heard a voice

**2**<sup>1</sup> saying, Mortal man, stand up. I want to talk to you.

<sup>2</sup>While the voice was speaking, God's spirit entered me and raised me to my feet, and I heard the voice continue,

<sup>3</sup>Mortal man, I am sending you to the people of Israel. They have rebelled and turned against me and are still rebels, just as their ancestors were.

<sup>4</sup>They are stubborn and do not respect me, so I am sending you to tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them.

<sup>5</sup>Whether those rebels listen to you or not, they will know that a prophet has been among them.

<sup>6</sup>But you, mortal man, must not be afraid of them or of anything they say. They will defy and despise you; it will be like living among scorpions. Still, don't be afraid of those rebels or of anything they say.

<sup>7</sup>You will tell them whatever I tell you to say, whether they listen or not. Remember what rebels they are.

<sup>8</sup>Mortal man, listen to what I tell you. Don't be rebellious like them. Open your

mouth and eat what I am going to give you.

<sup>9</sup>I saw a hand reaching out toward me, and it was holding a scroll.

<sup>10</sup>The hand unrolled the scroll, and I saw that there was writing on both sides -- cries of grief were written there, and wails and groans.

**3**<sup>1</sup> God said, Mortal man, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.

<sup>3</sup>He said, Mortal man, eat this scroll that I give you; fill your stomach with it. I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey.

<sup>4</sup>Then God said, Mortal man, go to the people of Israel and say to them whatever I tell you to say.

<sup>5</sup>I am not sending you to a nation that speaks a difficult foreign language, but to the Israelites.

<sup>6</sup>If I sent you to great nations that spoke difficult languages you didn't understand, they would listen to you.

<sup>7</sup>But none of the people of Israel will be willing to listen; they will not even

listen to me. All of them are stubborn and defiant.

<sup>8</sup>Now I will make you as stubborn and as tough as they are.

<sup>9</sup>I will make you as firm as a rock, as hard as a diamond; don't be afraid of those rebels.

<sup>10</sup>God continued, Mortal man, pay close attention and remember everything I tell you.

<sup>11</sup>Then go to the people of your nation who are in exile and tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them, whether they pay attention to you or not.

<sup>12</sup>Then God's spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the loud roar of a voice that said, Praise the glory of the LORD in heaven above!

<sup>13</sup>I heard the wings of the creatures beating together in the air, and the noise of the wheels, as loud as an earthquake.

<sup>14</sup>The power of the LORD came on me with great force, and as his spirit carried me off, I felt bitter and angry.

<sup>15</sup>So I came to Tel Abib beside the Chebar River, where the exiles were

living, and for seven days I stayed there, overcome by what I had seen and heard.

<sup>16</sup>After the seven days had passed, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>17</sup>Mortal man, he said, I am making you a lookout for the nation of Israel. You will pass on to them the warnings I give you.

<sup>18</sup>If I announce that someone evil is going to die but you do not warn him to change his ways so that he can save his life, he will die, still a sinner, but I will hold you responsible for his death.

<sup>19</sup>If you do warn an evil man and he doesn't stop sinning, he will die, still a sinner, but your life will be spared.

<sup>20</sup>If someone truly good starts doing evil and I put him in a dangerous situation, he will die if you do not warn him. He will die because of his sins -- I will not remember the good he did -- and I will hold you responsible for his death.

<sup>21</sup>If you do warn a good man not to sin and he listens to you and doesn't sin, he will stay alive, and your life will also be spared.

<sup>22</sup>I felt the powerful presence of the LORD and heard him say to me, Get up

and go out into the valley. I will talk to you there.

<sup>23</sup> So I went out into the valley, and there I saw the glory of the LORD, just as I had seen it beside the Chebar River. I fell face downward on the ground,

<sup>24</sup> but God's spirit entered me and raised me to my feet. The LORD said to me, Go home and shut yourself up in the house.

<sup>25</sup> You will be tied with ropes, mortal man, and you will not be able to go out in public.

<sup>26</sup> I will paralyze your tongue so that you won't be able to warn these rebellious people.

<sup>27</sup> Then, when I speak to you again and give you back the power of speech, you will tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying. Some of them will listen, but some will ignore you, for they are a nation of rebels.

**4**<sup>1</sup> God said, Mortal man, get a brick, put it in front of you, and scratch lines on it to represent the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>Then, to represent a siege, put trenches, earthworks, camps, and battering rams all around it.

<sup>3</sup>Take an iron pan and set it up like a wall between you and the city. Face the city. It is under siege, and you are the one besieging it. This will be a sign to the nation of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>Then lie down on your left side, and I will place on you the guilt of the nation of Israel. For 390 days you will stay there and suffer because of their guilt. I have sentenced you to one day for each year their punishment will last.

<sup>5</sup>(4: 4)

<sup>6</sup>When you finish that, turn over on your right side and suffer for the guilt of Judah for forty days -- one day for each year of their punishment.

<sup>7</sup>Fix your eyes on the siege of Jerusalem. Shake your fist at the city and prophesy against it.

<sup>8</sup>I will tie you up so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until the siege is over.

<sup>9</sup>Now take some wheat, barley, beans, peas, millet, and spelt. Mix them all together and make bread. That is what

you are to eat during the 390 days you are lying on your left side.

<sup>10</sup>You will be allowed eight ounces of bread a day, and it will have to last until the next day.

<sup>11</sup>You will also have a limited amount of water to drink, two cups a day.

<sup>12</sup>You are to build a fire out of dried human excrement, bake bread on the fire, and eat it where everyone can see you.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD said, This represents the way the Israelites will have to eat food which the Law forbids, when I scatter them to foreign countries.

<sup>14</sup>But I replied, No, Sovereign LORD! I have never defiled myself. From childhood on I have never eaten meat from any animal that died a natural death or was killed by wild animals. I have never eaten any food considered unclean.

<sup>15</sup>So God said, Very well. I will let you use cow dung instead, and you can bake your bread on that.

<sup>16</sup>And he added, Mortal man, I am going to cut off the supply of bread for Jerusalem. The people there will be



distressed and anxious as they measure out the food they eat and the water they drink.

<sup>17</sup>They will run out of bread and water; they will be in despair, and they will waste away because of their sins.

**5**<sup>1</sup>The LORD said, Mortal man, take a sharp sword and use it to shave off your beard and all your hair. Then weigh the hair on scales and divide it into three parts.

<sup>2</sup>Burn up a third of it in the city when the siege is over. Take another third and chop it up with your sword as you move around outside the city. Scatter the remaining third to the winds, and I will pursue it with my sword.

<sup>3</sup>Keep back a few hairs and wrap them in the hem of your clothes.

<sup>4</sup>Then take a few of them out again, throw them in the fire, and let them burn up. From them fire will spread to the whole nation of Israel.

<sup>5</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, Look at Jerusalem. I put her at the center of the world, with other countries all around her.

<sup>6</sup>But Jerusalem rebelled against my commands and showed that she was more wicked than the other nations, more disobedient than the countries around her. Jerusalem rejected my commands and refused to keep my laws.

<sup>7</sup>Now listen, Jerusalem, to what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying. By not obeying my laws or keeping my commands, you have caused more trouble than the nations around you. You have followed the customs of other nations.

<sup>8</sup>And so I, the Sovereign LORD, am telling you that I am your enemy. I will pass judgment on you where all the nations can see it.

<sup>9</sup>Because of all the things you do that I hate, I will punish Jerusalem as I have never done before and will never do again.

<sup>10</sup>As a result, parents in Jerusalem will eat their children, and children will eat their parents. I will punish you and scatter in every direction any who are left alive.

<sup>11</sup>Therefore, as I am the living God -- this is the word of the Sovereign LORD

-- because you defiled my Temple with all the evil, disgusting things you did, I will cut you down without mercy.

<sup>12</sup>A third of your people will die from sickness and hunger in the city; a third will be cut down by swords outside the city; and I will scatter the last third to the winds and pursue them with a sword.

<sup>13</sup>You will feel all the force of my anger and rage until I am satisfied. When all this happens, you will be convinced that I, the LORD, have spoken to you because I am outraged at your unfaithfulness.

<sup>14</sup>Everyone from the nations around you who passes by will sneer at you and keep their distance.

<sup>15</sup>When I am angry and furious with you and punish you, all the nations around you will be terrified. They will look at you with disgust and make fun of you.

<sup>16</sup>I will cut off your supply of food and let you starve. You will feel the pains of hunger like sharp arrows sent to destroy you.

<sup>17</sup>I will send hunger and wild animals to kill your children, and will send sickness,

violence, and war to kill you. I, the LORD, have spoken.

**6**<sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup> Mortal man, he said, look toward the mountains of Israel and give them my message.

<sup>3</sup> Tell the mountains of Israel to hear the Sovereign LORD's word -- to hear what I, the Sovereign LORD, am telling the mountains, the hills, the gorges, and the valleys: I will send a sword to destroy the places where people worship idols.

<sup>4</sup> The altars will be torn down and the incense altars broken. All the people there will be killed in front of their idols.

<sup>5</sup> I will scatter the corpses of the people of Israel; I will scatter their bones all around the altars.

<sup>6</sup> All the cities of Israel will be destroyed, so that all their altars and their idols will be smashed to pieces, their incense altars will be shattered, and everything they made will disappear.

<sup>7</sup> People will be killed everywhere, and those who survive will acknowledge that I am the LORD.

<sup>8</sup> I will let some escape the slaughter and be scattered among the nations,

<sup>9</sup>where they will live in exile. There they will remember me and know that I have punished them and disgraced them, because their faithless hearts deserted me and they preferred idols to me. And they will be disgusted with themselves because of the evil and degrading things they have done.

<sup>10</sup>They will know that I am the LORD and that my warnings were not empty threats.

<sup>11</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, Wring your hands! Stamp your feet! Cry in sorrow because of all the evil, disgusting things the Israelites have done. They are going to die in war or of starvation or disease.

<sup>12</sup>Those far away will get sick and die; those nearby will be killed in war; those who survive will starve to death. They will feel all the force of my anger.

<sup>13</sup>Corpses will be scattered among the idols and around the altars, scattered on every high hill, on the top of every mountain, under every green tree and every large oak, in every place where they burned sacrifices to their idols. Then everyone will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>Yes, I will reach out and destroy their country. I will make it a wasteland from the southern desert to the city of Riblah in the north, not sparing any place where the Israelites live. Then everyone will know that I am the LORD.

**7**<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, this is what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to the land of Israel: This is the end for the whole land!

<sup>3</sup>Israel, the end has come. You will feel my anger, because I am judging you for what you have done. I will pay you back for all your disgusting conduct.

<sup>4</sup>I will not spare you or show you any mercy. I am going to punish you for the disgusting things you have done, so that you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: One disaster after another is coming on you.

<sup>6</sup>It's all over. This is the end. You are finished.

<sup>7</sup>The end is coming for you people who live in the land. The time is near when there will be no more celebrations at the mountain shrines, only confusion.

<sup>8</sup>Very soon now you will feel all the force of my anger. I am judging you for what you have done, and I will pay you back for all your disgusting conduct.

<sup>9</sup>I will not spare you or show you any mercy. I am going to punish you for the disgusting things you have done, so that you will know that I am the LORD and that I am the one who punishes you.

<sup>10</sup>The day of disaster is coming. Violence is flourishing. Pride is at its height.

<sup>11</sup>Violence produces more wickedness. Nothing of theirs will remain, nothing of their wealth, their splendor, or their glory.

<sup>12</sup>The time is coming. The day is near when buying and selling will have no more meaning, because God's punishment will fall on everyone alike.

<sup>13</sup>No merchants will live long enough to get back what they have lost, because God's anger is on everyone. Those who are evil cannot survive.

<sup>14</sup>The trumpet blows, and everyone gets ready. But no one goes off to war, for God's anger will fall on everyone alike.

<sup>15</sup>There is fighting in the streets, and sickness and hunger in the houses. Anyone who is out in the country will die in the fighting, and anyone in the city will be a victim of sickness and hunger.

<sup>16</sup>Some will escape to the mountains like doves frightened from the valleys. All of them will moan over their sins.

<sup>17</sup>Everyone's hands will be weak, and their knees will shake.

<sup>18</sup>They will put on sackcloth and they will tremble all over. Their heads will be shaved, and they will all be disgraced.

<sup>19</sup>They will throw their gold and silver away in the streets like garbage, because neither silver nor gold can save them when the LORD pours out his fury. They cannot use it to satisfy their desires or fill their stomachs. Gold and silver led them into sin.

<sup>20</sup>Once they were proud of their beautiful jewels, but they used them to make disgusting idols. That is why the LORD has made their wealth repulsive to them.

<sup>21</sup>I will let foreigners rob them, says the LORD, and lawbreakers will take all their wealth and defile it.



<sup>22</sup>I will not interfere when my treasured Temple is profaned, when robbers break into it and defile it.

<sup>23</sup>Everything is in confusion -- the land is full of murders and the cities are full of violence.

<sup>24</sup>I will bring the most evil nations here and let them have your homes. Your strongest men will lose their confidence when I let the nations profane the places where you worship.

<sup>25</sup>Despair is coming. You will look for peace and never find it.

<sup>26</sup>One disaster will follow another, and a steady stream of bad news will pour in. You will beg the prophets to reveal what they foresee. The priests will have nothing to teach the people, and the elders will have no advice to give.

<sup>27</sup>The king will mourn, the prince will give up hope, and the people will shake with fear. I will punish you for all you have done, and will judge you in the same way as you have judged others. This will show you that I am the LORD.

**8**<sup>1</sup> On the fifth day of the sixth month of the sixth year of our exile, the leaders of the exiles from Judah were

sitting in my house with me. Suddenly the power of the Sovereign LORD came on me.

<sup>2</sup>I looked up and saw a vision of a fiery human form. From the waist down his body looked like fire, and from the waist up he was shining like polished bronze.

<sup>3</sup>He reached out what seemed to be a hand and grabbed me by the hair. Then in this vision God's spirit lifted me high in the air and took me to Jerusalem. He took me to the inner entrance of the north gate of the Temple, where there was an idol that was an outrage to God.

<sup>4</sup>There I saw the dazzling light that shows the presence of Israel's God, just as I had seen it when I was by the Chebar River.

<sup>5</sup>God said to me, Mortal man, look toward the north. I looked, and there near the altar by the entrance of the gateway I saw the idol that was an outrage to God.

<sup>6</sup>God said to me, Mortal man, do you see what is happening? Look at the disgusting things the people of Israel are doing here, driving me farther and farther away from my holy place. You

will see even more disgraceful things than this.

<sup>7</sup>He took me to the entrance of the outer courtyard and showed me a hole in the wall.

<sup>8</sup>He said, Mortal man, break through the wall here. I broke through it and found a door.

<sup>9</sup>He told me, Go in and look at the evil, disgusting things they are doing there.

<sup>10</sup>So I went in and looked. The walls were covered with drawings of snakes and other unclean animals, and of the other things which the Israelites were worshipping.

<sup>11</sup>Seventy Israelite leaders were there, including Jaazaniah son of Shaphan. Each one was holding an incense burner, and smoke was rising from the incense.

<sup>12</sup>God asked me, Mortal man, do you see what the Israelite leaders are doing in secret? They are all worshipping in a room full of images. Their excuse is: The LORD doesn't see us! He has abandoned the country.

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD said to me, You are going to see them do even more disgusting things than that.

<sup>14</sup> So he took me to the north gate of the Temple and showed me women weeping over the death of the god Tammuz.

<sup>15</sup> He asked, Mortal man, do you see that? You will see even more disgusting things.

<sup>16</sup> So he took me to the inner courtyard of the Temple. There near the entrance of the sanctuary, between the altar and the porch, were about twenty-five men. They had turned their backs to the sanctuary and were bowing low toward the east, worshiping the rising sun.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD said to me, Mortal man, do you see that? These people of Judah are not satisfied with merely doing all the disgusting things you have seen here and with spreading violence throughout the country. No, they must come and do them right here in the Temple and make me even more angry. Look how they insult me in the most offensive way possible!

<sup>18</sup> They will feel all the force of my anger. I will not spare them or show them any mercy. They will shout prayers

to me as loud as they can, but I will not listen to them.

**9**<sup>1</sup> Then I heard God shout, Come here, you men who are going to punish the city. Bring your weapons with you.

<sup>2</sup> At once six men came from the outer north gate of the Temple, each one carrying a weapon. With them was a man dressed in linen clothes, carrying something to write with. They all came and stood by the bronze altar.

<sup>3</sup> Then the dazzling light of the presence of the God of Israel rose up from the winged creatures where it had been, and moved to the entrance of the Temple. The LORD called to the man dressed in linen,

<sup>4</sup> Go through the whole city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the forehead of everyone who is distressed and troubled because of all the disgusting things being done in the city.

<sup>5</sup> And I heard God say to the other men, Follow him through the city and kill. Spare no one; have mercy on no one.

<sup>6</sup> Kill the old men, young men, young women, mothers, and children. But don't

touch anyone who has the mark on his forehead. Start here at my Temple. So they began with the leaders who were standing there at the Temple.

<sup>7</sup> God said to them, Defile the Temple. Fill its courtyards with corpses. Get to work! So they began to kill the people in the city.

<sup>8</sup> While the killing was going on, I was there alone. I threw myself face downward on the ground and shouted, Sovereign LORD, are you so angry with Jerusalem that you are going to kill everyone left in Israel?

<sup>9</sup> God answered, The people of Israel and Judah are guilty of terrible sins. They have committed murder all over the land and have filled Jerusalem with crime. They say that I, the LORD, have abandoned their country and that I don't see them.

<sup>10</sup> But I will not have pity on them; I will do to them what they have done to others.

<sup>11</sup> Then the man wearing linen clothes returned and reported to the LORD, I have carried out your orders.

**10**<sup>1</sup> I looked at the dome over the heads of the living creatures and above them was something that seemed to be a throne made of sapphire.

<sup>2</sup> God said to the man wearing linen clothes, Go between the wheels under the creatures and fill your hands with burning coals. Then scatter the coals over the city. I watched him go.

<sup>3</sup> The creatures were standing to the south of the Temple when he went in, and a cloud filled the inner courtyard.

<sup>4</sup> The dazzling light of the LORD's presence rose up from the creatures and moved to the entrance of the Temple. Then the cloud filled the Temple, and the courtyard was blazing with the light.

<sup>5</sup> The noise made by the creatures' wings was heard even in the outer courtyard. It sounded like the voice of Almighty God.

<sup>6</sup> When the LORD commanded the man wearing linen clothes to take some fire from between the wheels that were under the creatures, the man went in and stood by one of the wheels.

<sup>7</sup> One of the creatures reached his hand into the fire that was there among them,

picked up some coals, and put them in the hands of the man in linen. The man took the coals and left.

<sup>8</sup>I saw that each creature had what looked like a human hand under each of its wings.

<sup>9</sup>I also saw that there were four wheels, all alike, one beside each creature. The wheels shone like precious stones, and each one had another wheel which intersected it at right angles.

<sup>10</sup>(10: 9)

<sup>11</sup>When the creatures moved, they could go in any direction without turning. They all moved together in the direction they wanted to go, without having to turn around.

<sup>12</sup>Their bodies, backs, hands, wings, and wheels were covered with eyes.

<sup>13</sup>I heard a voice calling out, Whirling wheels.

<sup>14</sup>Each creature had four faces. The first was the face of a bull, the second a human face, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

<sup>15</sup>(They were the same creatures that I had seen by the Chebar River.) When the creatures rose in the air



<sup>16</sup>and moved, the wheels went with them. Whenever they spread their wings to fly, the wheels still went with them.

<sup>17</sup>When the creatures stopped, the wheels stopped; and when the creatures flew, the wheels went with them, because the creatures controlled them.

<sup>18</sup>Then the dazzling light of the LORD's presence left the entrance of the Temple and moved to a place above the creatures.

<sup>19</sup>They spread their wings and flew up from the earth while I was watching, and the wheels went with them. They paused at the east gate of the Temple, and the dazzling light was over them.

<sup>20</sup>I recognized them as the same creatures which I had seen beneath the God of Israel at the Chebar River.

<sup>21</sup>Each of them had four faces, four wings, and what looked like a human hand under each wing.

<sup>22</sup>Their faces looked exactly like the faces I had seen by the Chebar River. Each creature moved straight ahead.

**11** <sup>1</sup>God's spirit lifted me up and took me to the east gate of the Temple. There near the gate I saw twenty-five

men, including Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, two leaders of the nation.

<sup>2</sup>God said to me, Mortal man, these men make evil plans and give bad advice in this city.

<sup>3</sup>They say, We will soon be building houses again. The city is like a cooking pot, and we are like the meat in it, but at least it protects us from the fire.

<sup>4</sup>Now then, denounce them, mortal man.

<sup>5</sup>The spirit of the LORD took control of me, and the LORD told me to give the people this message: People of Israel, I know what you are saying and what you are planning.

<sup>6</sup>You have murdered so many people here in the city that the streets are full of corpses.

<sup>7</sup>So this is what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to you. This city is a cooking pot all right, but what is the meat? The corpses of those you have killed! You will not be here -- I will throw you out of the city!

<sup>8</sup>Are you afraid of swords? I will bring soldiers with swords to attack you.

<sup>9</sup>I will take you out of the city and hand you over to foreigners. I have sentenced you to death,

<sup>10</sup>and you will be killed in battle in your own country. Then everyone will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>This city will not protect you the way a pot protects the meat in it. I will punish you wherever you may be in the land of Israel.

<sup>12</sup>You will know that I am the LORD and that while you were keeping the laws of the neighboring nations, you were breaking my laws and disobeying my commands.

<sup>13</sup>While I was prophesying, Pelatiah dropped dead. I threw myself face downward on the ground and shouted, No, Sovereign LORD! Are you going to kill everyone left in Israel?

<sup>14</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>15</sup>Mortal man, he said, the people who live in Jerusalem are talking about you and those of your nation who are in exile. They say, The exiles are too far away to worship the LORD. He has given us possession of the land.

<sup>16</sup>Now tell your fellow exiles what I am saying. I am the one who sent them to live in far-off nations and scattered them in other countries. Yet, for the time being I will be present with them in the lands where they have gone.

<sup>17</sup>So tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying. I will gather them out of the countries where I scattered them, and will give the land of Israel back to them.

<sup>18</sup>When they return, they are to get rid of all the filthy, disgusting idols they find.

<sup>19</sup>I will give them a new heart and a new mind. I will take away their stubborn heart of stone and will give them an obedient heart.

<sup>20</sup>Then they will keep my laws and faithfully obey all my commands. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

<sup>21</sup>But I will punish the people who love to worship filthy, disgusting idols. I will punish them for what they have done. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>22</sup>The living creatures began to fly, and the wheels went with them. The dazzling

light of the presence of the God of Israel was over them.

<sup>23</sup>Then the dazzling light left the city and moved to the mountain east of it.

<sup>24</sup>In the vision the spirit of God lifted me up and brought me back to the exiles in Babylonia. Then the vision faded,

<sup>25</sup>and I told the exiles everything that the LORD had shown me.

**12**<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, you are living among rebellious people. They have eyes, but they see nothing; they have ears, but they hear nothing, because they are rebellious.

<sup>3</sup>Now, mortal man, pack a bundle just as a refugee would and start out before nightfall. Let everyone see you leaving and going to another place. Maybe those rebels will notice you.

<sup>4</sup>While it is still daylight, pack your bundle for exile, so that they can see you, and then let them watch you leave in the evening as if you were going into exile.

<sup>5</sup>While they are watching, break a hole through the wall of your house and take your pack out through it.

<sup>6</sup>Let them watch you putting your pack on your shoulder and going out into the dark with your eyes covered, so that you can't see where you are going. What you do will be a warning to the Israelites.

<sup>7</sup>I did what the LORD told me to do. That day I packed a bundle as a refugee would, and that evening as it was getting dark I dug a hole in the wall with my hands and went out. While everyone watched, I put the pack on my shoulder and left.

<sup>8</sup>The next morning the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>9</sup>Mortal man, he said, now that those Israelite rebels are asking you what you're doing,

<sup>10</sup>tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them. This message is for the prince ruling in Jerusalem and for all the people who live there.

<sup>11</sup>Tell them that what you have done is a sign of what will happen to them -- they will be refugees and captives.

<sup>12</sup>The prince who is ruling them will shoulder his pack in the dark and escape through a hole that they dig for him in

the wall. He will cover his eyes and not see where he is going.

<sup>13</sup>But I will spread out my net and trap him in it. Then I will take him to the city of Babylon, where he will die without having seen it.

<sup>14</sup>I will scatter in every direction all the members of his court and his advisers and bodyguards, and people will search for them to kill them.

<sup>15</sup>When I scatter them among the other nations and in foreign countries, they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>16</sup>I will let a few of them survive the war, the famine, and the diseases, so that there among the nations they will realize how disgusting their actions have been and will acknowledge that I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>18</sup>Mortal man, he said, tremble when you eat, and shake with fear when you drink.

<sup>19</sup>Tell the whole nation that this is the message of the Sovereign LORD to the people of Jerusalem who are still living in their land: They will tremble when they eat and shake with fear when they drink.

Their land will be stripped bare, because everyone who lives there is lawless.

<sup>20</sup>Cities that are now full of people will be destroyed, and the country will be made a wilderness. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>22</sup>Mortal man, he said, why do the people of Israel repeat this proverb: Time goes by, and predictions come to nothing?

<sup>23</sup>Now tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, have to say about that. I will put an end to that proverb. It won't be repeated in Israel any more. Tell them instead: The time has come, and the predictions are coming true!

<sup>24</sup>Among the people of Israel there will be no more false visions or misleading prophecies.

<sup>25</sup>I, the LORD, will speak to them, and what I say will be done. There will be no more delay. In your own lifetime, you rebels, I will do what I have warned you I would do. I have spoken, says the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>26</sup>The LORD said to me,



<sup>27</sup> Mortal man, the Israelites think that your visions and prophecies are about the distant future.

<sup>28</sup> So tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: There will be no more delay. What I have said will be done. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!

**13** <sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup> Mortal man, he said, denounce the prophets of Israel who make up their own prophecies. Tell them to listen to the word of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> This is what the Sovereign LORD says: These foolish prophets are doomed! They provide their own inspiration and invent their own visions.

<sup>4</sup> People of Israel, your prophets are as useless as foxes living among the ruins of a city.

<sup>5</sup> They don't guard the places where the walls have crumbled, nor do they rebuild the walls, and so Israel cannot be defended when war comes on the day of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> Their visions are false, and their predictions are lies. They claim that they are speaking my message, but I have

not sent them. Yet they expect their words to come true!

<sup>7</sup>I tell them: Those visions you see are false, and the predictions you make are lies. You say that they are my words, but I haven't spoken to you!

<sup>8</sup>So the Sovereign LORD says to them, Your words are false, and your visions are lies. I am against you.

<sup>9</sup>I am about to punish you prophets who have false visions and make misleading predictions. You will not be there when my people gather to make decisions; your names will not be included in the list of the citizens of Israel; you will never return to your land. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>10</sup>The prophets mislead my people by saying that all is well. All is certainly not well! My people have put up a wall of loose stones, and then the prophets have come and covered it with whitewash.

<sup>11</sup>Tell the prophets that their wall is going to fall down. I will send a pouring rain. Hailstones will fall on it, and a strong wind will blow against it.

<sup>12</sup>The wall will collapse, and everyone will ask you what good the whitewash did.

<sup>13</sup>Now this is what the Sovereign LORD says: In my anger I will send a strong wind, pouring rain, and hailstones to destroy the wall.

<sup>14</sup>I intend to break down the wall they whitewashed, to shatter it, and to leave the foundation stones bare. It will collapse and kill you all. Then everyone will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>The wall and those who covered it with whitewash will feel the force of my anger. Then I will tell you that the wall is gone and so are those who whitewashed it --

<sup>16</sup>those prophets who assured Jerusalem that all was well, when all was not well! The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD said, Now, mortal man, look at the women among your people who make up predictions. Denounce them

<sup>18</sup>and tell them what the Sovereign LORD is saying to them: You women are doomed! You sew magic wristbands for

everyone and make magic scarves for everyone to wear on their heads, so that they can have power over other people's lives. You want to possess the power of life and death over my people and to use it for your own benefit.

<sup>19</sup>You dishonor me in front of my people in order to get a few handfuls of barley and a few pieces of bread. You kill people who don't deserve to die, and you keep people alive who don't deserve to live. So you tell lies to my people, and they believe you.

<sup>20</sup>Now this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I hate the wristbands that you use in your attempt to control life and death. I will rip them off your arms and set free the people that you were controlling.

<sup>21</sup>I will rip off your scarves and let my people escape from your power once and for all. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>22</sup>By your lies you discourage good people, whom I do not wish to hurt. You prevent evil people from giving up evil and saving their lives.

<sup>23</sup>So now your false visions and misleading predictions are over. I am

rescuing my people from your power, so that you will know that I am the LORD.

**14**<sup>1</sup> Some of the leaders of the Israelites came to consult me about the LORD's will.

<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>3</sup> Mortal man, he said, these men have given their hearts to idols and are letting idols lead them into sin. Do they think I will give them an answer?

<sup>4</sup> Now speak to them and tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them: Each of you Israelites who have given your heart to idols and let them lead you into sin and who then come to consult a prophet, will get an answer from me -- the answer that your many idols deserve!

<sup>5</sup> All those idols have turned the Israelites away from me, but by my answer I hope to win back their loyalty.

<sup>6</sup> Now then, tell the Israelites what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: Turn back and leave your disgusting idols.

<sup>7</sup> Whenever one of you Israelites or one of you foreigners who live in the Israelite community turn away from me and worship idols, and then go to consult a

prophet, I, the LORD, will give you your answer!

<sup>8</sup>I will oppose you. I will make an example of you. I will remove you from the community of my people, so that all of you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>If any prophets are deceived into giving a false answer, it is because I, the LORD, have deceived them. I will remove them from the people of Israel.

<sup>10</sup>Both prophets and anyone who consults them will get the same punishment.

<sup>11</sup>I will do this to keep the Israelites from deserting me and defiling themselves by their sins. They are to be my people, and I will be their God. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>13</sup>Mortal man, he said, if a country sins and is unfaithful to me, I will reach out and destroy its supply of food. I will send a famine and kill people and animals alike.

<sup>14</sup>Even if those three men, Noah, Danel, and Job, were living there, their goodness would save only their own lives. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>15</sup>Or I might send wild animals to kill the people, making the land so dangerous that no one could travel through it,

<sup>16</sup>and even if those three men lived there -- as surely as I, the Sovereign LORD, am the living God -- they would not be able to save even their own children. They would save only their own lives, and the land would become a wilderness.

<sup>17</sup>Or I might bring war on that country and send destructive weapons to wipe out people and animals alike,

<sup>18</sup>and even if those three men lived there -- as surely as I, the Sovereign LORD, am the living God -- they would not be able to save even their children, but only their own lives.

<sup>19</sup>If I send an epidemic on that country and in my anger take many lives, killing people and animals,

<sup>20</sup>even if Noah, Danel, and Job lived there -- as surely as I, the Sovereign LORD, am the living God -- they would not be able to save even their own children. Their goodness would save only their own lives.

<sup>21</sup> This is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: I will send my four worst punishments on Jerusalem -- war, famine, wild animals, and disease -- to destroy people and animals alike.

<sup>22</sup> If some survive and save their children, look at them when they come to you. See how evil they are, and be convinced that the punishment I am bringing on Jerusalem is justified;

<sup>23</sup> then you will know that there was good reason for everything I did. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

**15** <sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup> Mortal man, he said, how does a vine compare with a tree? What good is a branch of a grapevine compared with the trees of the forest?

<sup>3</sup> Can you use it to make anything? Can you even make a peg out of it to hang things on?

<sup>4</sup> It is only good for building a fire. And when the ends are burned up and the middle is charred, can you make anything out of it?

<sup>5</sup> It was useless even before it was burned. Now that the fire has burned it and charred it, it is even more useless.



<sup>6</sup>Now this is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: Just as a vine is taken from the forest and burned, so I will take the people who live in Jerusalem

<sup>7</sup>and will punish them. They have escaped one fire, but now fire will burn them up. When I punish them, you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>They have been unfaithful to me, and so I will make the country a wilderness. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

**16** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me again. <sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, point out to Jerusalem what disgusting things she has done.

<sup>3</sup>Tell Jerusalem what the Sovereign LORD is saying to her: You were born in the land of Canaan. Your father was an Amorite, and your mother was a Hittite.

<sup>4</sup>When you were born, no one cut your umbilical cord or washed you or rubbed you with salt or wrapped you in cloths.

<sup>5</sup>No one took enough pity on you to do any of these things for you. When you were born, no one loved you. You were thrown out in an open field.

<sup>6</sup>Then I passed by and saw you squirming in your own blood. You were

covered with blood, but I wouldn't let you die.

<sup>7</sup>I made you grow like a healthy plant. You grew strong and tall and became a young woman. Your breasts were well-formed, and your hair had grown, but you were naked.

<sup>8</sup>As I passed by again, I saw that the time had come for you to fall in love. I covered your naked body with my coat and promised to love you. Yes, I made a marriage covenant with you, and you became mine. This is what the Sovereign LORD says.

<sup>9</sup>Then I took water and washed the blood off you. I rubbed olive oil on your skin.

<sup>10</sup>I dressed you in embroidered gowns and gave you shoes of the best leather, a linen headband, and a silk cloak.

<sup>11</sup>I put jewels on you -- bracelets and necklaces.

<sup>12</sup>I gave you a nose ring and earrings and a beautiful crown to wear.

<sup>13</sup>You had ornaments of gold and silver, and you always wore clothes of embroidered linen and silk. You ate bread made from the best flour, and had

honey and olive oil to eat. Your beauty was dazzling, and you became a queen.

<sup>14</sup>You became famous in every nation for your perfect beauty, because I was the one who made you so lovely. This is what the Sovereign LORD says.

<sup>15</sup>But you took advantage of your beauty and fame to sleep with everyone who came along.

<sup>16</sup>You used some of your clothes to decorate your places of worship, and just like a prostitute, you gave yourself to everyone.

<sup>17</sup>You took the silver and gold jewelry that I had given you, used it to make male images, and committed adultery with them.

<sup>18</sup>You took the embroidered clothes I gave you and put them on the images, and you offered to the images the olive oil and incense I had given you.

<sup>19</sup>I gave you food -- the best flour, olive oil, and honey -- but you offered it as a sacrifice to win the favor of idols. This is what the Sovereign LORD says.

<sup>20</sup>Then you took the sons and the daughters you had borne me and offered

them as sacrifices to idols. Wasn't it bad enough to be unfaithful to me,

<sup>21</sup> without taking my children and sacrificing them to idols?

<sup>22</sup> During your disgusting life as a prostitute you never once remembered your childhood -- when you were naked, squirming in your own blood.

<sup>23</sup> The Sovereign LORD said, You are doomed! Doomed! You did all that evil, and then

<sup>24</sup> by the side of every road you built places to worship idols and practice prostitution.

<sup>25</sup> You dragged your beauty through the mud. You offered yourself to everyone who came by, and you were more of a prostitute every day.

<sup>26</sup> You let your lustful neighbors, the Egyptians, go to bed with you, and you used your prostitution to make me angry.

<sup>27</sup> Now I have raised my hand to punish you and to take away your share of my blessing. I have handed you over to the Philistines, who hate you and are disgusted with your immoral actions.

<sup>28</sup> Because you were not satisfied by the others, you went running after the Assyrians. You were their prostitute, but they didn't satisfy you either.

<sup>29</sup> You were also a prostitute for the Babylonians, that nation of merchants, but they didn't satisfy you either.

<sup>30</sup> This is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: You have done all this like a shameless prostitute.

<sup>31</sup> On every street you built places to worship idols and practice prostitution. But you are not out for money like a common prostitute.

<sup>32</sup> You are like a woman who commits adultery with strangers instead of loving her husband.

<sup>33</sup> A prostitute is paid, but you gave presents to all your lovers and bribed them to come from everywhere to sleep with you.

<sup>34</sup> You are a special kind of prostitute. No one forced you to become one. You didn't get paid; you paid them! Yes, you are different.

<sup>35</sup> Now then, Jerusalem, you whore! Hear what the LORD is saying.

<sup>36</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You stripped off your clothes, and like a prostitute, you gave yourself to your lovers and to all your disgusting idols, and you killed your children as sacrifices to idols.

<sup>37</sup>Because of this I will bring all your former lovers together -- the ones you liked and the ones you hated. I will bring them around you in a circle, and then I will strip off your clothes and let them see you naked.

<sup>38</sup>I will condemn you for adultery and murder, and in my anger and fury I will punish you with death.

<sup>39</sup>I will put you in their power, and they will tear down the places where you engage in prostitution and worship idols. They will take away your clothes and jewels and leave you completely naked.

<sup>40</sup>They will stir up a crowd to stone you, and they will cut you to pieces with their swords.

<sup>41</sup>They will burn your houses down and let crowds of women see your punishment. I will make you stop being a prostitute and make you stop giving gifts to your lovers.

<sup>42</sup>Then my anger will be over, and I will be calm. I will not be angry or jealous any more.

<sup>43</sup>You have forgotten how I treated you when you were young, and you have made me angry by all the things you did. That is why I have made you pay for them all. Why did you add sexual immorality to all the other disgusting things you did? The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>44</sup>The LORD said, People will use this proverb about you, Jerusalem: Like mother, like daughter.

<sup>45</sup>You really are your mother's daughter. She detested her husband and her children. You are like your sisters, who hated their husbands and their children. You and your sister cities had a Hittite mother and an Amorite father.

<sup>46</sup>Your older sister, with her villages, is Samaria, in the north. Your younger sister, with her villages, is Sodom, in the south.

<sup>47</sup>Were you satisfied to follow in their footsteps and copy their disgusting actions? No, in only a little while you

were acting worse than they were in everything you did.

<sup>48</sup>As surely as I am the living God, the Sovereign LORD says, your sister Sodom and her villages never did the evil that you and your villages have done.

<sup>49</sup>She and her daughters were proud because they had plenty to eat and lived in peace and quiet, but they did not take care of the poor and the underprivileged.

<sup>50</sup>They were proud and stubborn and did the things that I hate, so I destroyed them, as you well know.

<sup>51</sup>Samaria did not sin half as much as you have. You have acted more disgustingly than she ever did. Your corruption makes your sisters look innocent by comparison.

<sup>52</sup>And now you will have to endure your disgrace. Your sins are so much worse than those of your sisters that they look innocent beside you. Now blush and bear your shame, because you make your sisters look pure.

<sup>53</sup>The LORD said to Jerusalem, I will make them prosperous again -- Sodom and her villages and Samaria and her



villages. Yes, I will make you prosperous too.

<sup>54</sup>You will be ashamed of yourself, and your disgrace will show your sisters how well-off they are.

<sup>55</sup>They will become prosperous again, and you and your villages will also be restored.

<sup>56</sup>Didn't you joke about Sodom in those days when you were proud

<sup>57</sup>and before the evil you did had been exposed? Now you are just like her -- a joke to the Edomites, the Philistines, and your other neighbors who hate you.

<sup>58</sup>You must suffer for the obscene, disgusting things you have done. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>59</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, I will treat you the way you deserve, because you ignored your promises and broke the covenant.

<sup>60</sup>But I will honor the covenant I made with you when you were young, and I will make a covenant with you that will last forever.

<sup>61</sup>You will remember how you have acted, and be ashamed of it when you get your older sister and your younger

sister back. I will let them be like daughters to you, even though this was not part of my covenant with you.

<sup>62</sup>I will renew my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>63</sup>I will forgive all the wrongs you have done, but you will remember them and be too ashamed to open your mouth. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

**17** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, tell the Israelites a parable

<sup>3</sup>to let them know what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them: There was a giant eagle with beautiful feathers and huge wings, spread wide. He flew to the Lebanon Mountains and broke off the top of a cedar tree,

<sup>4</sup>which he carried to a land of commerce and placed in a city of merchants.

<sup>5</sup>Then he took a young plant from the land of Israel and planted it in a fertile field, where there was always water to make it grow.

<sup>6</sup>The plant sprouted and became a low, wide-spreading grapevine. The branches grew upward toward the eagle, and the

roots grew deep. The vine was covered with branches and leaves.

<sup>7</sup>There was another giant eagle with huge wings and thick plumage. And now the vine sent its roots toward him and turned its leaves toward him, in the hope that he would give it more water than there was in the garden where it was growing.

<sup>8</sup>But the vine had already been planted in a fertile, well-watered field so that it could grow leaves and bear grapes and be a magnificent vine.

<sup>9</sup>So I, the Sovereign LORD, ask: Will this vine live and grow? Won't the first eagle pull it up by its roots, pull off the grapes, and break off the branches and let them wither? It will not take much strength or a mighty nation to pull it up.

<sup>10</sup>Yes, it is planted, but will it live and grow? Won't it wither when the east wind strikes it? Won't it wither there where it is growing?

<sup>11</sup>The LORD said to me,

<sup>12</sup>Ask these rebels if they know what the parable means. Tell them that the king of Babylonia came to Jerusalem and

took the king and his officials back with him to Babylonia.

<sup>13</sup>He took one of the king's family, made a treaty with him, and made him swear to be loyal. He took important men as hostages

<sup>14</sup>to keep the nation from rising again and to make sure that the treaty would be kept.

<sup>15</sup>But the king of Judah rebelled and sent agents to Egypt to get horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Can he get away with that? He cannot break the treaty and go unpunished!

<sup>16</sup>As surely as I am the living God, says the Sovereign LORD, this king will die in Babylonia because he broke his oath and the treaty he had made with the king of Babylonia, who put him on the throne.

<sup>17</sup>Even the powerful army of the king of Egypt will not be able to help him fight when the Babylonians build earthworks and dig trenches in order to kill many people.

<sup>18</sup>He broke his oath and the treaty he had made. He did all these things, and now he will not escape.

<sup>19</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, As surely as I am the living God, I will punish him for breaking the treaty which he swore in my name to keep.

<sup>20</sup>I will spread out a hunter's net and catch him in it. I will take him to Babylonia and punish him there, because he was unfaithful to me.

<sup>21</sup>His best soldiers will be killed in battle, and the survivors will be scattered in every direction. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>22</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the top of a tall cedar and break off a tender sprout; I will plant it on a high mountain,

<sup>23</sup>on Israel's highest mountain. It will grow branches and bear seed and become a magnificent cedar. Birds of every kind will live there and find shelter in its shade.

<sup>24</sup>All the trees in the land will know that I am the LORD. I cut down the tall trees and make small trees grow tall. I wither up the green trees and make the dry trees become green. I, the LORD, have spoken. I will do what I have said I would do.

**18**<sup>1</sup> The LORD spoke to me  
<sup>2</sup> and said, What is this proverb  
people keep repeating in the land of  
Israel? The parents ate the sour grapes,  
But the children got the sour taste.

<sup>3</sup> As surely as I am the living God, says  
the Sovereign LORD, you will not repeat  
this proverb in Israel any more.

<sup>4</sup> The life of every person belongs to  
me, the life of the parent as well as that  
of the child. The person who sins is the  
one who will die.

<sup>5</sup> Suppose there is a truly good man,  
righteous and honest.

<sup>6</sup> He doesn't worship the idols of the  
Israelites or eat the sacrifices offered  
at forbidden shrines. He doesn't seduce  
another man's wife or have intercourse  
with a woman during her period.

<sup>7</sup> He doesn't cheat or rob anyone. He  
returns what a borrower gives him as  
security; he feeds the hungry and gives  
clothing to the naked.

<sup>8</sup> He doesn't lend money for profit. He  
refuses to do evil and gives an honest  
decision in any dispute.

<sup>9</sup> Such a man obeys my commands and  
carefully keeps my laws. He is righteous,

and he will live, says the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>10</sup>Then suppose this man has a son who robs and kills, who does any of these things

<sup>11</sup>that the father never did. He eats sacrifices offered at forbidden shrines and seduces other men's wives.

<sup>12</sup>He cheats the poor, he robs, he keeps what a borrower gives him as security. He goes to pagan shrines, worships disgusting idols,

<sup>13</sup>and lends money for profit. Will he live? No, he will not. He has done all these disgusting things, and so he will die. He will be to blame for his own death.

<sup>14</sup>Now suppose this second man has a son. He sees all the sins his father practiced, but does not follow his example.

<sup>15</sup>He doesn't worship the idols of the Israelites or eat the sacrifices offered at forbidden shrines. He doesn't seduce another man's wife

<sup>16</sup>or oppress anyone or rob anyone. He returns what a borrower gives him as

security. He feeds the hungry and gives clothing to the naked.

<sup>17</sup> He refuses to do evil and doesn't lend money for profit. He keeps my laws and obeys my commands. He will not die because of his father's sins, but he will certainly live.

<sup>18</sup> His father, on the other hand, cheated and robbed and always did evil to everyone. And so he died because of the sins he himself had committed.

<sup>19</sup> But you ask, Why shouldn't the son suffer because of his father's sins? The answer is that the son did what was right and good. He kept my laws and followed them carefully, and so he will certainly live.

<sup>20</sup> It is the one who sins who will die. A son is not to suffer because of his father's sins, nor a father because of the sins of his son. Good people will be rewarded for doing good, and evil people will suffer for the evil they do.

<sup>21</sup> If someone evil stops sinning and keeps my laws, if he does what is right and good, he will not die; he will certainly live.



<sup>22</sup> All his sins will be forgiven, and he will live, because he did what is right.

<sup>23</sup> Do you think I enjoy seeing evil people die? asks the Sovereign LORD. No, I would rather see them repent and live.

<sup>24</sup> But if a righteous person stops doing good and starts doing all the evil, disgusting things that evil people do, will he go on living? No! None of the good he did will be remembered. He will die because of his unfaithfulness and his sins.

<sup>25</sup> But you say, What the Lord does isn't right. Listen to me, you Israelites. Do you think my way of doing things isn't right? It is your way that isn't right.

<sup>26</sup> When a righteous person stops doing good and starts doing evil and then dies, he dies because of the evil he has done.

<sup>27</sup> When someone evil stops sinning and does what is right and good, he saves his life.

<sup>28</sup> He realizes what he is doing and stops sinning, so he will certainly not die, but go on living.

<sup>29</sup> And you Israelites say, What the Lord does isn't right. You think my way isn't

right, do you? It is your way that isn't right.

<sup>30</sup>Now I, the Sovereign LORD, am telling you Israelites that I will judge each of you by what you have done. Turn away from all the evil you are doing, and don't let your sin destroy you.

<sup>31</sup>Give up all the evil you have been doing, and get yourselves new minds and hearts. Why do you Israelites want to die?

<sup>32</sup>I do not want anyone to die, says the Sovereign LORD. Turn away from your sins and live.

**19**<sup>1</sup>The LORD told me to sing this song of sorrow for two princes of Israel:

<sup>2</sup>What a lioness your mother was! She raised her cubs among the fierce male lions.

<sup>3</sup>She raised a cub and taught him to hunt; he learned to eat people.

<sup>4</sup>The nations heard about him and trapped him in a pit. With hooks they dragged him off to Egypt.

<sup>5</sup>She waited until she saw all hope was gone. Then she raised another of her cubs, and he grew into a fierce lion.

<sup>6</sup>When he was full-grown, he prowled with the other lions. He too learned to hunt and eat people.

<sup>7</sup>He wrecked forts, he ruined towns. The people of the land were terrified every time he roared.

<sup>8</sup>The nations gathered to fight him; people came from everywhere. They spread their hunting nets and caught him in their trap.

<sup>9</sup>They put him in a cage and took him to the king of Babylonia. They kept him under guard, so that his roar would never be heard again on the hills of Israel.

<sup>10</sup>Your mother was like a grapevine planted near a stream. Because there was plenty of water, the vine was covered with leaves and fruit.

<sup>11</sup>Its branches were strong and grew to be royal scepters. The vine grew tall enough to reach the clouds; everyone saw how leafy and tall it was.

<sup>12</sup>But angry hands pulled it up by the roots and threw it to the ground. The east wind dried up its fruit. Its branches were broken off; they dried up and were burned.

<sup>13</sup> Now it is planted in the desert, in a dry and waterless land.

<sup>14</sup> The stem of the vine caught fire; fire burned up its branches and fruit. The branches will never again be strong, will never be royal scepters. This is a song of sorrow; it has been sung again and again.

**20**<sup>1</sup> It was the tenth day of the fifth month of the seventh year of our exile. Some of the leaders of the Israelite community came to consult me about the LORD's will, and they sat down in front of me.

<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>3</sup> Mortal man, he said, speak to these leaders and tell them that the Sovereign LORD is saying: You have come to ask my will, have you? As surely as I am the living God, I will not let you ask me anything. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>4</sup> Are you ready to pass sentence on them, mortal man? Then do so. Remind them of the disgusting things their ancestors did.

<sup>5</sup> Tell them what I am saying. When I chose Israel, I made them a promise. I

revealed myself to them in Egypt and told them: I am the LORD your God.

<sup>6</sup>It was then that I promised to take them out of Egypt and lead them to a land I had chosen for them, a rich and fertile land, the finest land of all.

<sup>7</sup>I told them to throw away the disgusting idols they loved and not to make themselves unclean with the false gods of Egypt, because I am the LORD their God.

<sup>8</sup>But they defied me and refused to listen. They did not throw away their disgusting idols or give up the Egyptian gods. I was ready to let them feel the full force of my anger there in Egypt.

<sup>9</sup>But I did not, since that would have brought dishonor to my name, for in the presence of the people among whom they were living I had announced to Israel that I was going to lead them out of Egypt.

<sup>10</sup>And so I led them out of Egypt into the desert.

<sup>11</sup>I gave them my commands and taught them my laws, which bring life to anyone who obeys them.

<sup>12</sup>I made the keeping of the Sabbath a sign of the agreement between us, to remind them that I, the LORD, make them holy.

<sup>13</sup>But even in the desert they defied me. They broke my laws and rejected my commands, which bring life to anyone who obeys them. They completely profaned the Sabbath. I was ready to let them feel the force of my anger there in the desert and to destroy them.

<sup>14</sup>But I did not, since that would have brought dishonor to my name among the nations which had seen me lead Israel out of Egypt.

<sup>15</sup>So I made a vow in the desert that I would not take them to the land I had given them, a rich and fertile land, the finest land of all.

<sup>16</sup>I made the vow because they had rejected my commands, broken my laws, and profaned the Sabbath -- they preferred to worship their idols.

<sup>17</sup>But then I took pity on them. I decided not to kill them there in the desert.

<sup>18</sup>Instead, I warned the young people among them: Do not keep the laws your

ancestors made; do not follow their customs or defile yourselves with their idols.

<sup>19</sup>I am the LORD your God. Obey my laws and my commands.

<sup>20</sup>Make the Sabbath a holy day, so that it will be a sign of the covenant we made, and will remind you that I am the LORD your God.

<sup>21</sup>But that generation also defied me. They broke my laws and did not keep my commands, which bring life to anyone who obeys them. They profaned the Sabbath. I was ready to let them feel the force of my anger there in the desert and to kill them all.

<sup>22</sup>But I did not, since that would have brought dishonor to my name among the nations which had seen me bring Israel out of Egypt.

<sup>23</sup>So I made another vow in the desert. I vowed that I would scatter them all over the world.

<sup>24</sup>I did this because they had rejected my commands, broken my laws, profaned the Sabbath, and worshiped the same idols their ancestors had served.

<sup>25</sup> Then I gave them laws that are not good and commands that do not bring life.

<sup>26</sup> I let them defile themselves with their own offerings, and I let them sacrifice their first-born sons. This was to punish them and show them that I am the LORD.

<sup>27</sup> Now then, mortal man, tell the Israelites what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them. This is another way their ancestors insulted me by their unfaithfulness.

<sup>28</sup> I brought them to the land I had promised to give them. When they saw the high hills and green trees, they offered sacrifices at all of them. They made me angry by the sacrifices they burned and by the wine they brought as offerings.

<sup>29</sup> I asked them: What are these high places where you go? So they have been called High Places' ever since.

<sup>30</sup> Now tell the Israelites what I am saying: Why must you commit the same sins your ancestors did and go running after their idols?



<sup>31</sup> Even today you offer the same gifts and defile yourselves with the same idols by sacrificing your children to them in the fire. And then you Israelites still come to ask what my will is! As surely as I, the Sovereign LORD, am the living God, I will not let you ask me anything.

<sup>32</sup> You have made up your minds that you want to be like the other nations, like the people who live in other countries and worship trees and rocks. But that will never be.

<sup>33</sup> As surely as I, the Sovereign LORD, am the living God, I warn you that in my anger I will rule over you with a strong hand, with all my power.

<sup>34</sup> I will show you my power and my anger when I gather you together and bring you back from all the countries where you have been scattered.

<sup>35</sup> I will bring you into the Desert of the Nations, and there I will condemn you to your face.

<sup>36</sup> I will now condemn you just as I condemned your ancestors in the Sinai Desert, says the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>37</sup> I will take firm control of you and make you obey my covenant.

<sup>38</sup>I will take away from among you those who are rebellious and sinful. I will take them out of the lands where they are living now, but I will not let them return to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>39</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, And now, all you Israelites, suit yourselves! Go on and serve your idols! But I warn you that after this you will have to obey me and stop dishonoring my holy name by offering gifts to your idols.

<sup>40</sup>There in the land, on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, all you people of Israel will worship me. I will be pleased with you and will expect you to bring me your sacrifices, your best offerings, and your holy gifts.

<sup>41</sup>After I bring you out of the countries where you have been scattered and gather you together, I will accept the sacrifices that you burn, and the nations will see that I am holy.

<sup>42</sup>When I bring you back to Israel, the land that I promised I would give to your ancestors, then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>43</sup> Then you will remember all the disgraceful things you did and how you defiled yourselves. You will be disgusted with yourselves because of all the evil things you did.

<sup>44</sup> When I act to protect my honor, you Israelites will know that I am the LORD, because I do not deal with you as your wicked, evil actions deserve. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>45</sup> The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>46</sup> Mortal man, he said, look toward the south. Speak against the south and prophesy against the forest of the south.

<sup>47</sup> Tell the southern forest to hear what the Sovereign LORD is saying: Look! I am starting a fire, and it will burn up every tree in you, whether green or dry. Nothing will be able to put it out. It will spread from south to north, and everyone will feel the heat of the flames.

<sup>48</sup> They will all see that I, the LORD, set it on fire and that no one can put it out.

<sup>49</sup> But I protested, Sovereign LORD, don't make me do it! Everyone is already complaining that I always speak in riddles.

**21** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, denounce Jerusalem. Denounce the places where people worship. Warn the land of Israel <sup>3</sup>that I, the LORD, am saying: I am your enemy. I will draw my sword and kill all of you, good and evil alike.

<sup>4</sup>I will use my sword against everyone from south to north.

<sup>5</sup>Everyone will know that I, the LORD, have drawn my sword and that I will not put it away.

<sup>6</sup>Mortal man, groan as if your heart is breaking with despair. Groan in sorrow where everyone can watch you.

<sup>7</sup>When they ask you why you are groaning, tell them it is because of the news that is coming. When it comes, their hearts will be filled with fear, their hands will hang limp, their courage will fail, and their knees will tremble. The time has come; it is here. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD said to me,

<sup>9</sup>Mortal man, prophesy. Tell the people what I, the Lord, am saying: A sword, a sword is sharpened and polished.

<sup>10</sup>It is sharpened to kill, polished to flash like lightning. There can be no rejoicing, for my people have disregarded every warning and punishment.

<sup>11</sup>The sword is being polished, to make it ready for use. It is sharpened and polished, to be put in the hands of a killer.

<sup>12</sup>Howl in grief, mortal man; this sword is meant for my people and for all the leaders of Israel. They are going to be killed with all the rest of my people. Beat your breast in despair!

<sup>13</sup>I am testing my people, and if they refuse to repent, all these things will happen to them.

<sup>14</sup>Now, mortal man, prophesy. Clap your hands, and the sword will strike again and again. It is a sword that kills, a sword that terrifies and slaughters.

<sup>15</sup>It makes my people lose courage and stumble. I am threatening their city with a sword that flashes like lightning and is ready to kill.

<sup>16</sup>Cut to the right and the left, you sharp sword! Cut wherever you turn.

<sup>17</sup>I also will clap my hands, and my anger will be over. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>19</sup>Mortal man, he said, mark out two roads by which the king of Babylonia can come with his sword. Both of them are to start in the same country. Put up a signpost where the roads fork.

<sup>20</sup>One will show the king the way to the Ammonite city of Rabbah, and the other the way to Judah, to the fortified city, Jerusalem.

<sup>21</sup>The king of Babylonia stands by the signpost at the fork of the road. To discover which way to go, he shakes the arrows; he consults his idols; he examines the liver of a sacrificed animal.

<sup>22</sup>Now! His right hand holds the arrow marked Jerusalem! It tells him to go and set up battering rams, to shout the battle cry, to place battering rams against the gates, to throw up earthworks, and to dig trenches.

<sup>23</sup>The people of Jerusalem won't believe this because of the treaties they have made. But this prediction is to remind

them of their sins and to warn them that they will be captured.

<sup>24</sup>This then is what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: Your sins are exposed. Everyone knows how guilty you are. You show your sins in your every action. You stand condemned, and I will hand you over to your enemies.

<sup>25</sup>You wicked, unholy ruler of Israel, your day, the day of your final punishment, is coming.

<sup>26</sup>I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken. Take off your crown and your turban. Nothing will be the same again. Raise the poor to power! Bring down those who are ruling!

<sup>27</sup>Ruin, ruin! Yes, I will make the city a ruin. But this will not happen until the one comes whom I have chosen to punish the city. To him I will give it.

<sup>28</sup>Mortal man, prophesy. Announce what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to the Ammonites, who are insulting Israel. Say to them: A sword is ready to destroy; It is polished to kill, to flash like lightning.

<sup>29</sup>The visions that you see are false, and the predictions you make are lies.

You are wicked and evil, and your day is coming, the day of your final punishment. The sword is going to fall on your necks.

<sup>30</sup>Put up the sword! I will judge you in the place where you were created, in the land where you were born.

<sup>31</sup>You will feel my anger when I turn it loose on you like a blazing fire. And I will hand you over to brutal men, experts at destruction.

<sup>32</sup>You will be destroyed by fire. Your blood will be shed in your own country, and no one will remember you any more. The LORD has spoken.

**22** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, are you ready to judge the city that is full of murderers? Make clear to her all the disgusting things she has done.

<sup>3</sup>Tell the city what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: Because you have murdered so many of your own people and have defiled yourself by worshiping idols, your time is coming.

<sup>4</sup>You are guilty of those murders and are defiled by the idols you made, and so your day is coming, your time is up! That



is why I have let the nations make fun of you and all the countries sneer at you.

<sup>5</sup>Countries nearby and countries far away sneer at you because of your lawlessness.

<sup>6</sup>All Israel's leaders trust in their own strength and commit murder.

<sup>7</sup>None of you in the city honor your parents. You cheat foreigners and take advantage of widows and orphans.

<sup>8</sup>You have no respect for the holy places, and you don't keep the Sabbath.

<sup>9</sup>Some of your people tell lies about others in order to have them put to death. Some of them eat sacrifices offered to idols. Some are always satisfying their lusts.

<sup>10</sup>Some of them sleep with their father's wife. Some force women to have intercourse with them during their period.

<sup>11</sup>Some commit adultery, and others seduce their daughters-in-law or their half sisters.

<sup>12</sup>Some of your people murder for pay. Some charge interest on the loans they make to other Israelites and get rich by taking advantage of them. They have

forgotten me. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>13</sup>I will bring my fist down on your robberies and murders.

<sup>14</sup>Do you think you will have any courage left or have strength enough to lift your hand when I am finished with you? I, the LORD, have spoken, and I keep my word.

<sup>15</sup>I will scatter your people to every country and nation and will put an end to your evil actions.

<sup>16</sup>And so the other nations will dishonor you, but you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD said to me,

<sup>18</sup>Mortal man, the Israelites are of no use to me. They are like waste metal -- copper, tin, iron, and lead -- left over after silver has been refined in a furnace.

<sup>19</sup>So now I, the Sovereign LORD, am telling them that they are just as useless as that. I will bring them all together in Jerusalem

<sup>20</sup>in the same way that the ore of silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin is put in a refining furnace. My anger and rage will melt them the way fire melts ore.

<sup>21</sup> Yes, I will gather them in Jerusalem, build a fire under them, and melt them with my anger.

<sup>22</sup> They will be melted in Jerusalem the way silver is melted in a furnace, and then they will know that they are feeling the anger of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> The LORD spoke to me again.

<sup>24</sup> Mortal man, he said, tell the Israelites that their land is unholy, and so I am punishing it in my anger.

<sup>25</sup> The leaders are like lions roaring over the animals they have killed. They kill the people, take all the money and property they can get, and by their murders leave many widows.

<sup>26</sup> The priests break my law and have no respect for what is holy. They make no distinction between what is holy and what is not. They do not teach the difference between clean and unclean things, and they ignore the Sabbath. As a result the people of Israel do not respect me.

<sup>27</sup> The government officials are like wolves tearing apart the animals they have killed. They commit murder in order to get rich.

<sup>28</sup>The prophets have hidden these sins like workers covering a wall with whitewash. They see false visions and make false predictions. They claim to speak the word of the Sovereign LORD, but I, the LORD, have not spoken to them.

<sup>29</sup>The wealthy cheat and rob. They mistreat the poor and take advantage of foreigners.

<sup>30</sup>I looked for someone who could build a wall, who could stand in the places where the walls have crumbled and defend the land when my anger is about to destroy it, but I could find no one.

<sup>31</sup>So I will turn my anger loose on them, and like a fire I will destroy them for what they have done. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

**23** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, there were once two sisters.

<sup>3</sup>When they were young, living in Egypt, they lost their virginity and became prostitutes.

<sup>4</sup>The older one was named Oholah (she represents Samaria), and the younger one was named Oholibah (she

represents Jerusalem). I married both of them, and they bore me children.

<sup>5</sup>Although she was mine, Oholah continued to be a prostitute and was full of lust for her lovers from Assyria.

<sup>6</sup>They were soldiers in uniforms of purple, noblemen and high-ranking officers; all of them were handsome young cavalry officers.

<sup>7</sup>She was the whore for all the Assyrian officers, and her lust led her to defile herself by worshiping Assyrian idols.

<sup>8</sup>She continued what she had begun as a prostitute in Egypt, where she lost her virginity. From the time she was a young woman, men slept with her and treated her like a prostitute.

<sup>9</sup>So I handed her over to her Assyrian lovers whom she wanted so much.

<sup>10</sup>They stripped her naked, seized her sons and daughters, and then killed her with a sword. Women everywhere gossiped about her fate.

<sup>11</sup>Even though her sister Oholibah saw this, she was wilder and more of a prostitute than Oholah had ever been.

<sup>12</sup>She too was full of lust for the Assyrian noblemen and officers --

soldiers in bright uniforms -- and for the cavalry officers, all of those handsome young men.

<sup>13</sup>I saw that she was completely immoral, that the second sister was as bad as the first.

<sup>14</sup>She sank deeper and deeper in her immorality. She was attracted by the images of high Babylonian officials carved into the wall and painted bright red, with sashes around their waists and fancy turbans on their heads.

<sup>15</sup>(23: 14)

<sup>16</sup>As soon as she saw them, she was filled with lust and sent messengers to them in Babylonia.

<sup>17</sup>The Babylonians came to have sex with her. They used her and defiled her so much that finally she became disgusted with them.

<sup>18</sup>She exposed herself publicly and let everyone know she was a whore. I was as disgusted with her as I had been with her sister.

<sup>19</sup>She became more of a prostitute than ever, acting the way she did as a young woman, when she was a prostitute in Egypt.

<sup>20</sup>She was filled with lust for oversexed men who had all the lustfulness of donkeys or stallions.

<sup>21</sup>(Oholibah, you wanted to repeat the immorality you were guilty of as a young woman in Egypt, where men played with your breasts and you lost your virginity.)

<sup>22</sup>Now then, Oholibah, this is what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to you. You are tired of those lovers, but I will make them angry with you and bring them to surround you.

<sup>23</sup>I will bring all the Babylonians and Chaldeans, men from Pekod, Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians. I will gather all those handsome young noblemen and officers, all those important officials and high-ranking cavalry officers.

<sup>24</sup>They will attack you from the north, bringing a large army with chariots and supply wagons. Protected by shields and helmets, they will surround you. I will hand you over to them, and they will judge you by their own laws.

<sup>25</sup>Because I am angry with you, I will let them deal with you in their anger. They will cut off your nose and your ears and kill your children. Yes, they will take

your sons and daughters from you and burn them alive.

<sup>26</sup>They will tear off your clothes and take your jewels.

<sup>27</sup>I will put a stop to your lust and to the obscenities you have committed ever since you were in Egypt. You won't look at any more idols or think about Egypt any more.

<sup>28</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will hand you over to people you hate and are disgusted with.

<sup>29</sup>And because they hate you, they will take away everything you have worked for and leave you stripped naked, exposed like a prostitute. Your lust and your prostitution

<sup>30</sup>have brought this on you. You were a prostitute for the nations and defiled yourself with their idols.

<sup>31</sup>You followed in your sister's footsteps, and so I will give you the same cup of punishment to drink.

<sup>32</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, You will drink from your sister's cup; it is large and deep. Everyone will scorn and mock you; the cup is full.



<sup>33</sup> It will make you miserable and drunk, that cup of fear and ruin, your sister Samaria's cup.

<sup>34</sup> You will drink and drain it dry, and with its broken pieces tear your breast. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>35</sup> Now this is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: Because you forgot me and turned your back on me, you will suffer for your lust and your prostitution.

<sup>36</sup> The LORD said to me, Mortal man, are you ready to judge Oholah and Oholibah? Accuse them of the disgusting things they have done.

<sup>37</sup> They have committed adultery and murder -- adultery with idols and murder of the children they bore me. They sacrificed my children to their idols.

<sup>38</sup> And that is not all they did. They profaned my Temple and broke the Sabbath, which I had established.

<sup>39</sup> The very day that they killed my children as sacrifices to idols, they came to my Temple and profaned it!

<sup>40</sup> Again and again they sent messengers to invite men to come from a great distance, and the men came. The

two sisters would bathe and put on eye shadow and jewelry.

<sup>41</sup> They would sit on a beautiful couch, and in front of them they would have a table covered with good things, including the incense and the olive oil that I had given them.

<sup>42</sup> The sound of a carefree crowd could be heard, a group of men brought in from the desert. They put bracelets on the women's arms and beautiful crowns on their heads.

<sup>43</sup> And I said to myself that they were using as a prostitute a woman worn out by adultery.

<sup>44</sup> They went back to these prostitutes again and again. They went back to Oholah and Oholibah, those immoral women.

<sup>45</sup> Righteous men will condemn them on the charge of adultery and murder, because they practice adultery and their hands are stained with blood.

<sup>46</sup> This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Bring a mob to terrorize them and rob them.

<sup>47</sup> Let the mob stone them and attack them with swords, kill their children, and burn down their houses.

<sup>48</sup> Throughout the land I will put a stop to immorality, as a warning to every woman not to commit adultery as they did.

<sup>49</sup> And you two sisters -- I will punish you for your immorality and your sin of worshiping idols. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

**24** <sup>1</sup> On the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of our exile, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup> Mortal man, he said, write down today's date, because this is the day that the king of Babylonia is beginning the siege of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> Tell my rebellious people this parable that I, the Sovereign LORD, have for them: Set the pot on the fire and fill it up with water.

<sup>4</sup> Put in the best pieces of meat -- the shoulders and the legs -- fill it with choice bony pieces too.

<sup>5</sup> Use the meat of the finest sheep; pile the wood under the pot. Let the water boil; boil the bones and the meat.

<sup>6</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: The city of murderers is doomed! It is like a corroded pot that is never cleaned. Piece after piece of meat is taken out, and not one is left.

<sup>7</sup>There was murder in the city, but the blood was not spilled on the ground where the dust could hide it; it was spilled on a bare rock.

<sup>8</sup>I have left the blood there, where it cannot be hidden, where it demands angry revenge.

<sup>9</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: The city of murderers is doomed! I myself will pile up the firewood.

<sup>10</sup>Bring more wood! Fan the flames! Cook the meat! Boil away the broth! Burn up the bones!

<sup>11</sup>Now set the empty bronze pot on the coals and let it get red-hot. Then the pot will be ritually pure again after the corrosion is burned off,

<sup>12</sup>although all that corrosion will not disappear in the flames.

<sup>13</sup>Jerusalem, your immoral actions have defiled you. Although I tried to purify you, you remained defiled. You

will not be pure again until you have felt the full force of my anger.

<sup>14</sup>I, the LORD, have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not ignore your sins or show pity or be merciful. You will be punished for what you have done. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>16</sup>Mortal man, he said, with one blow I am going to take away the person you love most. You are not to complain or cry or shed any tears.

<sup>17</sup>Don't let your sobbing be heard. Do not go bareheaded or barefoot as a sign of mourning. Don't cover your face or eat the food that mourners eat.

<sup>18</sup>Early in the day I was talking with the people. That evening my wife died, and the next day I did as I had been told.

<sup>19</sup>The people asked me, Why are you acting like this?

<sup>20</sup>So I said to them, The LORD spoke to me and told me

<sup>21</sup>to give you Israelites this message: You are proud of the strength of the Temple. You like to look at it and to visit it, but the LORD is going to profane it. And the younger members of your

families who are left in Jerusalem will be killed in war.

<sup>22</sup>Then you will do what I have done. You will not cover your faces or eat the food that mourners eat.

<sup>23</sup>You will not go bareheaded or barefoot or mourn or cry. You will waste away because of your sins, and you will groan to one another.

<sup>24</sup>Then I will be a sign to you; you will do everything I have done. The LORD says that when this happens, you will know that he is the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>25</sup>The LORD said, Now, mortal man, I will take away from them the strong Temple that was their pride and joy, which they liked to look at and to visit. And I will take away their sons and daughters.

<sup>26</sup>On the day that I do this, some who escape the destruction will come and tell you about it.

<sup>27</sup>That same day you will get back the power of speech which you had lost, and you will talk with them. In this way you will be a sign to the people, and they will know that I am the LORD.

**25** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, denounce the country of Ammon.

<sup>3</sup>Tell them to listen to what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: You were delighted to see my Temple profaned, to see the land of Israel devastated, to see the people of Judah go into exile.

<sup>4</sup>Because you were glad, I will let the tribes from the eastern desert conquer you. They will set up their camps in your country and settle there. They will eat the fruit and drink the milk that should have been yours.

<sup>5</sup>I will turn the city of Rabbah into a place to keep camels, and the whole country of Ammon will become a place to keep sheep, so that you will know I am the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: You clapped your hands and jumped for joy. You despised the land of Israel.

<sup>7</sup>Because you did, I will hand you over to other nations who will rob you and plunder you. I will destroy you so completely that you will not be a nation

any more or have a country of your own. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, Because Moab has said that Judah is like all the other nations,

<sup>9</sup>I will let the cities that defend the border of Moab be attacked, including even the finest cities -- Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon, and Kiriathaim.

<sup>10</sup>I will let the tribes of the eastern desert conquer Moab, together with Ammon, so that Moab will no longer be a nation.

<sup>11</sup>I will punish Moab, and they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, The people of Edom took cruel revenge on Judah, and that revenge has brought lasting guilt on Edom.

<sup>13</sup>Now I announce that I will punish Edom and kill every person and animal there. I will make it a wasteland, from the city of Teman to the city of Dedan, and the people will be killed in battle.

<sup>14</sup>My people Israel will take revenge on Edom for me, and they will make Edom feel my furious anger. Edom will know what it means to be the object of



my revenge. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>15</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, The Philistines have taken cruel revenge on their agelong enemies and destroyed them in their hate.

<sup>16</sup>And so I am announcing that I will attack the Philistines and wipe them out. I will destroy everyone left living there on the Philistine Plain.

<sup>17</sup>I will punish them severely and take full revenge on them. They will feel my anger. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

**26** <sup>1</sup>On the first day of the...month of the eleventh year of our exile, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, this is what the people in the city of Tyre are cheering about. They shout, Jerusalem is shattered! Her commercial power is gone! She won't be our rival any more!

<sup>3</sup>Now then, this is what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: I am your enemy, city of Tyre. I will bring many nations to attack you, and they will come like the waves of the sea.

<sup>4</sup>They will destroy your city walls and tear down your towers. Then I will sweep away all the dust and leave only a bare rock.

<sup>5</sup>Fishermen will dry their nets on it, there where it stands in the sea. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken. The nations will plunder Tyre,

<sup>6</sup>and with their swords they will kill those who live in her towns on the mainland. Then Tyre will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, I am going to bring the greatest king of all -- King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia -- to attack Tyre. He will come from the north with a huge army, with horses and chariots and with cavalry.

<sup>8</sup>Those who live in the towns on the mainland will be killed in the fighting. The enemy will dig trenches, build earthworks, and make a solid wall of shields against you.

<sup>9</sup>They will pound in your walls with battering rams and tear down your towers with iron bars.

<sup>10</sup>The clouds of dust raised by their horses will cover you. The noise of their

horses pulling wagons and chariots will shake your walls as they pass through the gates of the ruined city.

<sup>11</sup>Their cavalry will storm through your streets, killing your people with their swords. Your mighty pillars will be thrown to the ground.

<sup>12</sup>Your enemies will help themselves to your wealth and merchandise. They will pull down your walls and shatter your luxurious houses. They will take the stones and wood and all the rubble, and dump them into the sea.

<sup>13</sup>I will put an end to all your songs, and I will silence the music of your harps.

<sup>14</sup>I will leave only a bare rock where fishermen can dry their nets. The city will never be rebuilt. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>15</sup>The Sovereign LORD has this to say to the city of Tyre: When you are being conquered, the people who live along the coast will be terrified at the screams of those who are slaughtered.

<sup>16</sup>All the kings of the seafaring nations will come down from their thrones. They will take off their robes and their

embroidered clothes and sit trembling on the ground. They will be so terrified at your fate that they will not be able to stop trembling.

<sup>17</sup>They will sing this funeral song for you: The famous city is destroyed! Her ships have been swept from the seas. The people of this city ruled the seas And terrified all who lived on the coast.

<sup>18</sup>Now, on the day it has fallen, The islands are trembling, And their people are shocked at such destruction.

<sup>19</sup>The Sovereign LORD says: I will make you as desolate as ruined cities where no one lives. I will cover you with the water of the ocean depths.

<sup>20</sup>I will send you down to the world of the dead to join the people who lived in ancient times. I will make you stay in that underground world among eternal ruins, keeping company with the dead. As a result you will never again be inhabited and take your place in the land of the living.

<sup>21</sup>I will make you a terrifying example, and that will be the end of you. People may look for you, but you will never be found. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

**27** <sup>1</sup>The LORD said to me,  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, sing a funeral song  
for Tyre,

<sup>3</sup>that city which stands at the edge  
of the sea and does business with the  
people living on every seacoast. Tell  
her what the Sovereign LORD is saying:  
Tyre, you boasted of your perfect beauty.

<sup>4</sup>Your home is the sea. Your builders  
made you like a beautiful ship;

<sup>5</sup>They used fir trees from Mount  
Hermon for timber And a cedar from  
Lebanon for your mast.

<sup>6</sup>They took oak trees from Bashan to  
make oars; They made your deck out of  
pine from Cyprus And inlaid it with ivory.

<sup>7</sup>Your sails were made of linen,  
Embroidered linen from Egypt, Easily  
recognized from afar. Your awnings were  
made of finest cloth, Of purple from the  
island of Cyprus.

<sup>8</sup>Your oarsmen were from the cities of  
Sidon and Arvad. Your own skillful men  
were the sailors.

<sup>9</sup>The ship's carpenters Were well-  
trained men from Byblos. Sailors from  
every seagoing ship Did business in your  
shops.

<sup>10</sup>Soldiers from Persia, Lydia, and Libya served in your army. They hung their shields and their helmets in your barracks. They are the men who won glory for you.

<sup>11</sup>Soldiers from Arvad guarded your walls, and troops from Gamad guarded your towers. They hung their shields on your walls. They are the ones who made you beautiful.

<sup>12</sup>You did business in Spain and took silver, iron, tin, and lead in payment for your abundant goods.

<sup>13</sup>You did business in Greece, Tubal, and Meshech and traded your goods for slaves and for articles of bronze.

<sup>14</sup>You sold your goods for workhorses, war-horses, and mules from Beth Togarmah.

<sup>15</sup>The people of Rhodes traded with you; people of many coastal lands gave you ivory and ebony in exchange for your goods.

<sup>16</sup>The people of Syria bought your merchandise and your many products. They gave emeralds, purple cloth, embroidery, fine linen, coral, and rubies in payment for your wares.

<sup>17</sup> Judah and Israel paid for your goods with wheat, honey, olive oil, and spices.

<sup>18</sup> The people of Damascus bought your merchandise and your products, paying for them with wine from Helbon and wool from Sahar. They traded wrought iron and spices for your goods.

<sup>19</sup> (27: 18)

<sup>20</sup> The people of Dedan traded saddle blankets for your goods.

<sup>21</sup> The Arabians and the rulers of the land of Kedar paid for your merchandise with lambs, sheep, and goats.

<sup>22</sup> For your goods the merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded jewels, gold, and the finest spices.

<sup>23</sup> The cities of Haran, Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, the cities of Asshur and Chilmad -- they all traded with you.

<sup>24</sup> They sold you luxurious clothing, purple cloth, and embroidery, brightly colored carpets, and well-made cords and ropes.

<sup>25</sup> Your merchandise was carried in fleets of the largest cargo ships. You were like a ship at sea Loaded with heavy cargo.

<sup>26</sup>When your oarsmen brought you out to sea, An east wind wrecked you far from land.

<sup>27</sup>All your wealth of merchandise, All the sailors in your crew, Your ship's carpenters and your merchants, Every soldier on board the ship -- All, all were lost at sea When your ship was wrecked.

<sup>28</sup>The shouts of the drowning sailors Echoed on the shore.

<sup>29</sup>Every ship is now deserted, And every sailor has gone ashore.

<sup>30</sup>They all mourn bitterly for you, Throwing dust on their heads and rolling in ashes.

<sup>31</sup>They shave their heads for you And dress themselves in sackcloth. Their hearts are bitter as they weep.

<sup>32</sup>They chant a funeral song for you: Who can be compared to Tyre, To Tyre now silent in the sea?

<sup>33</sup>When your merchandise went overseas, You filled the needs of every nation. Kings were made rich By the wealth of your goods.

<sup>34</sup>Now you are wrecked in the sea; You have sunk to the ocean depths. Your



goods and all who worked for you Have vanished with you in the sea.

<sup>35</sup>Everyone who lives along the coast is shocked at your fate. Even their kings are terrified, and fear is written on their faces.

<sup>36</sup>You are gone, gone forever, and merchants all over the world are terrified, afraid that they will share your fate.

**28**<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, tell the ruler of Tyre what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to him: Puffed up with pride, you claim to be a god. You say that like a god you sit on a throne, surrounded by the seas. You may pretend to be a god, but, no, you are mortal, not divine.

<sup>3</sup>You think you are wiser than Danel, that no secret can be kept from you.

<sup>4</sup>Your wisdom and skill made you rich with treasures of gold and silver.

<sup>5</sup>You made clever business deals and kept on making profits. How proud you are of your wealth!

<sup>6</sup>Now then, this is what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: Because you think you are as wise as a god,

<sup>7</sup> I will bring ruthless enemies to attack you. They will destroy all the beautiful things you have acquired by skill and wisdom.

<sup>8</sup> They will kill you and send you to a watery grave.

<sup>9</sup> When they come to kill you, will you still claim that you are a god? When you face your murderers, you will be mortal and not at all divine.

<sup>10</sup> You will die like a dog at the hand of godless foreigners. I, the Sovereign LORD, have given the command.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD spoke to me again.

<sup>12</sup> Mortal man, he said, grieve for the fate that is waiting for the king of Tyre. Tell him what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: You were once an example of perfection. How wise and handsome you were!

<sup>13</sup> You lived in Eden, the garden of God, and wore gems of every kind: rubies and diamonds; topaz, beryl, carnelian, and jasper; sapphires, emeralds, and garnets. You had ornaments of gold. They were made for you on the day you were created.

<sup>14</sup>I put a terrifying angel there to guard you. You lived on my holy mountain and walked among sparkling gems.

<sup>15</sup>Your conduct was perfect from the day you were created until you began to do evil.

<sup>16</sup>You were busy buying and selling, and this led you to violence and sin. So I forced you to leave my holy mountain, and the angel who guarded you drove you away from the sparkling gems.

<sup>17</sup>You were proud of being handsome, and your fame made you act like a fool. Because of this I hurled you to the ground and left you as a warning to other kings.

<sup>18</sup>You did such evil in buying and selling that your places of worship were corrupted. So I set fire to the city and burned it to the ground. All who look at you now see you reduced to ashes.

<sup>19</sup>You are gone, gone forever, and all the nations that had come to know you are terrified, afraid that they will share your fate.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD said to me,

<sup>21</sup>Mortal man, denounce the city of Sidon.

<sup>22</sup>Tell the people there what I, the Sovereign LORD, say about them: I am your enemy, Sidon; people will praise me because of what I do to you. They will know that I am the LORD, when I show how holy I am by punishing those who live in you.

<sup>23</sup>I will send diseases on you and make blood flow in your streets. You will be attacked from every side, and your people will be killed. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>24</sup>The LORD said, None of the surrounding nations that treated Israel with scorn will ever again be like thorns and briars to hurt Israel. And they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>25</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, I will bring back the people of Israel from the nations where I scattered them, and all the nations will know that I am holy. The people of Israel will live in their own land, the land that I gave to my servant Jacob.

<sup>26</sup>They will live there in safety. They will build houses and plant vineyards. I will punish all their neighbors who treated them with scorn, and Israel will

be secure. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.

**29**<sup>1</sup> On the twelfth day of the tenth month of the tenth year of our exile, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup> Mortal man, he said, denounce the king of Egypt. Tell him how he and all the land of Egypt will be punished.

<sup>3</sup> Say that this is what the Sovereign LORD is telling the king of Egypt: I am your enemy, you monster crocodile, lying in the river. You say that the Nile is yours and that you made it.

<sup>4</sup> I am going to put a hook through your jaw and make the fish in your river stick fast to you. Then I will pull you up out of the Nile, with all the fish sticking to you.

<sup>5</sup> I will throw you and all those fish into the desert. Your body will fall on the ground and be left unburied. I will give it to the birds and animals for food.

<sup>6</sup> Then all the people of Egypt will know that I am the LORD. The LORD says, The Israelites relied on you Egyptians for support, but you were no better than a weak stick.

<sup>7</sup> When they leaned on you, you broke, pierced their armpits, and made them wrench their backs.

<sup>8</sup> Now then, I, the Sovereign LORD, am telling you that I will have troops attack you with swords, and they will kill your people and your animals.

<sup>9</sup> Egypt will become an empty wasteland. Then you will know that I am the LORD. Because you said that the Nile is yours and you made it,

<sup>10</sup> I am your enemy and the enemy of your Nile. I will make all of Egypt an empty wasteland, from the city of Migdol in the north to the city of Aswan in the south, all the way to the Ethiopian border.

<sup>11</sup> No human being or animal will walk through it. For forty years nothing will live there.

<sup>12</sup> I will make Egypt the most desolate country in the world. For forty years the cities of Egypt will lie in ruins, ruins worse than those of any other city. I will make the Egyptians refugees. They will flee to every country and live among other peoples.

<sup>13</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, After forty years I will bring the Egyptians back from the nations where I have scattered them,

<sup>14</sup>and I will let them live in southern Egypt, their original home. There they will be a weak kingdom,

<sup>15</sup>the weakest kingdom of all, and they will never again rule other nations. I will make them so unimportant that they will not be able to bend any other nation to their will.

<sup>16</sup>Israel will never again depend on them for help. Egypt's fate will remind Israel how wrong it was to rely on them. Then Israel will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>17</sup>On the first day of the first month of the twenty-seventh year of our exile, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>18</sup>Mortal man, he said, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia launched an attack on Tyre. He made his soldiers carry such heavy loads that their heads were rubbed bald and their shoulders were worn raw, but neither the king nor his army got anything for all their trouble.

<sup>19</sup>So now this is what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: I am giving the land of Egypt to King Nebuchadnezzar. He will loot and plunder it and carry off all the wealth of Egypt as his army's pay.

<sup>20</sup>I am giving him Egypt in payment for his services, because his army was working for me. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>21</sup>When that happens, I will make the people of Israel strong and let you, Ezekiel, speak out where everyone can hear you, so that they will know that I am the LORD.

**30**<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me again.  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, prophesy and announce what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying. You are to shout these words: A day of terror is coming!

<sup>3</sup>The day is near, the day when the LORD will act, A day of clouds and trouble for the nations.

<sup>4</sup>There will be war in Egypt And great distress in Ethiopia. Many in Egypt will be killed; The country will be plundered And left in ruins.



<sup>5</sup>That war will also kill the soldiers hired from Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, Arabia, Kub, and even from among my own people.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD says, From Migdol in the north to Aswan in the south, all Egypt's defenders will be killed in battle. Egypt's proud army will be destroyed. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>7</sup>The land will be the most desolate in the world, and its cities will be left totally in ruins.

<sup>8</sup>When I set fire to Egypt and all her defenders are killed, then they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>When that day comes and Egypt is destroyed, I will send messengers in ships to arouse the unsuspecting people of Ethiopia, and they will be terrified. That day is coming!

<sup>10</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, I will use King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia to put an end to Egypt's wealth.

<sup>11</sup>He and his ruthless army will come to devastate the land. They will attack Egypt with swords, and the land will be full of corpses.

<sup>12</sup>I will dry up the Nile and put Egypt under the power of evil people.

Foreigners will devastate the whole country. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>13</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, I will destroy the idols and the false gods in Memphis. There will be no one to rule Egypt, and I will terrify all the people.

<sup>14</sup>I will make southern Egypt desolate and set fire to the city of Zoan in the north. I will punish the capital city of Thebes.

<sup>15</sup>I will let the city of Pelusium, Egypt's great fortress, feel my fury. I will destroy the wealth of Thebes.

<sup>16</sup>I will set fire to Egypt, and Pelusium will be in agony. The walls of Thebes will be broken down, and the city will be flooded.

<sup>17</sup>The young men of the cities of Heliopolis and Bubastis will die in the war, and the other people will be taken prisoner.

<sup>18</sup>Darkness will fall on Tahpanhes when I break the power of Egypt and put an end to the strength they were so proud of. A cloud will cover Egypt, and the people of all her cities will be taken prisoner.

<sup>19</sup>When I punish Egypt in this way, they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>20</sup>On the seventh day of the first month of the eleventh year of our exile, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>21</sup>Mortal man, he said, I have broken the arm of the king of Egypt. No one has bandaged it or put it in a sling so that it could heal and be strong enough to hold a sword again.

<sup>22</sup>Now then, this is what I, the Sovereign LORD, say: I am the enemy of the king of Egypt. I am going to break both his arms -- the good one and the one already broken -- and the sword will fall from his hand.

<sup>23</sup>I am going to scatter the Egyptians throughout the world.

<sup>24</sup>Then I will make the arms of the king of Babylonia strong and put my sword in his hands. But I will break the arms of the king of Egypt, and he will groan and die in front of his enemy.

<sup>25</sup>Yes, I will weaken him and strengthen the king of Babylonia. When I give him my sword and he points it toward Egypt, everyone will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>I will scatter the Egyptians throughout the world. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

**31** <sup>1</sup>On the first day of the third month of the eleventh year of our exile, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, say to the king of Egypt and all his people: How powerful you are! What can I compare you to?

<sup>3</sup>You are like a cedar in Lebanon, With beautiful, shady branches, A tree so tall it reaches the clouds.

<sup>4</sup>There was water to make it grow, And underground rivers to feed it. They watered the place where the tree was growing And sent streams to all the trees of the forest.

<sup>5</sup>Because it was well-watered, It grew taller than other trees. Its branches grew thick and long.

<sup>6</sup>Every kind of bird built nests in its branches; The wild animals bore their young in its shelter; The nations of the world rested in its shade.

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful the tree was -- So tall, with such long branches. Its roots reached down to the deep-flowing streams.

<sup>8</sup>No cedar in God's garden could compare with it. No fir tree ever had such branches, And no plane tree such limbs. No tree in God's own garden was so beautiful.

<sup>9</sup>I made it beautiful, with spreading branches. It was the envy of every tree in Eden, the garden of God.

<sup>10</sup>Now then, I, the Sovereign LORD, will tell you what is going to happen to that tree that grew until it reached the clouds. As it grew taller it grew proud;

<sup>11</sup>so I have rejected it and will let a foreign ruler have it. He will give that tree what it deserves for its wickedness.

<sup>12</sup>Ruthless foreigners will cut it down and leave it. Its branches and broken limbs will fall on every mountain and valley in the country. All the nations that have been living in its shade will go away.

<sup>13</sup>The birds will come and perch on the fallen tree, and the wild animals will walk over its branches.

<sup>14</sup>And so from now on, no tree, no matter how well-watered it is, will grow that tall again or push its top through the clouds and reach such a height. All

of them are doomed to die like mortals, doomed to join those who go down to the world of the dead.

<sup>15</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day when the tree goes to the world of the dead, I will make the underground waters cover it as a sign of mourning. I will hold back the rivers and not let the many streams flow out. Because the tree has died, I will bring darkness over the Lebanon Mountains and make all the trees of the forest wither.

<sup>16</sup>When I send it down to the world of the dead, the noise of its downfall will shake the nations. All the trees of Eden and all the choice, well-watered trees of Lebanon who have gone to the world below will be pleased at its downfall.

<sup>17</sup>They will go with it to the world of the dead to join those that have already fallen. And all who live under its shadow will be scattered among the nations.

<sup>18</sup>The tree is the king of Egypt and all his people. Not even the trees in Eden were so tall and impressive. But now, like the trees of Eden, it will go down to the world of the dead and join the

ungodly and those killed in battle. I have spoken, says the Sovereign LORD.

**32**<sup>1</sup> On the first day of the twelfth month of the twelfth year of our exile, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup> Mortal man, he said, give a solemn warning to the king of Egypt. Give him this message from me: You act like a lion among the nations, but you are more like a crocodile splashing through a river. You muddy the water with your feet and pollute the rivers.

<sup>3</sup> When many nations gather, I will catch you in my net and let them drag the net ashore.

<sup>4</sup> I will throw you out on the ground and bring all the birds and animals of the world to feed on you.

<sup>5</sup> I will cover mountains and valleys with your rotting corpse.

<sup>6</sup> I will pour out your blood until it spreads over the mountains and fills the streams.

<sup>7</sup> When I destroy you, I will cover the sky and blot out the stars. The sun will hide behind the clouds, and the moon will give no light.

<sup>8</sup>I will put out all the lights of heaven and plunge your world into darkness. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>9</sup>Many nations will be troubled when I spread the news of your destruction through countries you never heard of.

<sup>10</sup>What I do to you will shock many nations. When I swing my sword, kings will shudder with fright. On the day you fall, all of them will tremble in fear for their own lives.

<sup>11</sup>The Sovereign LORD says to the king of Egypt, You will face the sword of the king of Babylonia.

<sup>12</sup>I will let soldiers from cruel nations draw their swords and kill all your people. All your people and everything else that you are proud of will be destroyed.

<sup>13</sup>I will slaughter your cattle at every water hole. There will be no people or cattle to muddy the water any more.

<sup>14</sup>I will let your waters settle and become clear and let your rivers run calm. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>15</sup>When I make Egypt a desolate wasteland and destroy all who live there, they will know that I am the LORD.



<sup>16</sup>This solemn warning will become a funeral song. The women of the nations will sing it to mourn for Egypt and all its people. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>17</sup>On the fifteenth day of the first month of the twelfth year of our exile, the LORD spoke to me.

<sup>18</sup>Mortal man, he said, mourn for all the many people of Egypt. Send them down with the other powerful nations to the world of the dead.

<sup>19</sup>Say to them: Do you think you are more beautiful than anyone else? You will go down to the world of the dead and lie there among the ungodly.

<sup>20</sup>The people of Egypt will fall with those who are killed in battle. A sword is ready to kill them all.

<sup>21</sup>The greatest heroes and those who fought on the Egyptian side welcome the Egyptians to the world of the dead. They shout: The ungodly who were killed in battle have come down here, and here they lie!

<sup>22</sup>Assyria is there, with the graves of her soldiers all around. They were all killed in battle,

<sup>23</sup> and their graves are in the deepest parts of the world of the dead. All her soldiers fell in battle, and their graves surround her tomb. Yet once they terrified the land of the living.

<sup>24</sup> Elam is there, with the graves of her soldiers all around. They were all killed in battle, and they went down, uncircumcised, to the world of the dead. In life they spread terror, but now they lie dead and disgraced.

<sup>25</sup> Elam lies down among those killed in battle, and the graves of her soldiers are all around her. They are all uncircumcised, all killed in battle. In life they spread terror, but now they lie dead and disgraced, sharing the fate of those killed in battle.

<sup>26</sup> Meshech and Tubal are there, with the graves of their soldiers all around. They are all uncircumcised, all killed in battle. Yet once they terrified the living.

<sup>27</sup> They were not given honorable burial like the heroes of ancient times, who went fully armed to the world of the dead, their swords placed under their heads and their shields over their

bodies. These heroes were once powerful enough to terrify the living.

<sup>28</sup>That is how the Egyptians will lie crushed among the uncircumcised who were killed in battle.

<sup>29</sup>Edom is there with her kings and rulers. They were powerful soldiers, but now they lie in the world of the dead with the uncircumcised who were killed in battle.

<sup>30</sup>All the princes of the north are there, and so are the Sidonians. Their power once spread terror, but now they go down in disgrace with those killed in battle and are laid to rest, uncircumcised. They share the disgrace of those who go down to the world of the dead.

<sup>31</sup>The sight of all these who were killed in battle will be a comfort to the king of Egypt and his army, says the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>32</sup>I caused the king of Egypt to terrorize the living, but he and all his army will be killed and laid to rest with all the uncircumcised who die in battle. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

**33** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, tell your people what happens when I bring war to a land. The people of that country choose one of their number to be a lookout.

<sup>3</sup>When he sees the enemy approaching, he sounds the alarm to warn everyone.

<sup>4</sup>If someone hears it but pays no attention and the enemy comes and kills him, then he is to blame for his own death.

<sup>5</sup>His death is his own fault, because he paid no attention to the warning. If he had paid attention, he could have escaped.

<sup>6</sup>If, however, the lookout sees the enemy coming and does not sound the alarm, the enemy will come and kill those sinners, but I will hold the lookout responsible for their death.

<sup>7</sup>Now, mortal man, I am making you a lookout for the nation of Israel. You must pass on to them the warnings I give you.

<sup>8</sup>If I announce that an evil person is going to die but you do not warn him to change his ways so that he can save his

life, then he will die, still a sinner, and I will hold you responsible for his death.

<sup>9</sup>If you do warn an evil person and he doesn't stop sinning, he will die, still a sinner, but your life will be spared.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD spoke to me. Mortal man, he said, repeat to the Israelites what they are saying: We are burdened with our sins and the wrongs we have done. We are wasting away. How can we live?

<sup>11</sup>Tell them that as surely as I, the Sovereign LORD, am the living God, I do not enjoy seeing sinners die. I would rather see them stop sinning and live. Israel, stop the evil you are doing. Why do you want to die?

<sup>12</sup>Now, mortal man, tell the Israelites that when someone good sins, the good he has done will not save him. If an evil person stops doing evil, he won't be punished, and if a good man starts sinning, his life will not be spared.

<sup>13</sup>I may promise life to someone good, but if he starts thinking that his past goodness is enough and begins to sin, I will not remember any of the good he did. He will die because of his sins.

<sup>14</sup>I may warn someone evil that he is going to die, but if he stops sinning and does what is right and good --

<sup>15</sup>for example, if he returns the security he took for a loan or gives back what he stole -- if he stops sinning and follows the laws that give life, he will not die, but live.

<sup>16</sup>I will forgive the sins he has committed, and he will live because he has done what is right and good.

<sup>17</sup>And your people say that what I do isn't right! No, it's their way that isn't right.

<sup>18</sup>When someone righteous stops doing good and starts doing evil, he will die for it.

<sup>19</sup>When someone evil quits sinning and does what is right and good, he has saved his life.

<sup>20</sup>But Israel, you say that what I do isn't right. I am going to judge you by what you do.

<sup>21</sup>On the fifth day of the tenth month of the twelfth year of our exile, someone who had escaped from Jerusalem came and told me that the city had fallen.

<sup>22</sup>The evening before he came, I had felt the powerful presence of the LORD. When the man arrived the next morning, the LORD gave me back the power of speech.

<sup>23</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>24</sup>Mortal man, he said, the people who are living in the ruined cities of the land of Israel are saying: Abraham was only one man, and he was given the whole land. There are many of us, so now the land is ours.

<sup>25</sup>Tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: You eat meat with the blood still in it. You worship idols. You commit murder. What makes you think that the land belongs to you?

<sup>26</sup>You rely on your swords. Your actions are disgusting. Everyone commits adultery. What makes you think that the land is yours?

<sup>27</sup>Tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD, warn them that as surely as I am the living God, the people who live in the ruined cities will be killed. Those living in the country will be eaten by wild animals. Those hiding in the mountains and in caves will die of disease.

<sup>28</sup>I will make the country a desolate wasteland, and the power they were so proud of will come to an end. The mountains of Israel will be so wild that no one will be able to travel through them.

<sup>29</sup>When I punish the people for their sins and make the country a wasteland, then they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>30</sup>The LORD said, Mortal man, your people are talking about you when they meet by the city walls or in the doorways of their houses. They say to one another, Let's go and hear what word has come from the LORD now.

<sup>31</sup>So my people crowd in to hear what you have to say, but they don't do what you tell them to do. Loving words are on their lips, but they continue their greedy ways.

<sup>32</sup>To them you are nothing more than an entertainer singing love songs or playing a harp. They listen to all your words and don't obey a single one of them.

<sup>33</sup>But when all your words come true -- and they will come true -- then they will



know that a prophet has been among them.

**34** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, denounce the rulers of Israel. Prophecy to them, and tell them what I, the Sovereign LORD, say to them: You are doomed, you shepherds of Israel! You take care of yourselves, but never tend the sheep.

<sup>3</sup>You drink the milk, wear clothes made from the wool, and kill and eat the finest sheep. But you never tend the sheep.

<sup>4</sup>You have not taken care of the weak ones, healed the ones that are sick, bandaged the ones that are hurt, brought back the ones that wandered off, or looked for the ones that were lost. Instead, you treated them cruelly.

<sup>5</sup>Because the sheep had no shepherd, they were scattered, and wild animals killed and ate them.

<sup>6</sup>So my sheep wandered over the high hills and the mountains. They were scattered over the face of the earth, and no one looked for them or tried to find them.

<sup>7</sup>Now, you shepherds, listen to what I, the LORD, am telling you.

<sup>8</sup>As surely as I am the living God, you had better listen to me. My sheep have been attacked by wild animals that killed and ate them because there was no shepherd. My shepherds did not try to find the sheep. They were taking care of themselves and not the sheep.

<sup>9</sup>So listen to me, you shepherds.

<sup>10</sup>I, the Sovereign LORD, declare that I am your enemy. I will take my sheep away from you and never again let you be their shepherds; never again will I let you take care only of yourselves. I will rescue my sheep from you and not let you eat them.

<sup>11</sup>I, the Sovereign LORD, tell you that I myself will look for my sheep and take care of them

<sup>12</sup>in the same way as shepherds take care of their sheep that were scattered and are brought together again. I will bring them back from all the places where they were scattered on that dark, disastrous day.

<sup>13</sup>I will take them out of foreign countries, gather them together, and bring them back to their own land. I will lead them back to the mountains and

the streams of Israel and will feed them in pleasant pastures.

<sup>14</sup>I will let them graze in safety in the mountain meadows and the valleys and in all the green pastures of the land of Israel.

<sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will find them a place to rest. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>16</sup>I will look for those that are lost, bring back those that wander off, bandage those that are hurt, and heal those that are sick; but those that are fat and strong I will destroy, because I am a shepherd who does what is right.

<sup>17</sup>Now then, my flock, I, the Sovereign LORD, tell you that I will judge each of you and separate the good from the bad, the sheep from the goats.

<sup>18</sup>Some of you are not satisfied with eating the best grass; you even trample down what you don't eat! You drink the clear water and muddy what you don't drink!

<sup>19</sup>My other sheep have to eat the grass you trample down and drink the water you muddy.

<sup>20</sup> So now, I, the Sovereign LORD, tell you that I will judge between you strong sheep and the weak sheep.

<sup>21</sup> You pushed the sick ones aside and butted them away from the flock.

<sup>22</sup> But I will rescue my sheep and not let them be mistreated any more. I will judge each of my sheep and separate the good from the bad.

<sup>23</sup> I will give them a king like my servant David to be their one shepherd, and he will take care of them.

<sup>24</sup> I, the LORD, will be their God, and a king like my servant David will be their ruler. I have spoken.

<sup>25</sup> I will make a covenant with them that guarantees their security. I will get rid of all the dangerous animals in the land, so that my sheep can live safely in the fields and sleep in the forests.

<sup>26</sup> I will bless them and let them live around my sacred hill. There I will bless them with showers of rain when they need it.

<sup>27</sup> The trees will bear fruit, the fields will produce crops, and everyone will live in safety on his own land. When I break my people's chains and set them free from

those who made them slaves, then they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>28</sup>The heathen nations will not plunder them any more, and the wild animals will not kill and eat them. They will live in safety, and no one will terrify them.

<sup>29</sup>I will give them fertile fields and put an end to hunger in the land. The other nations will not sneer at them any more.

<sup>30</sup>Everyone will know that I protect Israel and that they are my people. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>31</sup>You, my sheep, the flock that I feed, are my people, and I am your God, says the Sovereign LORD.

**35** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, denounce the country of Edom.

<sup>3</sup>Tell the people what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: I am your enemy, mountains of Edom! I will make you a desolate wasteland.

<sup>4</sup>I will leave your cities in ruins And your land desolate; Then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>You were Israel's constant enemy and let her people be slaughtered in the

time of her disaster, the time of final punishment for her sins.

<sup>6</sup>So then -- as surely as I, the Sovereign LORD, am the living God -- death is your fate, and you cannot escape it. You are guilty of murder, and murder will follow you.

<sup>7</sup>I will make the hill country of Edom a wasteland and kill everyone who travels through it.

<sup>8</sup>I will cover the mountains with corpses, and the bodies of those who are killed in battle will cover the hills and valleys.

<sup>9</sup>I will make you desolate forever, and no one will live in your cities again. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>You said that the two nations, Judah and Israel, together with their lands, belonged to you and that you would possess them, even though I, the LORD, was their God.

<sup>11</sup>So then, as surely as I, the Sovereign LORD, am the living God, I will pay you back for your anger, your jealousy, and your hate toward my people. They will know that I am punishing you for what you did to them.

<sup>12</sup>Then you will know that I, the LORD, heard you say with contempt that the mountains of Israel were desolate and that they were yours to devour.

<sup>13</sup>I have heard the wild, boastful way you have talked against me.

<sup>14</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, I will make you so desolate that the whole world will rejoice at your downfall,

<sup>15</sup>just as you rejoiced at the devastation of Israel, my own possession. The mountains of Seir, yes, all the land of Edom, will be desolate. Then everyone will know that I am the LORD.

**36** <sup>1</sup>The LORD said, Mortal man, speak to the mountains of Israel and tell them to listen to the message which I,

<sup>2</sup>the Sovereign LORD, have for them: Israel's enemies gloated and said, Now those ancient hills are ours!

<sup>3</sup>Prophecy, then, and announce what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying. When the neighboring nations captured and plundered the mountains of Israel, everyone made fun of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>So now listen to what I, the Sovereign LORD, say to you mountains and hills,

to you brooks and valleys, to you places that were left in ruins, and to you deserted cities which were plundered and mocked by all the surrounding nations.

<sup>5</sup>I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken out in the heat of my anger against the surrounding nations, and especially against Edom. With glee and contempt they captured my land and took possession of its pastures.

<sup>6</sup>So prophesy to the land of Israel; tell the mountains, hills, brooks, and valleys what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying in jealous anger because of the way the nations have insulted and humiliated them.

<sup>7</sup>I, the Sovereign LORD, solemnly promise that the surrounding nations will be humiliated.

<sup>8</sup>But on the mountains of Israel the trees will again grow leaves and bear fruit for you, my people Israel. You are going to come home soon.

<sup>9</sup>I am on your side, and I will make sure that your land is plowed again and crops are planted on it.



<sup>10</sup>I will make your population grow. You will live in the cities and rebuild everything that was left in ruins.

<sup>11</sup>I will make people and cattle increase in number. There will be more of you than ever before, and you will have many children. I will let you live there as you used to live, and I will make you more prosperous than ever. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>I will bring you, my people Israel, back to live again in the land. It will be your own land, and it will never again let your children starve.

<sup>13</sup>I, the Sovereign LORD, say: It is true that people say that the land eats people and that it robs the nation of its children.

<sup>14</sup>But from now on it will no longer eat people and rob you of your children. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>15</sup>The land will no longer have to listen to the nations making fun of it or see the peoples sneer at it. The land will no longer rob the nation of its children. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD spoke to me.

<sup>17</sup>Mortal man, he said, when the Israelites were living in their land, they

defiled it by the way they lived and acted. I regarded their behavior as being as ritually unclean as a woman is during her monthly period.

<sup>18</sup>I let them feel the force of my anger because of the murders they had committed in the land and because of the idols by which they had defiled it.

<sup>19</sup>I condemned them for the way they lived and acted, and I scattered them through foreign countries.

<sup>20</sup>Wherever they went, they brought disgrace on my holy name, because people would say, These are the people of the LORD, but they had to leave his land.

<sup>21</sup>That made me concerned for my holy name, since the Israelites brought disgrace on it everywhere they went.

<sup>22</sup>Now then, give the Israelites the message that I, the Sovereign LORD, have for them: What I am going to do is not for the sake of you Israelites, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have disgraced in every country where you have gone.

<sup>23</sup>When I demonstrate to the nations the holiness of my great name -- the

name you disgraced among them -- then they will know that I am the LORD. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken. I will use you to show the nations that I am holy.

<sup>24</sup>I will take you from every nation and country and bring you back to your own land.

<sup>25</sup>I will sprinkle clean water on you and make you clean from all your idols and everything else that has defiled you.

<sup>26</sup>I will give you a new heart and a new mind. I will take away your stubborn heart of stone and give you an obedient heart.

<sup>27</sup>I will put my spirit in you and will see to it that you follow my laws and keep all the commands I have given you.

<sup>28</sup>Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God.

<sup>29</sup>I will save you from everything that defiles you. I will command the grain to be plentiful, so that you will not have any more famines.

<sup>30</sup>I will increase the yield of your fruit trees and your fields, so that there will be no more famines to disgrace you among the nations.

<sup>31</sup> You will remember your evil conduct and the wrongs that you committed, and you will be disgusted with yourselves because of your sins and your iniquities.

<sup>32</sup> Israel, I want you to know that I am not doing all this for your sake. I want you to feel the shame and disgrace of what you are doing. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>33</sup> The Sovereign LORD says, When I make you clean from all your sins, I will let you live in your cities again and let you rebuild the ruins.

<sup>34</sup> Everyone who used to walk by your fields saw how overgrown and wild they were, but I will let you farm them again.

<sup>35</sup> Everyone will talk about how this land, which was once a wilderness, has become like the Garden of Eden, and how the cities which were torn down, looted, and left in ruins, are now inhabited and fortified.

<sup>36</sup> Then the neighboring nations that have survived will know that I, the LORD, rebuild ruined cities and replant waste fields. I, the LORD, have promised that I would do this -- and I will.

<sup>37</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, I will once again let the Israelites ask me for help, and I will let them increase in numbers like a flock of sheep.

<sup>38</sup>The cities that are now in ruins will then be as full of people as Jerusalem was once full of the sheep which were offered as sacrifices at a festival. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

**37** <sup>1</sup>I felt the powerful presence of the LORD, and his spirit took me and set me down in a valley where the ground was covered with bones.

<sup>2</sup>He led me all around the valley, and I could see that there were very many bones and that they were very dry.

<sup>3</sup>He said to me, Mortal man, can these bones come back to life? I replied, Sovereign LORD, only you can answer that!

<sup>4</sup>He said, Prophecy to the bones. Tell these dry bones to listen to the word of the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>Tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them: I am going to put breath into you and bring you back to life.

<sup>6</sup>I will give you sinews and muscles, and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you and bring you back to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I had been told. While I was speaking, I heard a rattling noise, and the bones began to join together.

<sup>8</sup>While I watched, the bones were covered with sinews and muscles, and then with skin. But there was no breath in the bodies.

<sup>9</sup>God said to me, Mortal man, prophesy to the wind. Tell the wind that the Sovereign LORD commands it to come from every direction, to breathe into these dead bodies, and to bring them back to life.

<sup>10</sup>So I prophesied as I had been told. Breath entered the bodies, and they came to life and stood up. There were enough of them to form an army.

<sup>11</sup>God said to me, Mortal man, the people of Israel are like these bones. They say that they are dried up, without any hope and with no future.

<sup>12</sup>So prophesy to my people Israel and tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD, am

going to open their graves. I am going to take them out and bring them back to the land of Israel.

<sup>13</sup>When I open the graves where my people are buried and bring them out, they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>I will put my breath in them, bring them back to life, and let them live in their own land. Then they will know that I am the LORD. I have promised that I would do this -- and I will. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD spoke to me again.

<sup>16</sup>Mortal man, he said, take a wooden stick and write on it the words, The kingdom of Judah. Then take another stick and write on it the words, The kingdom of Israel.

<sup>17</sup>Then hold the two sticks end to end in your hand so that they look like one stick.

<sup>18</sup>When your people ask you to tell them what this means,

<sup>19</sup>tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD, am going to take the stick representing Israel and put it with the one that represents Judah. Out of the two I will make one stick and hold it in my hand.

<sup>20</sup> Hold in your hand the two sticks and let the people see them.

<sup>21</sup> Then tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD, am going to take all my people out of the nations where they have gone, gather them together, and bring them back to their own land.

<sup>22</sup> I will unite them into one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. They will have one king to rule over them, and they will no longer be divided into two nations or split into two kingdoms.

<sup>23</sup> They will not defile themselves with disgusting idols any more or corrupt themselves with sin. I will free them from all the ways in which they sin and betray me. I will purify them; they will be my people, and I will be their God.

<sup>24</sup> A king like my servant David will be their king. They will all be united under one ruler and will obey my laws faithfully.

<sup>25</sup> They will live on the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where their ancestors lived. They will live there forever, and so will their children and all their descendants. A king like my servant David will rule them forever.



<sup>26</sup>I will make a covenant with them that guarantees their security forever. I will establish them and increase their population, and will see to it that my Temple stands forever in their land.

<sup>27</sup>I will live there with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

<sup>28</sup>When I place my Temple there to be among them forever, then the nations will know that I, the LORD, have chosen Israel to be my own people.

**38** <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to me.  
<sup>2</sup>Mortal man, he said, denounce Gog, chief ruler of the nations of Meshech and Tubal in the land of Magog. Denounce him

<sup>3</sup>and tell him that I, the Sovereign LORD, am his enemy.

<sup>4</sup>I will turn him around, put hooks in his jaws, and drag him and all his troops away. His army, with its horses and uniformed riders, is enormous, and every soldier carries a shield and is armed with a sword.

<sup>5</sup>Troops from Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with him, and all have shields and helmets.

<sup>6</sup>All the fighting men of the lands of Gomer and Beth Togarmah in the north are with him, and so are men from many other nations.

<sup>7</sup>Tell him to get ready and have all his troops ready at his command.

<sup>8</sup>After many years I will order him to invade a country where the people were brought back together from many nations and have lived without fear of war. He will invade the mountains of Israel, which were desolate and deserted so long, but where all the people now live in safety.

<sup>9</sup>He and his army and the many nations with him will attack like a storm and cover the land like a cloud.

<sup>10</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Gog: When that time comes, you will start thinking up an evil plan.

<sup>11</sup>You will decide to invade a helpless country where the people live in peace and security in unwalled towns that have no defenses.

<sup>12</sup>You will plunder and loot the people who live in cities that were once in ruins. They have been gathered from the nations, and now they have livestock

and property and live at the crossroads of the world.

<sup>13</sup>The people of Sheba and Dedan and the merchants from the towns of Spain will ask you, Have you assembled your army and attacked in order to loot and plunder? Do you intend to get silver and gold, livestock and property, and march off with all those spoils?

<sup>14</sup>So the Sovereign LORD sent me to tell Gog what he was saying to him: Now while my people Israel live in security, you will set out

<sup>15</sup>to come from your place in the far north, leading a large, powerful army of soldiers from many nations, all of them on horseback.

<sup>16</sup>You will attack my people Israel like a storm moving across the land. When the time comes, I will send you to invade my land in order to show the nations who I am, to show my holiness by what I do through you.

<sup>17</sup>You are the one I was talking about long ago, when I announced through my servants, the prophets of Israel, that in days to come I would bring someone to

attack Israel. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>18</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, On the day when Gog invades Israel, I will become furious.

<sup>19</sup>I declare in the heat of my anger that on that day there will be a severe earthquake in the land of Israel.

<sup>20</sup>Every fish and bird, every animal large and small, and every human being on the face of the earth will tremble for fear of me. Mountains will fall, cliffs will crumble, and every wall will collapse.

<sup>21</sup>I will terrify Gog with all sorts of calamities. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken. His men will turn their swords against one another.

<sup>22</sup>I will punish him with disease and bloodshed. Torrents of rain and hail, together with fire and sulfur, will pour down on him and his army and on the many nations that are on his side.

<sup>23</sup>In this way I will show all the nations that I am great and that I am holy. They will know then that I am the LORD.

**39**<sup>1</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, Mortal man, denounce Gog, the chief

ruler of the nations of Meshech and Tubal, and tell him that I am his enemy.

<sup>2</sup>I will turn him in a new direction and lead him out of the far north until he comes to the mountains of Israel.

<sup>3</sup>Then I will knock his bow out of his left hand and his arrows out of his right hand.

<sup>4</sup>Gog and his army and his allies will fall dead on the mountains of Israel, and I will let their bodies be food for all the birds and wild animals.

<sup>5</sup>They will fall dead in the open field. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>6</sup>I will start a fire in the land of Magog and along all the seacoasts where people live undisturbed, and everyone will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>I will make sure that my people Israel know my holy name, and I will not let my name be disgraced any more. Then the nations will know that I, the LORD, am the holy God of Israel.

<sup>8</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, The day I spoke about is certain to come.

<sup>9</sup>The people who live in the cities of Israel will go out and collect the abandoned weapons for firewood. They

will build fires with the shields, bows, arrows, spears, and clubs, and have enough to last for seven years.

<sup>10</sup>They will not have to gather firewood in the fields or cut down trees in the forest, because they will have the abandoned weapons to burn. They will loot and plunder those who looted and plundered them. The Sovereign LORD has spoken.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD said, When all this happens, I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, in Travelers' Valley, east of the Dead Sea. Gog and all his army will be buried there, and the valley will be called The Valley of Gog's Army.

<sup>12</sup>It will take the Israelites seven months to bury all the corpses and make the land clean again.

<sup>13</sup>Everyone in the land will help bury them, and they will be honored for this on the day of my victory. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>14</sup>After the seven months are over, men will be chosen to travel through the land in order to find and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, so that they can make the land clean.

<sup>15</sup>As they go up and down the country, every time they find a human bone, they will put a marker beside it so that the gravediggers can come and bury it in the Valley of Gog's Army.

<sup>16</sup>(There will be a town nearby named after the army.) And so the land will be made clean again.

<sup>17</sup>The Sovereign LORD said to me, Mortal man, call all the birds and animals to come from all around to eat the sacrifice I am preparing for them. It will be a huge feast on the mountains of Israel, where they can eat meat and drink blood.

<sup>18</sup>They are to eat the bodies of soldiers and drink the blood of the rulers of the earth, all of whom will be killed like rams or lambs or goats or fat bulls.

<sup>19</sup>When I kill these people like sacrifices, the birds and animals are to eat all the fat they can hold and to drink blood until they are drunk.

<sup>20</sup>At my table they will eat all they can hold of horses and their riders and of soldiers and fighting men. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>21</sup> The LORD said, I will let the nations see my glory and show them how I use my power to carry out my just decisions.

<sup>22</sup> The Israelites will know from then on that I am the LORD their God.

<sup>23</sup> And the nations will know that the Israelites went into exile because of the sins which they committed against me. I turned away from them and let their enemies defeat them and kill them in battle.

<sup>24</sup> I gave them what they deserved for their uncleanness and their wickedness, and I turned away from them.

<sup>25</sup> The Sovereign LORD said, But now I will be merciful to Jacob's descendants, the people of Israel, and make them prosperous again. I will protect my holy name.

<sup>26</sup> When they are once more living in safety in their own land, with no one to threaten them, they will be able to forget how they were disgraced for having betrayed me.

<sup>27</sup> In order to show to the many nations that I am holy, I will bring my people back from all the countries where their enemies live.



<sup>28</sup>Then my people will know that I am the LORD their God. They will know this, because I sent them into captivity and now gather them and bring them back into their own land, not leaving even one of them behind.

<sup>29</sup>I will pour out my spirit on the people of Israel and never again turn away from them. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

**40**<sup>1</sup>It was the tenth day of the new year, which was the twenty-fifth year after we had been taken into exile and the fourteenth year after Jerusalem was captured. On that day I felt the powerful presence of the LORD, and he carried me away.

<sup>2</sup>In a vision God took me to the land of Israel and put me on a high mountain. I saw in front of me a group of buildings that looked like a city.

<sup>3</sup>He took me closer, and I saw a man who shone like bronze. He was holding a linen tape measure and a measuring rod and was standing by a gateway.

<sup>4</sup>He said to me, Watch, mortal man. Listen carefully and pay close attention to everything I show you, because this is

why you were brought here. You are to tell the people of Israel everything you see.

<sup>5</sup>What I saw was the Temple, and there was a wall around it. The man took his measuring rod, which was 10 feet long, and measured the wall. It was 10 feet high and 10 feet thick.

<sup>6</sup>Then he went to the gateway that faced east. He went up the steps, and at the top he measured the entrance; it was 10 feet deep.

<sup>7</sup>Beyond it there was a passageway, which had three guardrooms on each side. Each of the rooms was square, 10 feet on each side, and the walls between them were 8 feet thick. Beyond the guardrooms there was a passageway 10 feet long that led to an entrance room which faced the Temple.

<sup>8</sup>He measured this room and found it was 14 feet deep. It formed that end of the gateway which was nearest the Temple, and at its far end the walls were 4 feet thick.

<sup>9</sup>((40: 8)

<sup>10</sup>These guardrooms on each side of the passageway were all the same size,

and the walls between them were all of the same thickness.)

<sup>11</sup>Next, the man measured the width of the passageway in the gateway. It was 22 feet altogether, and the space between the open gates was 16 feet.

<sup>12</sup>In front of each of the guardrooms there was a low wall 20 inches high and 20 inches thick. (The rooms were 10 feet square.)

<sup>13</sup>Then he measured the distance from the back wall of one room to the back wall of the room across the passageway from it, and it was 42 feet.

<sup>14</sup>The room at the far end led out to a courtyard. He measured that room and found it was 34 feet wide.

<sup>15</sup>The total length of the gateway from the outside wall of the gate to the far side of the last room was 84 feet.

<sup>16</sup>There were small openings in the outside walls of all the rooms and also in the inner walls between the rooms. There were palm trees carved on the inner walls that faced the passageway.

<sup>17</sup>The man took me through the gateway into the courtyard. There were thirty rooms built against the outer wall,

and in front of them there was an area paved with stones,

<sup>18</sup>which extended around the courtyard. This outer courtyard was at a lower level than the inner courtyard.

<sup>19</sup>There was a gateway at a higher level that led to the inner courtyard. The man measured the distance between the two gateways, and it was 168 feet.

<sup>20</sup>Then the man measured the gateway on the north side that led into the outer courtyard.

<sup>21</sup>The three guardrooms on each side of the passageway, the walls between them, and the entrance room all had the same measurements as those in the east gateway. The total length of the gateway was 84 feet and the width 42 feet.

<sup>22</sup>The entrance room, the windows, and the carved palm trees were like those in the east gate. Here seven steps led up to the gate, and the entrance room was at the end facing the courtyard.

<sup>23</sup>Across the courtyard from this north gateway was another gateway leading to the inner courtyard, just as there was on the east side. The man measured the

distance between these two gateways, and it was 168 feet.

<sup>24</sup>Next, the man took me to the south side, and there we saw another gateway. He measured its inner walls and its entrance room, and they were the same as the others.

<sup>25</sup>There were windows in the rooms of this gateway just as in the others. The total length of the gateway was 84 feet and the width 42 feet.

<sup>26</sup>Seven steps led up to it, and its entrance room was also at the end facing the courtyard. There were palm trees carved on the inner walls that faced the passageway.

<sup>27</sup>Here, too, there was a gateway leading to the inner courtyard. The man measured the distance to this second gateway, and it was 168 feet.

<sup>28</sup>The man took me through the south gateway into the inner courtyard. He measured the gateway, and it was the same size as the gateways in the outer wall.

<sup>29</sup>Its guardrooms, its entrance room, and its inner walls were the same size as those in the other gateways. There

were also windows in the rooms of this gateway. The total length was 84 feet and the width 42 feet.

<sup>30</sup> (40: 29)

<sup>31</sup> Its entrance room faced the other courtyard, and palm trees were carved on the walls along the passageway. Eight steps led up to this gate.

<sup>32</sup> The man took me through the east gateway into the inner courtyard. He measured the gateway, and it was the same size as the others.

<sup>33</sup> Its guardrooms, its entrance room, and its inner walls measured the same as those in the other gateways. There were windows all around, and in the entrance room also. The total length was 84 feet and the width 42 feet.

<sup>34</sup> The entrance room faced the outer courtyard. Palm trees were carved on the walls along the passageway. Eight steps led up to this gate.

<sup>35</sup> Then the man took me to the north gateway. He measured it, and it was the same size as the others.

<sup>36</sup> Like them, it also had guardrooms, decorated inner walls, an entrance room,

and windows all around. Its total length was 84 feet and its width 42 feet.

<sup>37</sup>The entrance room faced the outer courtyard. Palm trees were carved on the walls along the passageway. Eight steps led up to this gate.

<sup>38</sup>In the outer courtyard there was an annex attached to the inner gateway on the north side. It opened into the entrance room that faced the courtyard, and there they washed the carcasses of the animals to be burned whole as sacrifices.

<sup>39</sup>In this entrance room there were four tables, two on each side of the room. It was on these tables that they killed the animals to be offered as sacrifices, either to be burned whole or to be sacrifices for sin or as repayment offerings.

<sup>40</sup>Outside the room there were four similar tables, two on either side of the entrance of the north gate.

<sup>41</sup>Altogether there were eight tables on which the animals to be sacrificed were killed: four inside the room and four out in the courtyard.

<sup>42</sup>The four tables in the annex, used to prepare the offerings to be burned

whole, were of cut stone. They were 20 inches high, and their tops were 30 inches square. All the equipment used in killing the sacrificial animals was kept on these tables.

<sup>43</sup> Ledges 3 inches wide ran around the edge of the tables. All the meat to be offered in sacrifice was placed on the tables.

<sup>44</sup> Then he brought me into the inner court. There were two rooms opening on the inner court, one facing south beside the north gateway and the other facing north beside the south gateway.

<sup>45</sup> The man told me that the room which faced south was for the priests who served in the Temple,

<sup>46</sup> and the room which faced north was for the priests who served at the altar. All the priests are descended from Zadok; they are the only members of the tribe of Levi who are permitted to go into the LORD's presence to serve him.

<sup>47</sup> The man measured the inner courtyard, and it was 168 feet square. The Temple was on the west side, and in front of it was an altar.



<sup>48</sup>Then he took me into the entrance room of the Temple. He measured the entranceway: it was 9 feet deep and 24 feet wide, with walls 5 feet thick on either side.

<sup>49</sup>Steps led up to the entrance room, which was 34 feet wide and 20 feet deep. There were two columns, one on each side of the entrance.

**41** <sup>1</sup>Next, the man took me into the central room, the Holy Place. He measured the passageway into it: it was 10 feet deep

<sup>2</sup>and 18 feet wide, with walls 8 feet thick on either side. He measured the room itself: it was 68 feet long and 34 feet wide.

<sup>3</sup>Then he went to the innermost room. He measured the passageway into it: it was 3 feet deep and 10 feet wide, with walls on either side 12 feet thick.

<sup>4</sup>He measured the room itself, and it was 34 feet square. This room was beyond the central room. Then he said to me, This is the Most Holy Place.

<sup>5</sup>The man measured the thickness of the inner wall of the Temple building, and it was 10 feet. Against this wall, all

around the Temple, was a series of small rooms 7 feet wide.

<sup>6</sup>These rooms were in three stories, with thirty rooms on each floor. The Temple's outer wall on each floor was thinner than on the floor below, so that the rooms could rest on the wall without being anchored into it.

<sup>7</sup>And so the Temple walls, when seen from the outside, seemed to have the same thickness all the way to the top. Against the Temple's outer wall, on the outside of the rooms, two wide stairways were built, so that it was possible to go from the lower story to the middle and the upper stories.

<sup>8</sup>The outside wall of these rooms was 8 feet thick; there was one door into the rooms on the north side of the Temple, and one into those on the south side. I saw that there was a terrace 8 feet wide around the Temple; it was 10 feet above the ground and it was level with the foundation of the rooms by the Temple walls. Between the terrace and the buildings used by the priests there was an open space 34 feet across, along the sides of the Temple.

<sup>9</sup> (41: 8)

<sup>10</sup> (41: 8)

<sup>11</sup> (41: 8)

<sup>12</sup> At the far end of the open space on the west side of the Temple there was a building 150 feet long and 116 feet wide; its walls were 9 feet thick all around.

<sup>13</sup> The man measured the outside of the Temple, and it was 168 feet long. And from the back of the Temple, across the open space to the far side of the building to the west, the distance was also 168 feet.

<sup>14</sup> The distance across the front of the Temple, including the open space on either side, was also 168 feet.

<sup>15</sup> He measured the length of the building to the west, including its galleries on both sides, and it was also 168 feet. The entrance room of the Temple, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place

<sup>16</sup> were all paneled with wood from the floor to the windows. These windows could be covered.

<sup>17</sup> The inside walls of the Temple, up as high as above the doors, were completely covered with carvings

<sup>18</sup>of palm trees and winged creatures. Palm trees alternated with creatures, one following the other, all the way around the room. Each creature had two faces:

<sup>19</sup>a human face that was turned toward the palm tree on one side, and a lion's face that was turned toward the tree on the other side. It was like this all around the wall,

<sup>20</sup>from the floor to above the doors.

<sup>21</sup>The doorposts of the Holy Place were square. In front of the entrance of the Most Holy Place there was something that looked like

<sup>22</sup>a wooden altar. It was 5 feet high and 4 feet wide. Its corner posts, its base, and its sides were all made of wood. The man said to me, This is the table which stands in the presence of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup>There was a door at the end of the passageway to the Holy Place and one also at the end of the passageway to the Most Holy Place.

<sup>24</sup>They were double doors that swung open in the middle.

<sup>25</sup>There were palm trees and winged creatures carved on the doors of the

Holy Place, just as there were on the walls. And there was a wooden covering over the outside of the doorway of the entrance room.

<sup>26</sup>At the sides of this room there were windows, and the walls were decorated with palm trees.

**42**<sup>1</sup>Then the man took me into the outer courtyard and led me to a building on the north side of the Temple, not far from the building at the west end of the Temple.

<sup>2</sup>This building was 168 feet long and 84 feet wide.

<sup>3</sup>On one side it faced the space 34 feet wide which was alongside the Temple, and on the other side it faced the pavement of the outer courtyard. It was built on three levels, each one set further back than the one below it.

<sup>4</sup>Along the north side of this building was a passageway 16 feet wide and 168 feet long, with entrances on that side.

<sup>5</sup>The rooms at the upper level of the building were narrower than those at the middle and lower levels because they were set further back.

<sup>6</sup>The rooms at all three levels were on terraces and were not supported by columns like the other buildings in the courtyard.

<sup>7</sup>At the lower level the outer wall of the building was solid for 84 feet, half its length; and there were rooms in the remaining 84 feet. At the top level there were rooms in the entire length of the building.

<sup>8</sup>(42: 7)

<sup>9</sup>Below these rooms at the east end of the building, where the wall of the courtyard began, there was an entrance into the outer courtyard. At the south side of the Temple there was an identical building not far from the building at the west end of the Temple.

<sup>10</sup>(42: 9)

<sup>11</sup>In front of the rooms there was a passageway just like the one on the north side. It had the same measurements, the same design, and the same kind of entrances.

<sup>12</sup>There was a door under the rooms on the south side of the building, at the east end where the wall began.

<sup>13</sup>The man said to me, Both these buildings are holy. In them the priests who enter the LORD's presence eat the holiest offerings. Because the rooms are holy, the priests will place the holiest offerings there: the offerings of grain and the sacrifices offered for sin or as repayment offerings.

<sup>14</sup>When priests have been in the Temple and want to go to the outer courtyard, they must leave in these rooms the holy clothing they wore while serving the LORD. They must put on other clothes before going out to the area where the people gather.

<sup>15</sup>When the man had finished measuring inside the Temple area, he took me out through the east gate and then measured the outside of the area.

<sup>16</sup>He took the measuring rod and measured the east side, and it was 840 feet.

<sup>17</sup>Then he measured the north side, the south side, and the west side; each side had the same length, 840 feet,

<sup>18</sup>(42: 17)

<sup>19</sup>(42: 17)

<sup>20</sup>so that the wall enclosed a square 840 feet on each side. The wall served to separate what was holy from what was not.

**43** <sup>1</sup>The man took me to the gate that faces east,

<sup>2</sup>and there I saw coming from the east the dazzling light of the presence of the God of Israel. God's voice sounded like the roar of the sea, and the earth shone with the dazzling light.

<sup>3</sup>This vision was like the one I had seen when God came to destroy Jerusalem, and the one I saw by the Chebar River. Then I threw myself face downward on the ground.

<sup>4</sup>The dazzling light passed through the east gate and went into the Temple.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD's spirit lifted me up and took me into the inner courtyard, where I saw that the Temple was filled with the glory of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>The man stood beside me there, and I heard the LORD speak to me out of the Temple:

<sup>7</sup>Mortal man, here is my throne. I will live here among the people of Israel and rule them forever. Neither the people



of Israel nor their kings will ever again disgrace my holy name by worshiping other gods or by burying the corpses of their dead kings.

<sup>8</sup>The kings built the doorsills and doorposts of their palace right against the doorsills and doorposts of my Temple, so that there was only a wall between us. They disgraced my holy name by all the disgusting things they did, and so in my anger I destroyed them.

<sup>9</sup>Now they must stop worshiping other gods and remove the corpses of their kings. If they do, I will live among them forever.

<sup>10</sup>And the LORD continued, Mortal man, tell the people of Israel about the Temple, and let them study its plan. Make them ashamed of their sinful actions.

<sup>11</sup>Then if they are ashamed of what they have done, explain the plan of the Temple to them: its design, its entrances and exits, its shape, the arrangement of everything, and all its rules and regulations. Write all this down for them

so that they can see how everything is arranged and can carry out all the rules.

<sup>12</sup>This is the law of the Temple: All the area surrounding it on the top of the mountain is sacred and holy.

<sup>13</sup>These are the measurements of the altar, using the same unit of measure as in measuring the Temple. All around the base of the altar there was a gutter 20 inches deep and 20 inches wide, with a rim at the outside edge 10 inches high.

<sup>14</sup>The lowest section of the altar, from the top of the base, was 4 feet high. The next section was set back from the edge 20 inches all around, and was 7 feet high. The section after that was also set back from the edge 20 inches all around.

<sup>15</sup>This top section, on which the sacrifices were burned, was also 7 feet high. The projections on the four corners were higher than the rest of the top.

<sup>16</sup>The top of the altar was a square, 20 feet on each side.

<sup>17</sup>The middle section was also a square, 24 feet on each side, with a rim at the outside edge 10 inches high. (The gutter was 20 inches wide.) The steps going up the altar were on the east side.

<sup>18</sup>The Sovereign LORD said to me, Mortal man, listen to what I tell you. When the altar is built, you are to dedicate it by burning sacrifices on it and by sprinkling on it the blood of the animals that were sacrificed.

<sup>19</sup>Those priests belonging to the tribe of Levi who are descended from Zadok are the only ones who are to come into my presence to serve me. I, the Sovereign LORD, command this. You will give them a young bull to offer as a sacrifice for sin.

<sup>20</sup>You are to take some of its blood and put it on the projections on the top corners of the altar, on the corners of the middle section of the altar, and all around its edges. In this way you will purify the altar and consecrate it.

<sup>21</sup>You are to take the bull that is offered as a sacrifice for sin and burn it at the specified place outside the Temple area.

<sup>22</sup>The next day you are to take a male goat without any defects and offer it as a sacrifice for sin. Purify the altar with its blood the same way you did with the bull.

<sup>23</sup>When you have finished doing that, take a young bull and a young ram, both of them without any defects,

<sup>24</sup>and bring them to me. The priests will sprinkle salt on them and burn them as an offering to me.

<sup>25</sup>Each day for seven days you are to offer a goat, a bull, and a ram as sacrifices for sin. All of them must be without any defects.

<sup>26</sup>For seven days the priests are to consecrate the altar and make it ready for use.

<sup>27</sup>When the week is over, the priests are to begin offering on the altar the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings of the people. Then I will be pleased with all of you. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

**44**<sup>1</sup>The man led me to the outer gate at the east side of the Temple area. The gate was closed,

<sup>2</sup>and the LORD said to me, This gate will stay closed and will never be opened. No human being is allowed to use it, because I, the LORD God of Israel, have entered through it. It is to remain closed.

<sup>3</sup>The ruling prince, however, may go there to eat a holy meal in my presence. He is to enter and leave the gateway through the entrance room at the inner end.

<sup>4</sup>Then the man took me through the north gate to the front of the Temple. As I looked, I saw that the Temple of the LORD was filled with the dazzling light of his presence. I threw myself face downward on the ground,

<sup>5</sup>and the LORD said to me, Mortal man, pay attention to everything you see and hear. I am going to tell you the rules and regulations for the Temple. Note carefully which persons are allowed to go in and out of the Temple, and which persons are not allowed.

<sup>6</sup>Tell those rebellious people of Israel that I, the Sovereign LORD, will no longer tolerate the disgusting things that they have been doing.

<sup>7</sup>They have profaned my Temple by letting uncircumcised foreigners, people who do not obey me, enter the Temple when the fat and the blood of the sacrifices are being offered to me. So my

people have broken my covenant by all the disgusting things they have done.

<sup>8</sup>They have not taken charge of the sacred rituals in my Temple, but instead have put foreigners in charge.

<sup>9</sup>I, the Sovereign LORD, declare that no uncircumcised foreigner, no one who disobeys me, will enter my Temple, not even a foreigner who lives among the people of Israel.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD said to me, I am punishing those Levites who, together with the rest of the people of Israel, deserted me and worshiped idols.

<sup>11</sup>They may serve me in the Temple by taking charge of the gates and by performing the work of the Temple. They may kill the animals which the people offer for burnt offerings and for sacrifices, and they are to be on duty to serve the people.

<sup>12</sup>But because they conducted the worship of idols for the people of Israel and in this way led the people into sin, I, the Sovereign LORD, solemnly swear that they must be punished.

<sup>13</sup>They are not to serve me as priests or to go near anything that is holy to me

or to enter the Most Holy Place. This is the punishment for the disgusting things they have done.

<sup>14</sup>I am assigning to them the menial work that is to be done in the Temple.

<sup>15</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, Those priests belonging to the tribe of Levi who are descended from Zadok, however, continued to serve me faithfully in the Temple when the rest of the people of Israel turned away from me. So now they are the ones who are to serve me and come into my presence to offer me the fat and the blood of the sacrifices.

<sup>16</sup>They alone will enter my Temple, serve at my altar, and conduct the Temple worship.

<sup>17</sup>When they enter the gateway to the inner courtyard of the Temple, they are to put on linen clothing. They must not wear anything made of wool when they are on duty in the inner courtyard or in the Temple.

<sup>18</sup>So that they won't perspire, they are to wear linen turbans and linen trousers, but no belt.

<sup>19</sup>Before they go to the outer courtyard where the people are, they must first

take off the clothes they wore on duty in the Temple and leave them in the holy rooms. They are to put on other clothing in order to keep their sacred clothing from harming the people.

<sup>20</sup> Priests must neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long. They are to keep it a proper length.

<sup>21</sup> Priests must not drink any wine before going into the inner courtyard.

<sup>22</sup> No priest may marry a divorced woman; he is to marry only an Israelite virgin or the widow of another priest.

<sup>23</sup> The priests are to teach my people the difference between what is holy and what is not, and between what is ritually clean and what is not.

<sup>24</sup> When a legal dispute arises, the priests are to decide the case according to my laws. They are to keep the religious festivals according to my rules and regulations, and they are to keep the Sabbaths holy.

<sup>25</sup> A priest is not to become ritually unclean by touching a corpse, unless it is one of his parents, one of his children or a brother or an unmarried sister.



<sup>26</sup>After he has become clean again, he must wait seven days

<sup>27</sup>and then go into the inner courtyard of the Temple and offer a sacrifice for his purification, so that he can serve in the Temple again. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>28</sup>The priests have the priesthood as their share of what I have given Israel to be handed down from one generation to another. They are not to hold property in Israel; I am all they need.

<sup>29</sup>The grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the repayment offerings will be the priests' food, and they are to receive everything in Israel that is set apart for me.

<sup>30</sup>The priests are to have the best of all the first harvest and of everything else that is offered to me. Each time the people bake bread, they are to give the priests the first loaf as an offering, and my blessing will rest on their homes.

<sup>31</sup>The priests must not eat any bird or animal that dies a natural death or is killed by another animal.

**45**<sup>1</sup>When the land is divided to give each tribe a share, one part is to

be dedicated to the LORD. It is to be 10 miles long by 8 miles wide. The entire area will be holy.

<sup>2</sup>In this area there is to be a square plot of land for the Temple, 840 feet on each side, entirely surrounded by an open space 84 feet wide.

<sup>3</sup>Half of this area, a section 10 miles by 4 miles, is to be measured off; it will contain the Temple, the holiest place of all.

<sup>4</sup>It will be a holy part of the country, set aside for the priests who serve the LORD in his Temple. It will contain their houses and the section of land for the Temple.

<sup>5</sup>The other half of the area is to be set aside as the possession of the Levites, who do the work in the Temple. There will be towns there for them to live in.

<sup>6</sup>Next to the holy area, another section, 10 miles long and 2 miles wide, is to be set aside for a city where any of the people of Israel may live.

<sup>7</sup>Land is also to be set aside for the ruling prince. From the west boundary of the holy area it will extend west to the Mediterranean Sea; and from the east boundary it will extend to the eastern

border of the country, so that its length will be the same as the length of one of the areas allotted to the tribes of Israel.

<sup>8</sup>This area will be the share the ruling prince will have in the land of Israel, so that he will no longer oppress the people, but will let the rest of the country belong to the tribes of Israel.

<sup>9</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, You have sinned too long, you rulers of Israel! Stop your violence and oppression. Do what is right and just. You must never again drive my people off their land. I, the Sovereign LORD, am telling you this.

<sup>10</sup>Everyone must use honest weights and measures:

<sup>11</sup>The ephah for dry measure is to be equal to the bath for liquid measure. The standard is the homer. The resulting measures are as follows: 1 homer = 10 ephahs = 10 baths

<sup>12</sup>Your weights are to be as follows: 20 gerahs = 1 shekel 60 shekels = 1 mina

<sup>13</sup>This is the basis on which you are to make your offerings: Wheat: 1/60th of your harvest Barley: 1/60th of your harvest Olive oil: 1/100th of the yield of your trees (Measure it by the bath:

10 baths = 1 homer = 1 kor.) Sheep: 1 sheep out of every 200 from the meadows of Israel You are to bring grain offerings, animals to be burned whole, and animals for fellowship offerings, so that your sins will be forgiven. I, the Sovereign LORD, command it.

<sup>14</sup> (45: 13)

<sup>15</sup> (45: 13)

<sup>16</sup> All the people of the land must take these offerings to the ruling prince of Israel.

<sup>17</sup> It will be his duty to provide the animals to be burned whole, the grain offerings, and the wine offerings for the whole nation of Israel at the New Moon Festivals, the Sabbaths, and the other festivals. He is to provide the sin offerings, the grain offerings, the offerings to be burned whole, and the fellowship offerings, to take away the sins of the people of Israel.

<sup>18</sup> The Sovereign LORD said, On the first day of the first month you are to sacrifice a bull without any defects and purify the Temple.

<sup>19</sup> The priest will take some of the blood of this sin offering and put it on the

doorposts of the Temple, on the four corners of the altar, and on the posts of the gateways to the inner courtyard.

<sup>20</sup>On the seventh day of the month you are to do the same thing on behalf of anyone who sins unintentionally or through ignorance. In this way you will keep the Temple holy.

<sup>21</sup>On the fourteenth day of the first month you will begin the celebration of the Passover Festival. For seven days everyone will eat bread made without yeast.

<sup>22</sup>On the first day of the festival the ruling prince must offer a bull as a sacrifice for his sins and for those of all the people.

<sup>23</sup>On each of the seven days of the festival he is to sacrifice to the LORD seven bulls and seven rams without any defects and burn them whole. He is also to sacrifice a male goat each day as a sin offering.

<sup>24</sup>For each bull and each ram that is sacrificed, there is to be an offering of half a bushel of grain and three quarts of olive oil.

<sup>25</sup>For the Festival of Shelters, which begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the prince will offer on each of the seven days the same sacrifice for sin, the same offerings to be burned whole, and the same offerings of grain and olive oil.

**46**<sup>1</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, The east gateway to the inner courtyard must be kept closed during the six working days, but it is to be opened on the Sabbath and at the New Moon Festival.

<sup>2</sup>The ruling prince will go from the outer courtyard into the entrance room of the gateway and stand beside the posts of the gate while the priests burn his sacrifices whole and offer his fellowship offerings. There at the gate he must worship and then go back out. The gate must not be shut until evening.

<sup>3</sup>Each Sabbath and each New Moon Festival all the people are also to bow down and worship the LORD in front of the gate.

<sup>4</sup>On the Sabbath the prince is to bring to the LORD, as sacrifices to be burned

whole, six lambs and one ram, all without any defects.

<sup>5</sup>With each ram he is to bring an offering of half a bushel of grain, and with each lamb he is to bring whatever he wants to give. For each half-bushel of grain offering he is to bring three quarts of olive oil.

<sup>6</sup>At the New Moon Festival he will offer a young bull, six lambs, and a ram, all without any defects.

<sup>7</sup>With each bull and each ram the offering is to be half a bushel of grain, and with each lamb the offering is to be whatever the prince wants to give. Three quarts of olive oil are to be offered with each half-bushel of grain.

<sup>8</sup>The prince must leave the entrance room of the gateway and go out by the same way he went in.

<sup>9</sup>When the people come to worship the LORD at any festival, those who enter by the north gate are to leave by the south gate after they have worshiped, and those who enter by the south gate are to leave by the north gate. No one may go out by the same way he entered, but must leave by the opposite gate.

<sup>10</sup>The prince is to come in when the people come, and leave when they leave.

<sup>11</sup>On the feast days and at the festivals the grain offering will be half a bushel with each bull or ram, and whatever the worshiper wants to give with each lamb. Three quarts of olive oil are to be offered with each half-bushel of grain.

<sup>12</sup>When the ruling prince wants to make a voluntary offering to the LORD, either an offering to be burned whole or a fellowship offering, the east gate to the inner courtyard will be opened for him. He is to make the offering in the same way he does on the Sabbath, and the gate is to be closed after he goes back out.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD says, Every morning a one-year-old lamb without any defects is to be burned whole as an offering to the LORD. This offering must be made every day.

<sup>14</sup>Also an offering of five pounds of flour is to be made every morning, along with one quart of olive oil for mixing with the flour. The rules for this offering to the LORD are to be in force forever.



<sup>15</sup>The lamb, the flour, and the olive oil are to be offered to the LORD every morning forever.

<sup>16</sup>The Sovereign LORD commands: If the ruling prince gives any of the land he owns to one of his sons as a present, it will belong to that son as a part of his family property.

<sup>17</sup>But if the ruling prince gives any of his land to anyone who is in his service, it will become the prince's property again when the Year of Restoration comes. It belongs to him, and only he and his sons can own it permanently.

<sup>18</sup>The ruling prince must not take any of the people's property away from them. Any land he gives to his sons must be from the land that is assigned to him, so that he will not oppress any of my people by taking their land.

<sup>19</sup>Then the man took me to the entrance of the rooms facing north near the gate on the south side of the inner courtyard. These are holy rooms for the priests. He pointed out a place on the west side of the rooms

<sup>20</sup>and said, This is the place where the priests are to boil the meat offered

as sacrifices for sin or as repayment offerings, and to bake the offerings of flour, so that nothing holy is carried to the outer courtyard, where it might harm the people.

<sup>21</sup> Then he led me to the outer courtyard and showed me that in each of its four corners there was a smaller courtyard, 68 feet long and 48 feet wide.

<sup>22</sup> (46: 21)

<sup>23</sup> Each one had a stone wall around it, with fireplaces built against the wall.

<sup>24</sup> The man told me, These are the kitchens where the Temple servants are to boil the sacrifices the people offer.

**47** <sup>1</sup> The man led me back to the entrance of the Temple. Water was coming out from under the entrance and flowing east, the direction the Temple faced. It was flowing down from under the south part of the Temple past the south side of the altar.

<sup>2</sup> The man then took me out of the Temple area by way of the north gate and led me around to the gate that faces east. A small stream of water was flowing out at the south side of the gate.

<sup>3</sup>With his measuring rod the man measured 560 yards downstream to the east and told me to wade through the stream there. The water came only to my ankles.

<sup>4</sup>Then he measured another 560 yards, and the water came up to my knees. Another 560 yards farther down, the water was up to my waist.

<sup>5</sup>He measured 560 yards more, and there the stream was so deep I could not wade through it. It was too deep to cross except by swimming.

<sup>6</sup>He said to me, Mortal man, note all this carefully. Then the man took me back to the riverbank,

<sup>7</sup>and when I got there, I saw that there were very many trees on each bank.

<sup>8</sup>He said to me, This water flows through the land to the east and down into the Jordan Valley and to the Dead Sea. When it flows into the Dead Sea, it replaces the salt water of that sea with fresh water.

<sup>9</sup>Wherever the stream flows, there will be all kinds of animals and fish. The stream will make the water of the Dead

Sea fresh, and wherever it flows, it will bring life.

<sup>10</sup>From the Springs of Engedi all the way to the Springs of Eneglaim, there will be fishermen on the shore of the sea, and they will spread out their nets there to dry. There will be as many different kinds of fish there as there are in the Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>11</sup>But the water in the marshes and ponds along the shore will not be made fresh. They will remain there as a source of salt.

<sup>12</sup>On each bank of the stream all kinds of trees will grow to provide food. Their leaves will never wither, and they will never stop bearing fruit. They will have fresh fruit every month, because they are watered by the stream that flows from the Temple. The trees will provide food, and their leaves will be used for healing people.

<sup>13</sup>The Sovereign LORD said, These are the boundaries of the land that is to be divided among the twelve tribes, with the tribe of Joseph receiving two sections.

<sup>14</sup>I solemnly promised your ancestors that I would give them possession of this land; now divide it equally among you.

<sup>15</sup>The northern boundary runs eastward from the Mediterranean Sea to the city of Hethlon, to Hamath Pass, to the city of Zedad,

<sup>16</sup>to the cities of Berothah and Sibram (they are located between the territory of the kingdom of Damascus and that of the kingdom of Hamath), and to the city of Ticon (located by the border of the district of Hauran).

<sup>17</sup>So the northern boundary runs from the Mediterranean eastward to Enon City, with the border regions of Damascus and Hamath to the north of it.

<sup>18</sup>The eastern boundary runs south from a point between the territory of Damascus and that of Hauran, with the Jordan River forming the boundary between the land of Israel on the west and Gilead on the east, as far as Tamar on the Dead Sea.

<sup>19</sup>The southern boundary runs southwest from Tamar to the oasis of Kadesh Meribah and then northwest

along the Egyptian border to the Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>20</sup>The western boundary is formed by the Mediterranean and runs north to a point west of Hamath Pass.

<sup>21</sup>Divide this land among your tribes;

<sup>22</sup>it is to be your permanent possession. The foreigners who are living among you and who have had children born here are also to receive their share of the land when you divide it. They are to be treated like full Israelite citizens and are to draw lots for shares of the land along with the tribes of Israel.

<sup>23</sup>All foreign residents will receive their share with the people of the tribe among whom they are living. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

**48**<sup>1</sup>The northern boundary of the land runs eastward from the Mediterranean Sea to the city of Hethlon, to Hamath Pass, to Enon City, to the boundary between the kingdoms of Damascus and Hamath. Each tribe is to receive one section of land extending from the eastern boundary west to the Mediterranean Sea, in the following order

from north to south: Dan Asher Naphtali  
Manasseh Ephraim Reuben Judah

<sup>2</sup> (48: 1)

<sup>3</sup> (48: 1)

<sup>4</sup> (48: 1)

<sup>5</sup> (48: 1)

<sup>6</sup> (48: 1)

<sup>7</sup> (48: 1)

<sup>8</sup>The next section of the land is to be set apart for special use. It is to be 10 miles wide from north to south, and the same length from east to west as the sections given to the tribes. The Temple will be located within this section.

<sup>9</sup>In the center of this section, a special area 10 miles by 8 miles is to be dedicated to the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>The priests are to have a portion of this holy area. From east to west their portion is to measure 10 miles, and from north to south, 4 miles. The Temple of the LORD is to be located in the middle of this area.

<sup>11</sup>This holy area is to be for the priests who are descendants of Zadok. They served me faithfully and did not join the rest of the Israelites in doing wrong, as

the other members of the tribe of Levi did.

<sup>12</sup>So they are to have a special area next to the area belonging to the Levites, and it will be the holiest of all.

<sup>13</sup>The Levites also are to have a special area, south of that of the priests. It too is to be 10 miles from east to west, by 4 miles from north to south.

<sup>14</sup>The area dedicated to the LORD is the best part of all the land, and none of it may be sold or exchanged or transferred to anyone else. It is holy and belongs to the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>The part of the special area that is left, 10 miles by 2 miles, is not holy, but is for the general use of the people. They may live there and use the land. The city is to be in the center of it,

<sup>16</sup>and it will be a square, 2,520 yards on each side.

<sup>17</sup>All around the city on each side there will be an open space 140 yards across.

<sup>18</sup>The land that is left after the city has been built in the area immediately to the south of the holy area -- 4 miles by 2 miles on the east and 4 miles by 2 miles



on the west -- is to be used as farmland by the people who live in the city.

<sup>19</sup>Anyone who lives in the city, no matter which tribe he comes from, may farm that land.

<sup>20</sup>And so the total area in the center of the section which was set apart will be a square measuring 10 miles on each side, and it will include the area occupied by the city.

<sup>21</sup>To the east and to the west of this area which contains the Temple, the priests' land, the Levites' land, and the city, the remaining land belongs to the ruling prince. It reaches east to the eastern boundary and west to the Mediterranean Sea, and is bounded on the north by the section belonging to Judah and on the south by the one belonging to Benjamin.

<sup>22</sup>(48: 21)

<sup>23</sup>South of this special section, each of the remaining tribes is to receive one section of land running from the eastern boundary west to the Mediterranean Sea, in the following order from north to south: Benjamin Simeon Issachar Zebulun Gad

<sup>24</sup> (48: 23)

<sup>25</sup> (48: 23)

<sup>26</sup> (48: 23)

<sup>27</sup> (48: 23)

<sup>28</sup> On the south side of the portion given to the tribe of Gad, the boundary runs southwest from Tamar to the oasis of Kadesh, and then northwest along the Egyptian border to the Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>29</sup> The Sovereign LORD said, That is the way the land is to be divided into sections for the tribes of Israel to possess.

<sup>30</sup> There are twelve entrances to the city of Jerusalem. Each of the four walls measures 2,520 yards and has three gates in it, each named for one of the tribes. The gates in the north wall are named for Reuben, Judah, and Levi; those in the east wall, for Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan; those in the south wall, for Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun; and those in the west wall are named for Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

<sup>31</sup> (48: 30)

<sup>32</sup> (48: 30)

<sup>33</sup> (48: 30)

<sup>34</sup> (48: 30)

<sup>35</sup> The total length of the wall on all four sides of the city is 10,080 yards. The name of the city from now on will be The- LORD -Is-Here!

# Daniel

**1** <sup>1</sup>In the third year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia attacked Jerusalem and surrounded the city.

<sup>2</sup>The Lord let him capture King Jehoiakim and seize some of the Temple treasures. He took some prisoners back with him to the temple of his gods in Babylon, and put the captured treasures in the temple storerooms.

<sup>3</sup>The king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief official, to select from among the Israelite exiles some young men of the royal family and of the noble families.

<sup>4</sup>They had to be handsome, intelligent, well-trained, quick to learn, and free from physical defects, so that they would be qualified to serve in the royal court. Ashpenaz was to teach them to read and write the Babylonian language.

<sup>5</sup>The king also gave orders that every day they were to be given the same food and wine as the members of the royal

court. After three years of this training they were to appear before the king.

<sup>6</sup>Among those chosen were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, all of whom were from the tribe of Judah.

<sup>7</sup>The chief official gave them new names: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

<sup>8</sup>Daniel made up his mind not to let himself become ritually unclean by eating the food and drinking the wine of the royal court, so he asked Ashpenaz to help him,

<sup>9</sup>and God made Ashpenaz sympathetic to Daniel.

<sup>10</sup>Ashpenaz, however, was afraid of the king, so he said to Daniel, The king has decided what you are to eat and drink, and if you don't look as fit as the other young men, he may kill me.

<sup>11</sup>So Daniel went to the guard whom Ashpenaz had placed in charge of him and his three friends.

<sup>12</sup>Test us for ten days, he said. Give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.

<sup>13</sup>Then compare us with the young men who are eating the food of the royal

court, and base your decision on how we look.

<sup>14</sup>He agreed to let them try it for ten days.

<sup>15</sup>When the time was up, they looked healthier and stronger than all those who had been eating the royal food.

<sup>16</sup>So from then on the guard let them continue to eat vegetables instead of what the king provided.

<sup>17</sup>God gave the four young men knowledge and skill in literature and philosophy. In addition, he gave Daniel skill in interpreting visions and dreams.

<sup>18</sup>At the end of the three years set by the king, Ashpenaz took all the young men to Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>19</sup>The king talked with them all, and Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah impressed him more than any of the others. So they became members of the king's court.

<sup>20</sup>No matter what question the king asked or what problem he raised, these four knew ten times more than any fortuneteller or magician in his whole kingdom.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel remained at the royal court until Cyrus, the emperor of Persia, conquered Babylonia.

**2**<sup>1</sup> In the second year that Nebuchadnezzar was king, he had a dream. It worried him so much that he couldn't sleep,

<sup>2</sup> so he sent for his fortunetellers, magicians, sorcerers, and wizards to come and explain the dream to him. When they came and stood before the king,

<sup>3</sup> he said to them, I'm worried about a dream I've had. I want to know what it means.

<sup>4</sup> They answered the king in Aramaic, May Your Majesty live forever! Tell us your dream, and we will explain it to you.

<sup>5</sup> The king said to them, I have made up my mind that you must tell me the dream and then tell me what it means. If you can't, I'll have you torn limb from limb and make your houses a pile of ruins.

<sup>6</sup> But if you can tell me both the dream and its meaning, I will reward you with

gifts and great honor. Now then, tell me what the dream was and what it means.

<sup>7</sup>They answered the king again, If Your Majesty will only tell us what the dream was, we will explain it.

<sup>8</sup>At that, the king exclaimed, Just as I thought! You are trying to gain time, because you see that I have made up my mind

<sup>9</sup>to give all of you the same punishment if you don't tell me the dream. You have agreed among yourselves to go on telling me lies because you hope that in time things will change. Tell me what the dream was, and then I will know that you can also tell me what it means.

<sup>10</sup>The advisers replied, There is no one on the face of the earth who can tell Your Majesty what you want to know. No king, not even the greatest and most powerful, has ever made such a demand of his fortunetellers, magicians, and wizards.

<sup>11</sup>What Your Majesty is asking for is so difficult that no one can do it for you except the gods, and they do not live among human beings.



<sup>12</sup>At that, the king flew into a rage and ordered the execution of all the royal advisers in Babylon.

<sup>13</sup>So the order was issued for all of them to be killed, including Daniel and his friends.

<sup>14</sup>Then Daniel went to Arioch, commander of the king's bodyguard, who had been ordered to carry out the execution. Choosing his words carefully,

<sup>15</sup>he asked Arioch why the king had issued such a harsh order. So Arioch told Daniel what had happened.

<sup>16</sup>Daniel went at once and obtained royal permission for more time, so that he could tell the king what the dream meant.

<sup>17</sup>Then Daniel went home and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what had happened.

<sup>18</sup>He told them to pray to the God of heaven for mercy and to ask him to explain the mystery to them so that they would not be killed along with the other advisers in Babylon.

<sup>19</sup>Then that same night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision, and he praised the God of heaven:

<sup>20</sup> God is wise and powerful! Praise him forever and ever.

<sup>21</sup> He controls the times and the seasons; he makes and unmakes kings; it is he who gives wisdom and understanding.

<sup>22</sup> He reveals things that are deep and secret; he knows what is hidden in darkness, and he himself is surrounded by light.

<sup>23</sup> I praise you and honor you, God of my ancestors. You have given me wisdom and strength; you have answered my prayer and shown us what to tell the king.

<sup>24</sup> So Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had commanded to execute the royal advisers. He said to him, Don't put them to death. Take me to the king, and I will tell him what his dream means.

<sup>25</sup> At once Arioch took Daniel into King Nebuchadnezzar's presence and told the king, I have found one of the Jewish exiles who can tell Your Majesty the meaning of your dream.

<sup>26</sup> The king said to Daniel (who was also called Belteshazzar), Can you tell me what I dreamed and what it means?

<sup>27</sup> Daniel replied, Your Majesty, there is no wizard, magician, fortuneteller, or astrologer who can tell you that.

<sup>28</sup> But there is a God in heaven, who reveals mysteries. He has informed Your Majesty what will happen in the future. Now I will tell you the dream, the vision you had while you were asleep.

<sup>29</sup> While Your Majesty was sleeping, you dreamed about the future; and God, who reveals mysteries, showed you what is going to happen.

<sup>30</sup> Now, this mystery was revealed to me, not because I am wiser than anyone else, but so that Your Majesty may learn the meaning of your dream and understand the thoughts that have come to you.

<sup>31</sup> Your Majesty, in your vision you saw standing before you a giant statue, bright and shining, and terrifying to look at.

<sup>32</sup> Its head was made of the finest gold; its chest and arms were made of silver; its waist and hips of bronze,

<sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, and its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

<sup>34</sup> While you were looking at it, a great stone broke loose from a cliff without anyone touching it, struck the iron and clay feet of the statue, and shattered them.

<sup>35</sup> At once the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold crumbled and became like the dust on a threshing place in summer. The wind carried it all away, leaving not a trace. But the stone grew to be a mountain that covered the whole earth.

<sup>36</sup> This was the dream. Now I will tell Your Majesty what it means.

<sup>37</sup> Your Majesty, you are the greatest of all kings. The God of heaven has made you emperor and given you power, might, and honor.

<sup>38</sup> He has made you ruler of all the inhabited earth and ruler over all the animals and birds. You are the head of gold.

<sup>39</sup> After you there will be another empire, not as great as yours, and after that a third, an empire of bronze, which will rule the whole earth.

<sup>40</sup> And then there will be a fourth empire, as strong as iron, which shatters and breaks everything. And just as iron

shatters everything, it will shatter and crush all the earlier empires.

<sup>41</sup> You also saw that the feet and the toes were partly clay and partly iron. This means that it will be a divided empire. It will have something of the strength of iron, because there was iron mixed with the clay.

<sup>42</sup> The toes -- partly iron and partly clay -- mean that part of the empire will be strong and part of it weak.

<sup>43</sup> You also saw that the iron was mixed with the clay. This means that the rulers of that empire will try to unite their families by intermarriage, but they will not be able to, any more than iron can mix with clay.

<sup>44</sup> At the time of those rulers the God of heaven will establish a kingdom that will never end. It will never be conquered, but will completely destroy all those empires and then last forever.

<sup>45</sup> You saw how a stone broke loose from a cliff without anyone touching it and how it struck the statue made of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God is telling Your Majesty what will happen in the future. I have told you

exactly what you dreamed, and have given you its true meaning.

<sup>46</sup>Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed to the ground and gave orders for sacrifices and offerings to be made to Daniel.

<sup>47</sup>The king said, Your God is the greatest of all gods, the Lord over kings, and the one who reveals mysteries. I know this because you have been able to explain this mystery.

<sup>48</sup>Then he gave Daniel a high position, presented him with many splendid gifts, put him in charge of the province of Babylon, and made him the head of all the royal advisers.

<sup>49</sup>At Daniel's request the king put Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in charge of the affairs of the province of Babylon; Daniel, however, remained at the royal court.

**3**<sup>1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar had a gold statue made, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and he had it set up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

<sup>2</sup>Then the king gave orders for all his officials to come together -- the princes, governors, lieutenant governors,

commissioners, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the other officials of the provinces. They were to attend the dedication of the statue which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>3</sup>When all these officials gathered for the dedication and stood in front of the statue,

<sup>4</sup>a herald announced in a loud voice, People of all nations, races, and languages!

<sup>5</sup>You will hear the sound of the trumpets, followed by the playing of oboes, lyres, zithers, and harps; and then all the other instruments will join in. As soon as the music starts, you are to bow down and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

<sup>6</sup>Anyone who does not bow down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

<sup>7</sup>And so, as soon as they heard the sound of the instruments, the people of all the nations, races, and languages bowed down and worshiped the gold statue which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>8</sup>It was then that some Babylonians took the opportunity to denounce the Jews.

<sup>9</sup>They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, May Your Majesty live forever!

<sup>10</sup>Your Majesty has issued an order that as soon as the music starts, everyone is to bow down and worship the gold statue,

<sup>11</sup>and that anyone who does not bow down and worship it is to be thrown into a blazing furnace.

<sup>12</sup>There are some Jews whom you put in charge of the province of Babylon -- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego -- who are disobeying Your Majesty's orders. They do not worship your god or bow down to the statue you set up.

<sup>13</sup>At that, the king flew into a rage and ordered the three men to be brought before him.

<sup>14</sup>He said to them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you refuse to worship my god and to bow down to the gold statue I have set up?

<sup>15</sup>Now then, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, oboes, lyres, zithers, harps, and all the other



instruments, bow down and worship the statue. If you do not, you will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace. Do you think there is any god who can save you?

<sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered, Your Majesty, we will not try to defend ourselves.

<sup>17</sup>If the God whom we serve is able to save us from the blazing furnace and from your power, then he will.

<sup>18</sup>But even if he doesn't, Your Majesty may be sure that we will not worship your god, and we will not bow down to the gold statue that you have set up.

<sup>19</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar lost his temper, and his face turned red with anger at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual.

<sup>20</sup>And he commanded the strongest men in his army to tie the three men up and throw them into the blazing furnace.

<sup>21</sup>So they tied them up, fully dressed -- shirts, robes, caps, and all -- and threw them into the blazing furnace.

<sup>22</sup>Now because the king had given strict orders for the furnace to be made

extremely hot, the flames burned up the guards who took the men to the furnace.

<sup>23</sup>Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, still tied up, fell into the heart of the blazing fire.

<sup>24</sup>Suddenly Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement. He asked his officials, Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the blazing furnace? They answered, Yes, we did, Your Majesty.

<sup>25</sup>Then why do I see four men walking around in the fire? he asked. They are not tied up, and they show no sign of being hurt -- and the fourth one looks like an angel.

<sup>26</sup>So Nebuchadnezzar went up to the door of the blazing furnace and called out, Shadrach! Meshach! Abednego! Servants of the Supreme God! Come out! And they came out at once.

<sup>27</sup>All the princes, governors, lieutenant governors, and other officials of the king gathered to look at the three men, who had not been harmed by the fire. Their hair was not singed, their clothes were not burned, and there was no smell of smoke on them.

<sup>28</sup>The king said, Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel and rescued these men who serve and trust him. They disobeyed my orders and risked their lives rather than bow down and worship any god except their own.

<sup>29</sup>And now I command that if anyone of any nation, race, or language speaks disrespectfully of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he is to be torn limb from limb, and his house is to be made a pile of ruins. There is no other god who can rescue like this.

<sup>30</sup>And the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to higher positions in the province of Babylon.

**4**<sup>1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar sent the following message to the people of all nations, races, and languages in the world: Greetings!

<sup>2</sup>Listen to my account of the wonders and miracles which the Supreme God has shown me.

<sup>3</sup>How great are the wonders God shows us! How powerful are the miracles he performs! God is king forever; he will rule for all time.

<sup>4</sup>I was living comfortably in my palace, enjoying great prosperity.

<sup>5</sup>But I had a frightening dream and saw terrifying visions while I was asleep.

<sup>6</sup>I ordered all the royal advisers in Babylon to be brought to me so that they could tell me what the dream meant.

<sup>7</sup>Then all the fortunetellers, magicians, wizards, and astrologers were brought in, and I told them my dream, but they could not explain it to me.

<sup>8</sup>Then Daniel came in. (He is also called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god.) The spirit of the holy gods is in him, so I told him what I had dreamed. I said to him:

<sup>9</sup>Belteshazzar, chief of the fortunetellers, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that you understand all mysteries. This is my dream. Tell me what it means.

<sup>10</sup>While I was asleep, I had a vision of a huge tree in the middle of the earth.

<sup>11</sup>It grew bigger and bigger until it reached the sky and could be seen by everyone in the world.

<sup>12</sup>Its leaves were beautiful, and it was loaded down with fruit -- enough for

the whole world to eat. Wild animals rested in its shade, birds built nests in its branches, and every kind of living being ate its fruit.

<sup>13</sup>While I was thinking about the vision, I saw coming down from heaven an angel, alert and watchful.

<sup>14</sup>He proclaimed in a loud voice, Cut the tree down and chop off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Drive the animals from under it and the birds out of its branches.

<sup>15</sup>But leave the stump in the ground with a band of iron and bronze around it. Leave it there in the field with the grass. Now let the dew fall on this man, and let him live with the animals and the plants.

<sup>16</sup>For seven years he will not have a human mind, but the mind of an animal.

<sup>17</sup>This is the decision of the alert and watchful angels. So then, let all people everywhere know that the Supreme God has power over human kingdoms and that he can give them to anyone he chooses -- even to those who are least important.

<sup>18</sup>This is the dream I had, said King Nebuchadnezzar. Now, Belteshazzar, tell

me what it means. None of my royal advisers could tell me, but you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.

<sup>19</sup>At this, Daniel, who is also called Belteshazzar, was so alarmed that he could not say anything. The king said to him, Belteshazzar, don't let the dream and its message alarm you. Belteshazzar replied, Your Majesty, I wish that the dream and its explanation applied to your enemies and not to you.

<sup>20</sup>The tree, so tall that it reached the sky, could be seen by everyone in the world.

<sup>21</sup>Its leaves were beautiful, and it had enough fruit on it to feed the whole world. Wild animals rested under it, and birds made their nests in its branches.

<sup>22</sup>Your Majesty, you are the tree, tall and strong. You have grown so great that you reach the sky, and your power extends over the whole world.

<sup>23</sup>While Your Majesty was watching, an angel came down from heaven and said, Cut the tree down and destroy it, but leave the stump in the ground. Wrap a band of iron and bronze around it, and

leave it there in the field with the grass. Let the dew fall on this man, and let him live there with the animals for seven years.

<sup>24</sup>This, then, is what it means, Your Majesty, and this is what the Supreme God has declared will happen to you.

<sup>25</sup>You will be driven away from human society and will live with wild animals. For seven years you will eat grass like an ox and sleep in the open air, where the dew will fall on you. Then you will admit that the Supreme God controls all human kingdoms and that he can give them to anyone he chooses.

<sup>26</sup>The angel ordered the stump to be left in the ground. This means that you will become king again when you acknowledge that God rules all the world.

<sup>27</sup>So then, Your Majesty, follow my advice. Stop sinning, do what is right, and be merciful to the poor. Then you will continue to be prosperous.

<sup>28</sup>All this did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>29</sup> Only twelve months later, while he was walking around on the roof of his royal palace in Babylon,

<sup>30</sup> he said, Look how great Babylon is! I built it as my capital city to display my power and might, my glory and majesty.

<sup>31</sup> Before the words were out of his mouth, a voice spoke from heaven, King Nebuchadnezzar, listen to what I say! Your royal power is now taken away from you.

<sup>32</sup> You will be driven away from human society, live with wild animals, and eat grass like an ox for seven years. Then you will acknowledge that the Supreme God has power over human kingdoms and that he can give them to anyone he chooses.

<sup>33</sup> The words came true immediately. Nebuchadnezzar was driven out of human society and ate grass like an ox. The dew fell on his body, and his hair grew as long as eagle feathers and his nails as long as bird claws.

<sup>34</sup> When the seven years had passed, said the king, I looked up at the sky, and my sanity returned. I praised the Supreme God and gave honor and glory



to the one who lives forever. He will rule forever, and his kingdom will last for all time.

<sup>35</sup> He looks on the people of the earth as nothing; angels in heaven and people on earth are under his control. No one can oppose his will or question what he does.

<sup>36</sup> When my sanity returned, my honor, my majesty, and the glory of my kingdom were given back to me. My officials and my noblemen welcomed me, and I was given back my royal power with even greater honor than before.

<sup>37</sup> And now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, honor, and glorify the King of Heaven. Everything he does is right and just, and he can humble anyone who acts proudly.

**5**<sup>1</sup> One night King Belshazzar invited a thousand noblemen to a great banquet, and they drank wine together.

<sup>2</sup> While they were drinking, Belshazzar gave orders to bring in the gold and silver cups and bowls which his father Nebuchadnezzar had carried off from the Temple in Jerusalem. The king sent for them so that he, his noblemen, his

wives, and his concubines could drink out of them.

<sup>3</sup>At once the gold cups and bowls were brought in, and they all drank wine out of them

<sup>4</sup>and praised gods made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

<sup>5</sup>Suddenly a human hand appeared and began writing on the plaster wall of the palace, where the light from the lamps was shining most brightly. And the king saw the hand as it was writing.

<sup>6</sup>He turned pale and was so frightened that his knees began to shake.

<sup>7</sup>He shouted for someone to bring in the magicians, wizards, and astrologers. When they came in, the king said to them, Anyone who can read this writing and tell me what it means will be dressed in robes of royal purple, wear a gold chain of honor around his neck, and be the third in power in the kingdom.

<sup>8</sup>The royal advisers came forward, but none of them could read the writing or tell the king what it meant.

<sup>9</sup>In his distress King Belshazzar grew even paler, and his noblemen had no idea what to do.

<sup>10</sup>The queen mother heard the noise made by the king and his noblemen and entered the banquet hall. She said, May Your Majesty live forever! Please do not be so disturbed and look so pale.

<sup>11</sup>There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. When your father was king, this man showed good sense, knowledge, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, made him chief of the fortunetellers, magicians, wizards, and astrologers.

<sup>12</sup>He has unusual ability and is wise and skillful in interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining mysteries; so send for this man Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, and he will tell you what all this means.

<sup>13</sup>Daniel was brought at once into the king's presence, and the king said to him, Are you Daniel, that Jewish exile whom my father the king brought here from Judah?

<sup>14</sup>I have heard that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that you are skillful and have knowledge and wisdom.

<sup>15</sup>The advisers and magicians were brought in to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not discover the meaning.

<sup>16</sup>Now I have heard that you can find hidden meanings and explain mysteries. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be dressed in robes of royal purple, wear a gold chain of honor around your neck, and be the third in power in the kingdom.

<sup>17</sup>Daniel replied, Keep your gifts for yourself or give them to someone else. I will read for Your Majesty what has been written and tell you what it means.

<sup>18</sup>The Supreme God made your father Nebuchadnezzar a great king and gave him dignity and majesty.

<sup>19</sup>He was so great that people of all nations, races, and languages were afraid of him and trembled. If he wanted to kill someone, he did; if he wanted to keep someone alive, he did. He honored or disgraced anyone he wanted to.

<sup>20</sup>But because he became proud, stubborn, and cruel, he was removed from his royal throne and lost his place of honor.

<sup>21</sup> He was driven away from human society, and his mind became like that of an animal. He lived with wild donkeys, ate grass like an ox, and slept in the open air with nothing to protect him from the dew. Finally he admitted that the Supreme God controls all human kingdoms and can give them to anyone he chooses.

<sup>22</sup> But you, his son, have not humbled yourself, even though you knew all this.

<sup>23</sup> You acted against the Lord of heaven and brought in the cups and bowls taken from his Temple. You, your noblemen, your wives, and your concubines drank wine out of them and praised gods made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone -- gods that cannot see or hear and that do not know anything. But you did not honor the God who determines whether you live or die and who controls everything you do.

<sup>24</sup> That is why God has sent the hand to write these words.

<sup>25</sup> This is what was written: Number, number, weight, divisions.

<sup>26</sup>And this is what it means: number, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end;

<sup>27</sup>weight, you have been weighed on the scales and found to be too light;

<sup>28</sup>divisions, your kingdom is divided up and given to the Medes and Persians.

<sup>29</sup>Immediately Belshazzar ordered his servants to dress Daniel in a robe of royal purple and to hang a gold chain of honor around his neck. And he made him the third in power in the kingdom.

<sup>30</sup>That same night Belshazzar, the king of Babylonia, was killed;

<sup>31</sup>and Darius the Mede, who was then sixty-two years old, seized the royal power.

**6**<sup>1</sup> Darius decided to appoint a hundred and twenty governors to hold office throughout his empire.

<sup>2</sup>In addition, he chose Daniel and two others to supervise the governors and to look after the king's interests.

<sup>3</sup>Daniel soon showed that he could do better work than the other supervisors or the governors. Because he was so outstanding, the king considered putting him in charge of the whole empire.

<sup>4</sup>Then the other supervisors and the governors tried to find something wrong with the way Daniel administered the empire, but they couldn't, because Daniel was reliable and did not do anything wrong or dishonest.

<sup>5</sup>They said to each other, We are not going to find anything of which to accuse Daniel unless it is something in connection with his religion.

<sup>6</sup>So they went to see the king and said, King Darius, may Your Majesty live forever!

<sup>7</sup>All of us who administer your empire -- the supervisors, the governors, the lieutenant governors, and the other officials -- have agreed that Your Majesty should issue an order and enforce it strictly. Give orders that for thirty days no one be permitted to request anything from any god or from any human being except from Your Majesty. Anyone who violates this order is to be thrown into a pit filled with lions.

<sup>8</sup>So let Your Majesty issue this order and sign it, and it will be in force, a law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be changed.

<sup>9</sup>And so King Darius signed the order.

<sup>10</sup>When Daniel learned that the order had been signed, he went home. In an upstairs room of his house there were windows that faced toward Jerusalem. There, just as he had always done, he knelt down at the open windows and prayed to God three times a day.

<sup>11</sup>When Daniel's enemies observed him praying to God,

<sup>12</sup>all of them went together to the king to accuse Daniel. They said, Your Majesty, you signed an order that for the next thirty days anyone who requested anything from any god or from any human being except you, would be thrown into a pit filled with lions. The king replied, Yes, that is a strict order, a law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be changed.

<sup>13</sup>Then they said to the king, Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, does not respect Your Majesty or obey the order you issued. He prays regularly three times a day.

<sup>14</sup>When the king heard this, he was upset and did his best to find some way



to rescue Daniel. He kept trying until sunset.

<sup>15</sup>Then Daniel's enemies came back to the king and said to him, Your Majesty knows that according to the laws of the Medes and Persians no order which the king issues can be changed.

<sup>16</sup>So the king gave orders for Daniel to be taken and thrown into the pit filled with lions. He said to Daniel, May your God, whom you serve so loyally, rescue you.

<sup>17</sup>A stone was put over the mouth of the pit, and the king placed his own royal seal and the seal of his noblemen on the stone, so that no one could rescue Daniel.

<sup>18</sup>Then the king returned to the palace and spent a sleepless night, without food or any form of entertainment.

<sup>19</sup>At dawn the king got up and hurried to the pit.

<sup>20</sup>When he got there, he called out anxiously, Daniel, servant of the living God! Was the God you serve so loyally able to save you from the lions?

<sup>21</sup>Daniel answered, May Your Majesty live forever!

<sup>22</sup> God sent his angel to shut the mouths of the lions so that they would not hurt me. He did this because he knew that I was innocent and because I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.

<sup>23</sup> The king was overjoyed and gave orders for Daniel to be pulled up out of the pit. So they pulled him up and saw that he had not been hurt at all, for he trusted God.

<sup>24</sup> Then the king gave orders to arrest all those who had accused Daniel, and he had them thrown, together with their wives and children, into the pit filled with lions. Before they even reached the bottom of the pit, the lions pounced on them and broke all their bones.

<sup>25</sup> Then King Darius wrote to the people of all nations, races, and languages on earth: Greetings!

<sup>26</sup> I command that throughout my empire everyone should fear and respect Daniel's God. He is a living God, and he will rule forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his power will never come to an end.

<sup>27</sup> He saves and rescues; he performs wonders and miracles in heaven and on

earth. He saved Daniel from being killed by the lions.

<sup>28</sup>Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

**7**<sup>1</sup>In the first year that Belshazzar was king of Babylonia, I had a dream and saw a vision in the night. I wrote the dream down, and this is the record

<sup>2</sup>of what I saw that night: Winds were blowing from all directions and lashing the surface of the ocean.

<sup>3</sup>Four huge beasts came up out of the ocean, each one different from the others.

<sup>4</sup>The first one looked like a lion, but had wings like an eagle. While I was watching, the wings were torn off. The beast was lifted up and made to stand up straight. And then a human mind was given to it.

<sup>5</sup>The second beast looked like a bear standing on its hind legs. It was holding three ribs between its teeth, and a voice said to it, Go on, eat as much meat as you can!

<sup>6</sup>While I was watching, another beast appeared. It looked like a leopard, but on

its back there were four wings, like the wings of a bird, and it had four heads. It had a look of authority about it.

<sup>7</sup>As I was watching, a fourth beast appeared. It was powerful, horrible, terrifying. With its huge iron teeth it crushed its victims, and then it trampled on them. Unlike the other beasts, it had ten horns.

<sup>8</sup>While I was staring at the horns, I saw a little horn coming up among the others. It tore out three of the horns that were already there. This horn had human eyes and a mouth that was boasting proudly.

<sup>9</sup>While I was looking, thrones were put in place. One who had been living forever sat down on one of the thrones. His clothes were white as snow, and his hair was like pure wool. His throne, mounted on fiery wheels, was blazing with fire,

<sup>10</sup>and a stream of fire was pouring out from it. There were many thousands of people there to serve him, and millions of people stood before him. The court began its session, and the books were opened.

<sup>11</sup> While I was looking, I could still hear the little horn bragging and boasting. As I watched, the fourth beast was killed, and its body was thrown into the flames and destroyed.

<sup>12</sup> The other beasts had their power taken away, but they were permitted to go on living for a limited time.

<sup>13</sup> During this vision in the night, I saw what looked like a human being. He was approaching me, surrounded by clouds, and he went to the one who had been living forever and was presented to him.

<sup>14</sup> He was given authority, honor, and royal power, so that the people of all nations, races, and languages would serve him. His authority would last forever, and his kingdom would never end.

<sup>15</sup> The visions I saw alarmed me, and I was deeply disturbed.

<sup>16</sup> I went up to one of those standing there and asked him to explain it all. So he told me the meaning.

<sup>17</sup> He said, These four huge beasts are four empires which will arise on earth.

<sup>18</sup>And the people of the Supreme God will receive royal power and keep it forever and ever.

<sup>19</sup>Then I wanted to know more about the fourth beast, which was not like any of the others -- the terrifying beast which crushed its victims with its bronze claws and iron teeth and then trampled on them.

<sup>20</sup>And I wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and the horn that had come up afterward and had made three of the horns fall. It had eyes and a mouth and was boasting proudly. It was more terrifying than any of the others.

<sup>21</sup>While I was looking, that horn made war on God's people and conquered them.

<sup>22</sup>Then the one who had been living forever came and pronounced judgment in favor of the people of the Supreme God. The time had arrived for God's people to receive royal power.

<sup>23</sup>This is the explanation I was given: The fourth beast is a fourth empire that will be on the earth and will be different from all other empires. It will crush the whole earth and trample it down.

<sup>24</sup>The ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. Then another king will appear; he will be very different from the earlier ones and will overthrow three kings.

<sup>25</sup>He will speak against the Supreme God and oppress God's people. He will try to change their religious laws and festivals, and God's people will be under his power for three and a half years.

<sup>26</sup>Then the heavenly court will sit in judgment, take away his power, and destroy him completely.

<sup>27</sup>The power and greatness of all the kingdoms on earth will be given to the people of the Supreme God. Their royal power will never end, and all rulers on earth will serve and obey them.

<sup>28</sup>This is the end of the account. I was so frightened that I turned pale, and I kept everything to myself.

**8**<sup>1</sup>In the third year that Belshazzar was king, I saw a second vision.

<sup>2</sup>In the vision I suddenly found myself in the walled city of Susa in the province of Elam. I was standing by the Ulai River,

<sup>3</sup>and there beside the river I saw a ram that had two long horns, one of which was longer and newer than the other.

<sup>4</sup>I watched the ram butting with his horns to the west, the north, and the south. No animal could stop him or escape his power. He did as he pleased and grew arrogant.

<sup>5</sup>While I was wondering what this meant, a goat came rushing out of the west, moving so fast that his feet didn't touch the ground. He had one prominent horn between his eyes.

<sup>6</sup>He came toward the ram, which I had seen standing beside the river, and rushed at him with all his force.

<sup>7</sup>I watched him attack the ram. He was so angry that he smashed into him and broke the two horns. The ram had no strength to resist. He was thrown to the ground and trampled on, and there was no one who could save him.

<sup>8</sup>The goat grew more and more arrogant, but at the height of his power his horn was broken. In its place four prominent horns came up, each pointing in a different direction.



<sup>9</sup>Out of one of these four horns grew a little horn, whose power extended toward the south and the east and toward the Promised Land.

<sup>10</sup>It grew strong enough to attack the army of heaven, the stars themselves, and it threw some of them to the ground and trampled on them.

<sup>11</sup>It even defied the Prince of the heavenly army, stopped the daily sacrifices offered to him, and ruined the Temple.

<sup>12</sup>People sinned there instead of offering the proper daily sacrifices, and true religion was thrown to the ground. The horn was successful in everything it did.

<sup>13</sup>Then I heard one angel ask another, How long will these things that were seen in the vision continue? How long will an awful sin replace the daily sacrifices? How long will the army of heaven and the Temple be trampled on?

<sup>14</sup>I heard the other angel answer, It will continue for 2,300 evenings and mornings, during which sacrifices will not be offered. Then the Temple will be restored.

<sup>15</sup>I was trying to understand what the vision meant, when suddenly someone was standing in front of me.

<sup>16</sup>I heard a voice call out over the Ulai River, Gabriel, explain to him the meaning of what he saw.

<sup>17</sup>Gabriel came and stood beside me, and I was so terrified that I fell to the ground. He said to me, Mortal man, understand the meaning. The vision has to do with the end of the world.

<sup>18</sup>While he was talking, I fell to the ground unconscious. But he took hold of me, raised me to my feet,

<sup>19</sup>and said, I am showing you what the result of God's anger will be. The vision refers to the time of the end.

<sup>20</sup>The ram you saw that had two horns represents the kingdoms of Media and Persia.

<sup>21</sup>The goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the prominent horn between his eyes is the first king.

<sup>22</sup>The four horns that came up when the first horn was broken represent the four kingdoms into which that nation will be divided and which will not be as strong as the first kingdom.

<sup>23</sup>When the end of those kingdoms is near and they have become so wicked that they must be punished, there will be a stubborn, vicious, and deceitful king.

<sup>24</sup>He will grow strong -- but not by his own power. He will cause terrible destruction and be successful in everything he does. He will bring destruction on powerful men and on God's own people.

<sup>25</sup>Because he is cunning, he will succeed in his deceitful ways. He will be proud of himself and destroy many people without warning. He will even defy the greatest King of all, but he will be destroyed without the use of any human power.

<sup>26</sup>This vision about the evening and morning sacrifices which has been explained to you will come true. But keep it secret now, because it will be a long time before it does come true.

<sup>27</sup>I was depressed and ill for several days. Then I got up and went back to the work that the king had assigned to me, but I was puzzled by the vision and could not understand it.

**9**<sup>1</sup> Darius the Mede, who was the son of Xerxes, ruled over the kingdom of Babylonia.

<sup>2</sup>In the first year of his reign I was studying the sacred books and thinking about the seventy years that Jerusalem would be in ruins, according to what the LORD had told the prophet Jeremiah.

<sup>3</sup>And I prayed earnestly to the Lord God, pleading with him, fasting, wearing sackcloth, and sitting in ashes.

<sup>4</sup>I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed the sins of my people. I said, Lord God, you are great, and we honor you. You are faithful to your covenant and show constant love to those who love you and do what you command.

<sup>5</sup>We have sinned, we have been evil, we have done wrong. We have rejected what you commanded us to do and have turned away from what you showed us was right.

<sup>6</sup>We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our rulers, our ancestors, and our whole nation.

<sup>7</sup>You, Lord, always do what is right, but we have always brought disgrace on

ourselves. This is true of all of us who live in Judea and in Jerusalem and of all the Israelites whom you scattered in countries near and far because they were unfaithful to you.

<sup>8</sup>Our kings, our rulers, and our ancestors have acted shamefully and sinned against you, Lord.

<sup>9</sup>You are merciful and forgiving, although we have rebelled against you.

<sup>10</sup>We did not listen to you, O LORD our God, when you told us to live according to the laws which you gave us through your servants the prophets.

<sup>11</sup>All Israel broke your laws and refused to listen to what you said. We sinned against you, and so you brought on us the curses that are written in the Law of Moses, your servant.

<sup>12</sup>You did what you said you would do to us and our rulers. You punished Jerusalem more severely than any other city on earth,

<sup>13</sup>giving us all the punishment described in the Law of Moses. But even now, O LORD our God, we have not tried to please you by turning from our sins or by following your truth.

<sup>14</sup>You, O LORD our God, were prepared to punish us, and you did, because you always do what is right, and we did not listen to you.

<sup>15</sup>O Lord our God, you showed your power by bringing your people out of Egypt, and your power is still remembered. We have sinned; we have done wrong.

<sup>16</sup>You have defended us in the past, so do not be angry with Jerusalem any longer. It is your city, your sacred hill. All the people in the neighboring countries look down on Jerusalem and on your people because of our sins and the evil our ancestors did.

<sup>17</sup>O God, hear my prayer and pleading. Restore your Temple, which has been destroyed; restore it so that everyone will know that you are God.

<sup>18</sup>Listen to us, O God; look at us and see the trouble we are in and the suffering of the city that bears your name. We are praying to you because you are merciful, not because we have done right.

<sup>19</sup>Lord, hear us. Lord, forgive us. Lord, listen to us, and act! In order that

everyone will know that you are God, do not delay! This city and these people are yours.

<sup>20</sup>I went on praying, confessing my sins and the sins of my people Israel and pleading with the LORD my God to restore his holy Temple.

<sup>21</sup>While I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came flying down to where I was. It was the time for the evening sacrifice to be offered.

<sup>22</sup>He explained, Daniel, I have come here to help you understand the prophecy.

<sup>23</sup>When you began to plead with God, he answered you. He loves you, and so I have come to tell you the answer. Now pay attention while I explain the vision.

<sup>24</sup>Seven times seventy years is the length of time God has set for freeing your people and your holy city from sin and evil. Sin will be forgiven and eternal justice established, so that the vision and the prophecy will come true, and the holy Temple will be rededicated.

<sup>25</sup>Note this and understand it: From the time the command is given to rebuild

Jerusalem until God's chosen leader comes, seven times seven years will pass. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defenses, and will stand for seven times sixty-two years, but this will be a time of troubles.

<sup>26</sup>And at the end of that time God's chosen leader will be killed unjustly. The city and the Temple will be destroyed by the invading army of a powerful ruler. The end will come like a flood, bringing the war and destruction which God has prepared.

<sup>27</sup>That ruler will have a firm agreement with many people for seven years, and when half this time is past, he will put an end to sacrifices and offerings. The Awful Horror will be placed on the highest point of the Temple and will remain there until the one who put it there meets the end which God has prepared for him.

**10**<sup>1</sup>In the third year that Cyrus was emperor of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, who is also called Belteshazzar. The message was true but extremely hard to understand. It was explained to him in a vision.



<sup>2</sup>At that time I was mourning for three weeks.

<sup>3</sup>I did not eat any rich food or any meat, drink any wine, or comb my hair until the three weeks were past.

<sup>4</sup>On the twenty-fourth day of the first month of the year I was standing on the bank of the mighty Tigris River.

<sup>5</sup>I looked up and saw someone who was wearing linen clothes and a belt of fine gold.

<sup>6</sup>His body shone like a jewel. His face was as bright as a flash of lightning, and his eyes blazed like fire. His arms and legs shone like polished bronze, and his voice sounded like the roar of a great crowd.

<sup>7</sup>I was the only one who saw the vision. Those who were with me did not see anything, but they were terrified and ran and hid.

<sup>8</sup>I was left there alone, watching this amazing vision. I had no strength left, and my face was so changed that no one could have recognized me.

<sup>9</sup>When I heard his voice, I fell to the ground unconscious and lay there face downward.

<sup>10</sup>Then a hand took hold of me and raised me to my hands and knees; I was still trembling.

<sup>11</sup>The angel said to me, Daniel, God loves you. Stand up and listen carefully to what I am going to say. I have been sent to you. When he had said this, I stood up, still trembling.

<sup>12</sup>Then he said, Daniel, don't be afraid. God has heard your prayers ever since the first day you decided to humble yourself in order to gain understanding. I have come in answer to your prayer.

<sup>13</sup>The angel prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief angels, came to help me, because I had been left there alone in Persia.

<sup>14</sup>I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the future. This is a vision about the future.

<sup>15</sup>When he said this, I stared at the ground, speechless.

<sup>16</sup>Then the angel, who looked like a human being, reached out and touched my lips. I said to him, Sir, this vision makes me so weak that I can't stop trembling.

<sup>17</sup>I am like a slave standing before his master. How can I talk to you? I have no strength or breath left in me.

<sup>18</sup>Once more he took hold of me, and I felt stronger.

<sup>19</sup>He said, God loves you, so don't let anything worry you or frighten you. When he had said this, I felt even stronger and said, Sir, tell me what you have to say. You have made me feel better.

<sup>20</sup>He said, Do you know why I came to you? It is to reveal to you what is written in the Book of Truth. Now I have to go back and fight the guardian angel of Persia. After that the guardian angel of Greece will appear. There is no one to help me except Michael, Israel's guardian angel.

<sup>21</sup> (10: 20)

**11** <sup>1</sup>He is responsible for helping and defending me.

<sup>2</sup>And what I am now going to tell you is true. The angel said, Three more kings will rule over Persia, followed by a fourth, who will be richer than all the others. At the height of his power and wealth he will challenge the kingdom of Greece.

<sup>3</sup>Then a heroic king will appear. He will rule over a huge empire and do whatever he wants.

<sup>4</sup>But at the height of his power his empire will break up and be divided into four parts. Kings not descended from him will rule in his place, but they will not have the power that he had.

<sup>5</sup>The king of Egypt will be strong. One of his generals, however, will be even stronger and rule a greater kingdom.

<sup>6</sup>After a number of years the king of Egypt will make an alliance with the king of Syria and give him his daughter in marriage. But the alliance will not last, and she, her husband, her child, and the servants who went with her will all be killed.

<sup>7</sup>Soon afterward one of her relatives will become king. He will attack the army of the king of Syria, enter their fortress, and defeat them.

<sup>8</sup>He will carry back to Egypt the images of their gods and the articles of gold and silver dedicated to those gods. After several years of peace

<sup>9</sup>the king of Syria will invade Egypt, but he will be forced to retreat.

<sup>10</sup>The sons of the king of Syria will prepare for war and gather a large army. One of them will sweep on like a flood and attack an enemy fortress.

<sup>11</sup>In his anger the king of Egypt will go to war against the king of Syria and capture his huge army.

<sup>12</sup>He will be proud of his victory and of the many soldiers he has killed, but he will not continue to be victorious.

<sup>13</sup>The king of Syria will go back and gather a larger army than he had before. When the proper time comes, he will return with a large, well-equipped army.

<sup>14</sup>Then many people will rebel against the king of Egypt. And some violent people from your nation, Daniel, will rebel because of a vision they have seen, but they will be defeated.

<sup>15</sup>So the king of Syria will lay siege to a fortified city and capture it. The soldiers of Egypt will not continue to fight; even the best of them will not have enough strength.

<sup>16</sup>The Syrian invader will do with them as he pleases, without opposition. He will stand in the Promised Land and have it completely in his power.

<sup>17</sup>The king of Syria will plan an expedition, using his whole army. Then, in order to destroy his enemy's kingdom, he will make an alliance with him and offer him his daughter in marriage; but his plan will not succeed.

<sup>18</sup>After that he will attack the nations by the sea and conquer many of them. But a foreign leader will defeat him and put an end to his arrogance; indeed he will turn the arrogance of Syria's king back on him.

<sup>19</sup>The king will return to the fortresses of his own land, but he will be defeated, and that will be the end of him.

<sup>20</sup>He will be followed by another king, who will send an officer to oppress the people with taxes in order to increase the wealth of his kingdom. In a short time that king will be killed, but not publicly and not in battle.

<sup>21</sup>The angel went on to explain: The next king of Syria will be an evil man who has no right to be king, but he will come unexpectedly and seize power by trickery.

<sup>22</sup> Anyone who opposes him, even God's High Priest, will be swept away and wiped out.

<sup>23</sup> By making treaties, he will deceive other nations, and he will grow stronger and stronger, even though he rules only a small nation.

<sup>24</sup> He will invade a wealthy province without warning and will do things that none of his ancestors ever did. Then he will divide among his followers the goods and property he has captured in war. He will make plans to attack fortresses, but his time will soon run out.

<sup>25</sup> He will boldly raise a large army to attack the king of Egypt, who will prepare to fight back with a huge and powerful army. But the king of Egypt will be deceived and will not be successful.

<sup>26</sup> His closest advisers will ruin him. Many of his soldiers will be killed, and his army will be wiped out.

<sup>27</sup> Then the two kings will sit down to eat at the same table, but their motives will be evil, and they will lie to each other. They will not get what they want, because the time for it has not yet come.

<sup>28</sup>The king of Syria will return home with all the loot he has captured, determined to destroy the religion of God's people. He will do as he pleases and then return to his own land.

<sup>29</sup>Later on he will invade Egypt again, but this time things will turn out differently.

<sup>30</sup>The Romans will come in ships and oppose him, and he will be frightened. Then he will turn back in a rage and try to destroy the religion of God's people. He will follow the advice of those who have abandoned that religion.

<sup>31</sup>Some of his soldiers will make the Temple ritually unclean. They will stop the daily sacrifices and set up The Awful Horror.

<sup>32</sup>By deceit the king will win the support of those who have already abandoned their religion, but those who follow God will fight back.

<sup>33</sup>Wise leaders of the people will share their wisdom with many others. But for a while some of them will be killed in battle or be burned to death, and some will be robbed and made prisoners.



<sup>34</sup> While the killing is going on, God's people will receive a little help, even though many who join them will do so for selfish reasons.

<sup>35</sup> Some of those wise leaders will be killed, but as a result of this the people will be purified. This will continue until the end comes, the time that God has set.

<sup>36</sup> The king of Syria will do as he pleases. He will boast that he is greater than any god, superior even to the Supreme God. He will be able to do this until the time when God punishes him. God will do exactly what he has planned.

<sup>37</sup> The king will ignore the god his ancestors served, and also the god that women love. In fact, he will ignore every god, because he will think he is greater than any of them.

<sup>38</sup> Instead, he will honor the god who protects fortresses. He will offer gold, silver, jewels, and other rich gifts to a god his ancestors never worshiped.

<sup>39</sup> To defend his fortresses, he will use people who worship a foreign god. He will give great honor to those who accept

him as ruler, put them into high offices, and give them land as a reward.

<sup>40</sup>When the king of Syria's final hour has almost come, the king of Egypt will attack him, and the king of Syria will fight back with all his power, using chariots, horses, and many ships. He will invade many countries, like the waters of a flood.

<sup>41</sup>He will even invade the Promised Land and kill tens of thousands, but the countries of Edom, Moab, and what is left of Ammon will escape.

<sup>42</sup>When he invades all those countries, even Egypt will not be spared.

<sup>43</sup>He will take away Egypt's hidden treasures of gold and silver and its other prized possessions. He will conquer Libya and Ethiopia.

<sup>44</sup>Then news that comes from the east and the north will frighten him, and he will fight furiously, killing many people.

<sup>45</sup>He will even set up his huge royal tents between the sea and the mountain on which the Temple stands. But he will die, with no one there to help him.

**12**<sup>1</sup>The angel wearing linen clothes said, At that time the great angel

Michael, who guards your people, will appear. Then there will be a time of troubles, the worst since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, all the people of your nation whose names are written in God's book will be saved.

<sup>2</sup> Many of those who have already died will live again: some will enjoy eternal life, and some will suffer eternal disgrace.

<sup>3</sup> The wise leaders will shine with all the brightness of the sky. And those who have taught many people to do what is right will shine like the stars forever.

<sup>4</sup> He said to me, And now, Daniel, close the book and put a seal on it until the end of the world. Meanwhile, many people will waste their efforts trying to understand what is happening.

<sup>5</sup> Then I saw two men standing by a river, one on each bank.

<sup>6</sup> One of them asked the angel who was standing further upstream, How long will it be until these amazing events come to an end?

<sup>7</sup> The angel raised both hands toward the sky and made a solemn promise in

the name of the Eternal God. I heard him say, It will be three and a half years. When the persecution of God's people ends, all these things will have happened.

<sup>8</sup>I heard what he said, but I did not understand it. So I asked, But, sir, how will it all end?

<sup>9</sup>He answered, You must go now, Daniel, because these words are to be kept secret and hidden until the end comes.

<sup>10</sup>Many people will be purified. Those who are wicked will not understand but will go on being wicked; only those who are wise will understand.

<sup>11</sup>From the time the daily sacrifices are stopped, that is, from the time of The Awful Horror, 1,290 days will pass.

<sup>12</sup>Happy are those who remain faithful until 1,335 days are over!

<sup>13</sup>And you, Daniel, be faithful to the end. Then you will die, but you will rise to receive your reward at the end of time.

# Hosea

**1** <sup>1</sup>This is the message which the LORD gave Hosea son of Beerī during the time that Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>When the LORD first spoke to Israel through Hosea, he said to Hosea, Go and get married; your wife will be unfaithful, and your children will be just like her. In the same way my people have left me and become unfaithful.

<sup>3</sup>So Hosea married a woman named Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim. After the birth of their first child, a son,

<sup>4</sup>the LORD said to Hosea, Name him Jezreel, because it will not be long before I punish the king of Israel for the murders that his ancestor Jehu committed at Jezreel. I am going to put an end to Jehu's dynasty.

<sup>5</sup>And in Jezreel Valley I will at that time destroy Israel's military power.

<sup>6</sup>Gomer had a second child -- this time it was a daughter. The LORD said to Hosea, Name her Unloved, because I will no longer show love to the people of Israel or forgive them.

<sup>7</sup>But to the people of Judah I will show love. I, the LORD their God, will save them, but I will not do it by war -- with swords or bows and arrows or with horses and horsemen.

<sup>8</sup>After Gomer had weaned her daughter, she became pregnant again and had another son.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD said to Hosea, Name him Not-My-People, because the people of Israel are not my people, and I am not their God.

<sup>10</sup>The people of Israel will become like the sand of the sea, more than can be counted or measured. Now God says to them, You are not my people, but the day is coming when he will say to them, You are the children of the living God!

<sup>11</sup>The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited. They will choose for themselves a single leader, and once again they will grow and prosper in their

land. Yes, the day of Jezreel will be a great day!

**2**<sup>1</sup> So call your fellow Israelites God's People and Loved-by-the-Lord.

<sup>2</sup> My children, plead with your mother -- though she is no longer a wife to me, and I am no longer her husband. Plead with her to stop her adultery and prostitution.

<sup>3</sup> If she does not, I will strip her as naked as she was on the day she was born. I will make her like a dry and barren land, and she will die of thirst.

<sup>4</sup> I will not show mercy to her children; they are the children of a shameless prostitute. She herself said, I will go to my lovers -- they give me food and water, wool and linen, olive oil and wine.

<sup>5</sup> (2: 4)

<sup>6</sup> So I am going to fence her in with thorn bushes and build a wall to block her way.

<sup>7</sup> She will run after her lovers but will not catch them. She will look for them but will not find them. Then she will say, I am going back to my first husband -- I was better off then than I am now.

<sup>8</sup> She would never acknowledge that I am the one who gave her the grain,

the wine, the olive oil, and all the silver and gold that she used in the worship of Baal.

<sup>9</sup>So at harvest time I will take back my gifts of grain and wine, and will take away the wool and the linen I gave her for clothing.

<sup>10</sup>I will strip her naked in front of her lovers, and no one will be able to save her from my power.

<sup>11</sup>I will put an end to all her festivities -- her annual and monthly festivals and her Sabbath celebrations -- all her religious meetings.

<sup>12</sup>I will destroy her grapevines and her fig trees, which she said her lovers gave her for serving them. I will turn her vineyards and orchards into a wilderness; wild animals will destroy them.

<sup>13</sup>I will punish her for the times that she forgot me, when she burned incense to Baal and put on her jewelry to go chasing after her lovers. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>14</sup>So I am going to take her into the desert again; there I will win her back with words of love.



<sup>15</sup>I will give back to her the vineyards she had and make Trouble Valley a door of hope. She will respond to me there as she did when she was young, when she came from Egypt.

<sup>16</sup>Then once again she will call me her husband -- she will no longer call me her Baal.

<sup>17</sup>I will never let her speak the name of Baal again.

<sup>18</sup>At that time I will make a covenant with all the wild animals and birds, so that they will not harm my people. I will also remove all weapons of war from the land, all swords and bows, and will let my people live in peace and safety.

<sup>19</sup>Israel, I will make you my wife; I will be true and faithful; I will show you constant love and mercy and make you mine forever.

<sup>20</sup>I will keep my promise and make you mine, and you will acknowledge me as LORD.

<sup>21</sup>At that time I will answer the prayers of my people Israel. I will make rain fall on the earth, and the earth will produce grain and grapes and olives.

<sup>22</sup> (2: 21)

<sup>23</sup>I will establish my people in the land and make them prosper. I will show love to those who were called Unloved, and to those who were called Not-My-People I will say, You are my people, and they will answer, You are our God.

**3**<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to me, Go again and show your love for a woman who is committing adultery with a lover. You must love her just as I still love the people of Israel, even though they turn to other gods and like to take offerings of raisins to idols.

<sup>2</sup>So I paid fifteen pieces of silver and seven bushels of barley to buy her.

<sup>3</sup>I told her that for a long time she would have to wait for me without being a prostitute or committing adultery; and during this time I would wait for her.

<sup>4</sup>In just this way the people of Israel will have to live for a long time without kings or leaders, without sacrifices or sacred stone pillars, without idols or images to use for divination.

<sup>5</sup>But the time will come when the people of Israel will once again turn to the LORD their God and to a descendant

of David their king. Then they will fear the LORD and will receive his good gifts.

**4**<sup>1</sup>The LORD has an accusation to bring against the people who live in this land. Listen, Israel, to what he says: There is no faithfulness or love in the land, and the people do not acknowledge me as God.

<sup>2</sup>They make promises and break them; they lie, murder, steal, and commit adultery. Crimes increase, and there is one murder after another.

<sup>3</sup>And so the land will dry up, and everything that lives on it will die. All the animals and birds, and even the fish, will die.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD says, Let no one accuse the people or reprimand them -- my complaint is against you priests.

<sup>5</sup>Night and day you blunder on, and the prophets do no better than you. I am going to destroy Israel, your mother.

<sup>6</sup>My people are doomed because they do not acknowledge me. You priests have refused to acknowledge me and have rejected my teaching, and so I reject you and will not acknowledge your sons as my priests.

<sup>7</sup>The more of you priests there are, the more you sin against me, and so I will turn your honor into disgrace.

<sup>8</sup>You grow rich from the sins of my people, and so you want them to sin more and more.

<sup>9</sup>You will suffer the same punishment as the people! I will punish you and make you pay for the evil you do.

<sup>10</sup>You will eat your share of the sacrifices, but still be hungry. You will worship the fertility gods, but still have no children, because you have turned away from me to follow other gods.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, Wine, both old and new, is robbing my people of their senses!

<sup>12</sup>They ask for revelations from a piece of wood! A stick tells them what they want to know! They have left me. Like a woman who becomes a prostitute, they have given themselves to other gods.

<sup>13</sup>At sacred places on the mountaintops they offer sacrifices, and on the hills they burn incense under tall, spreading trees, because the shade is so pleasant! As a result, your daughters serve as

prostitutes, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

<sup>14</sup>Yet I will not punish them for this, because you yourselves go off with temple prostitutes, and together with them you offer pagan sacrifices. As the proverb says, A people without sense will be ruined.

<sup>15</sup>Even though you people of Israel are unfaithful to me, may Judah not be guilty of the same thing. Don't worship at Gilgal or Bethaven, or make promises there in the name of the living LORD.

<sup>16</sup>The people of Israel are as stubborn as mules. How can I feed them like lambs in a meadow?

<sup>17</sup>The people of Israel are under the spell of idols. Let them go their own way.

<sup>18</sup>After drinking much wine, they delight in their prostitution, preferring disgrace to honor.

<sup>19</sup>They will be carried away as by the wind, and they will be ashamed of their pagan sacrifices.

**5**<sup>1</sup>Listen to this, you priests! Pay attention, people of Israel! Listen, you that belong to the royal family! You are supposed to judge with justice --

so judgment will fall on you! You have become a trap at Mizpah, a net spread on Mount Tabor,

<sup>2</sup>a deep pit at Acacia City, and I will punish all of you.

<sup>3</sup>I know what Israel is like -- she cannot hide from me. She has been unfaithful, and her people are unfit to worship me.

<sup>4</sup>The evil that the people have done keeps them from returning to their God. Idolatry has a powerful hold on them, and they do not acknowledge the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>The arrogance of the people of Israel cries out against them. Their sins make them stumble and fall, and the people of Judah fall with them.

<sup>6</sup>They take their sheep and cattle to offer as sacrifices to the LORD, but it does them no good. They cannot find him, for he has left them.

<sup>7</sup>They have been unfaithful to the LORD; their children do not belong to him. So now they and their lands will soon be destroyed.

<sup>8</sup>Blow the war trumpets in Gibeah! Sound the alarm in Ramah! Raise the war cry at Bethaven! Into battle, men of Benjamin!

<sup>9</sup>The day of punishment is coming, and Israel will be ruined. People of Israel, this will surely happen!

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says, I am angry because the leaders of Judah have invaded Israel and stolen land from her. So I will pour out punishment on them like a flood.

<sup>11</sup>Israel is suffering oppression; she has lost land that was rightfully hers, because she insisted on going for help to those who had none to give.

<sup>12</sup>I will bring destruction on Israel and ruin on the people of Judah.

<sup>13</sup>When Israel saw how sick she was and when Judah saw her own wounds, then Israel went to Assyria to ask the great emperor for help, but he could not cure them or heal their wounds.

<sup>14</sup>I will attack the people of Israel and Judah like a lion. I myself will tear them to pieces and then leave them. When I drag them off, no one will be able to save them.

<sup>15</sup>I will abandon my people until they have suffered enough for their sins and come looking for me. Perhaps in their suffering they will try to find me.

**6**<sup>1</sup> The people say, Let's return to the LORD! He has hurt us, but he will be sure to heal us; he has wounded us, but he will bandage our wounds, won't he?

<sup>2</sup> In two or three days he will revive us, and we will live in his presence.

<sup>3</sup> Let us try to know the LORD. He will come to us as surely as the day dawns, as surely as the spring rains fall upon the earth.

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD says, Israel and Judah, what am I going to do with you? Your love for me disappears as quickly as morning mist; it is like dew, that vanishes early in the day.

<sup>5</sup> That is why I have sent my prophets to you with my message of judgment and destruction. What I want from you is plain and clear:

<sup>6</sup> I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me.

<sup>7</sup> But as soon as they entered the land at Adam, they broke the covenant I had made with them.

<sup>8</sup> Gilead is a city full of evil people and murderers.



<sup>9</sup>The priests are like a gang of robbers who wait in ambush for someone. Even on the road to the holy place at Shechem they commit murder. And they do all this evil deliberately!

<sup>10</sup>I have seen a horrible thing in Israel: my people have defiled themselves by worshiping idols.

<sup>11</sup>And as for you, people of Judah, I have set a time to punish you also for what you are doing.

**7** <sup>1</sup>Whenever I want to heal my people Israel and make them prosperous again, all I can see is their wickedness and the evil they do. They cheat one another; they break into houses and steal; they rob people in the streets.

<sup>2</sup>It never enters their heads that I will remember all this evil; but their sins surround them, and I cannot avoid seeing them.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD says, People deceive the king and his officers by their evil plots.

<sup>4</sup>They are all treacherous and disloyal. Their hatred smolders like the fire in an oven, which is not stirred by the baker until the dough is ready to bake.

<sup>5</sup>On the day of the king's celebration they made the king and his officials drunk and foolish with wine.

<sup>6</sup>Yes, they burned like an oven with their plotting. All night their anger smoldered, and in the morning it burst into flames.

<sup>7</sup>In the heat of their anger they murdered their rulers. Their kings have been assassinated one after another, but no one prays to me for help.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD says, The people of Israel are like a half-baked loaf of bread. They rely on the nations around them

<sup>9</sup>and do not realize that this reliance on foreigners has robbed them of their strength. Their days are numbered, but they don't even know it.

<sup>10</sup>The arrogance of the people of Israel cries out against them. In spite of everything that has happened, they have not returned to me, the LORD their God.

<sup>11</sup>Israel flits around like a silly pigeon; first her people call on Egypt for help, and then they run to Assyria!

<sup>12</sup>But I will spread out a net and catch them like birds as they go by. I will punish them for the evil they have done.

<sup>13</sup>They are doomed! They have left me and rebelled against me. They will be destroyed. I wanted to save them, but their worship of me was false.

<sup>14</sup>They have not prayed to me sincerely, but instead they throw themselves down and wail as the heathen do. When they pray for grain and wine, they gash themselves like pagans. What rebels they are!

<sup>15</sup>Even though I was the one who brought them up and made them strong, they plotted against me.

<sup>16</sup>They keep on turning away from me to a god that is powerless. They are as unreliable as a crooked bow. Because their leaders talk arrogantly, they will die a violent death, and the Egyptians will laugh.

**8**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says, Sound the alarm! Enemies are swooping down on my land like eagles! My people have broken the covenant I made with them and have rebelled against my teaching.

<sup>2</sup>Even though they call me their God and claim that they are my people and that they know me,

<sup>3</sup> they have rejected what is good. Because of this their enemies will pursue them.

<sup>4</sup> My people chose kings, but they did it on their own. They appointed leaders, but without my approval. They took their silver and gold and made idols -- for their own destruction.

<sup>5</sup> I hate the gold bull worshiped by the people of the city of Samaria. I am furious with them. How long will it be before they give up their idolatry?

<sup>6</sup> An Israelite craftsman made the idol, and it is not a god at all! The gold bull worshiped in Samaria will be smashed to pieces!

<sup>7</sup> When they sow the wind, they will reap a storm! A field of grain that doesn't ripen can never produce any bread. But even if it did, foreigners would eat it up.

<sup>8</sup> Israel has become like any other nation and is as useless as a broken pot.

<sup>9</sup> Stubborn as wild donkeys, the people of Israel go their own way. They have gone off to seek help from Assyria and have paid other nations to protect them.

<sup>10</sup> But now I am going to gather them together and punish them. Soon they

will writhe in pain when the emperor of Assyria oppresses them.

<sup>11</sup>The more altars the people of Israel build for removing sin, the more places they have for sinning!

<sup>12</sup>I write down countless teachings for the people, but they reject them as strange and foreign.

<sup>13</sup>They offer sacrifices to me and eat the meat of the sacrifices. But I, the LORD, am not pleased with them, and now I will remember their sin and punish them for it; I will send them back to Egypt!

<sup>14</sup>The people of Israel have built palaces, but they have forgotten their own Maker. The people of Judah have built fortified cities. But I will send fire that will burn down their palaces and their cities.

**9**<sup>1</sup> People of Israel, stop celebrating your festivals like pagans. You have turned away from your God and have been unfaithful to him. All over the land you have sold yourselves like prostitutes to the god Baal and have loved the grain you thought he paid you with!

<sup>2</sup>But soon you will not have enough grain and olive oil, and there will be no wine.

<sup>3</sup>The people of Israel will not remain in the LORD's land, but will have to go back to Egypt and will have to eat forbidden food in Assyria.

<sup>4</sup>In those foreign lands they will not be able to make wine offerings to the LORD or bring their sacrifices to him. Their food will defile everyone who eats it, like food eaten at funerals. It will be used only to satisfy their hunger; none of it will be taken as an offering to the LORD's Temple.

<sup>5</sup>And when the time comes for the appointed festivals in honor of the LORD, what will they do then?

<sup>6</sup>When the disaster comes and the people are scattered, the Egyptians will gather them up -- gather them for burial there at Memphis! Their treasures of silver and the places where their homes once stood will be overgrown with weeds and thorn bushes.

<sup>7</sup>The time for punishment has come, the time when people will get what they deserve. When that happens, Israel will

know it! This prophet, you say, is a fool. This inspired man is insane. You people hate me so much because your sin is so great.

<sup>8</sup>God has sent me as a prophet to warn his people Israel. Yet wherever I go, you try to trap me like a bird. Even in God's Temple the people are the prophet's enemies.

<sup>9</sup>They are hopelessly evil in what they do, just as they were at Gibeah. God will remember their sin and punish them for it.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says, When I first found Israel, it was like finding grapes growing in the desert. When I first saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the first ripe figs of the season. But when they came to Mount Peor, they began to worship Baal and soon became as disgusting as the gods they loved.

<sup>11</sup>Israel's greatness will fly away like a bird, and there will be no more children born to them, no more women pregnant, no more children conceived.

<sup>12</sup>But even if they did bring up children, I would take them away and not leave

one alive. When I abandon these people, terrible things will happen to them.

<sup>13</sup>LORD, I can see their children being hunted down and killed.

<sup>14</sup>What shall I ask you to do to these people? Make their women barren! Make them unable to nurse their babies!

<sup>15</sup>The LORD says, All their evildoing began in Gilgal. It was there that I began to hate them. And because of the evil they have done, I will drive them out of my land. I will not love them any more; all their leaders have rebelled against me.

<sup>16</sup>The people of Israel are like a plant whose roots have dried up and which bears no fruit. They will have no children, but even if they did, I would kill the children so dear to them.

<sup>17</sup>The God I serve will reject his people, because they have not listened to him. They will become wanderers among the nations.

**10**<sup>1</sup>The people of Israel were like a grapevine that was full of grapes. The more prosperous they were, the more altars they built. The more productive their land was, the more



beautiful they made the sacred stone pillars they worship.

<sup>2</sup>The people whose hearts are deceitful must now suffer for their sins. God will break down their altars and destroy their sacred pillars.

<sup>3</sup>These people will soon be saying, We have no king because we did not fear the LORD. But what could a king do for us anyway?

<sup>4</sup>They utter empty words and make false promises and useless treaties. Justice has become injustice, growing like poisonous weeds in a plowed field.

<sup>5</sup>The people who live in the city of Samaria will be afraid and will mourn the loss of the gold bull at Bethaven. They and the priests who serve the idol will weep over it. They will wail when it is stripped of its golden splendor.

<sup>6</sup>The idol will be carried off to Assyria as tribute to the great emperor. The people of Israel will be disgraced and put to shame because of the advice they followed.

<sup>7</sup>Their king will be carried off, like a chip of wood on water.

<sup>8</sup>The hilltop shrines of Aven, where the people of Israel worship idols, will be destroyed. Thorns and weeds will grow up over their altars. The people will call out to the mountains, Hide us! and to the hills, Cover us!

<sup>9</sup>The LORD says, The people of Israel have not stopped sinning against me since the time of their sin at Gibeah. So at Gibeah war will catch up with them.

<sup>10</sup>I will attack this sinful people and punish them. Nations will join together against them, and they will be punished for their many sins.

<sup>11</sup>Israel was once like a well-trained young cow, ready and willing to thresh grain. But I decided to put a yoke on her beautiful neck and to harness her for harder work. I made Judah pull the plow and Israel pull the harrow.

<sup>12</sup>I said, Plow new ground for yourselves, plant righteousness, and reap the blessings that your devotion to me will produce. It is time for you to turn to me, your LORD, and I will come and pour out blessings upon you.

<sup>13</sup>But instead you planted evil and reaped its harvest. You have eaten the

fruit produced by your lies. Because you trusted in your chariots and in the large number of your soldiers,

<sup>14</sup>war will come to your people, and all your fortresses will be destroyed. It will be like the day when King Shalman destroyed the city of Betharbel in battle, and mothers and their children were crushed to death.

<sup>15</sup>That is what will happen to you, people of Bethel, because of the terrible evil that you have done. As soon as the battle begins, the king of Israel will die.

**11** <sup>1</sup>The LORD says, When Israel was a child, I loved him and called him out of Egypt as my son.

<sup>2</sup>But the more I called to him, the more he turned away from me. My people sacrificed to Baal; they burned incense to idols.

<sup>3</sup>Yet I was the one who taught Israel to walk. I took my people up in my arms, but they did not acknowledge that I took care of them.

<sup>4</sup>I drew them to me with affection and love. I picked them up and held them to my cheek; I bent down to them and fed them.

<sup>5</sup>They refuse to return to me, and so they must return to Egypt, and Assyria will rule them.

<sup>6</sup>War will sweep through their cities and break down the city gates. It will destroy my people because they do what they themselves think best.

<sup>7</sup>They insist on turning away from me. They will cry out because of the yoke that is on them, but no one will lift it from them.

<sup>8</sup>How can I give you up, Israel? How can I abandon you? Could I ever destroy you as I did Admah, or treat you as I did Zeboiim? My heart will not let me do it! My love for you is too strong.

<sup>9</sup>I will not punish you in my anger; I will not destroy Israel again. For I am God and not a mere human being. I, the Holy One, am with you. I will not come to you in anger.

<sup>10</sup>My people will follow me when I roar like a lion at their enemies. They will hurry to me from the west.

<sup>11</sup>They will come from Egypt, as swiftly as birds, and from Assyria, like doves. I will bring them to their homes again. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD says, The people of Israel have surrounded me with lies and deceit, and the people of Judah are still rebelling against me, the faithful and holy God.

**12**<sup>1</sup> Everything that the people of Israel do from morning to night is useless and destructive. Treachery and acts of violence increase among them. They make treaties with Assyria and do business with Egypt.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD has an accusation to bring against the people of Judah; he is also going to punish Israel for the way her people act. He will pay them back for what they have done.

<sup>3</sup>Their ancestor Jacob struggled with his twin brother Esau while the two of them were still in their mother's womb; when Jacob grew up, he fought against God --

<sup>4</sup>he fought against an angel and won. He wept and asked for a blessing. And at Bethel God came to our ancestor Jacob and spoke with him.

<sup>5</sup>This was the LORD God Almighty -- the LORD is the name by which he is to be worshiped.

<sup>6</sup>So now, descendants of Jacob, trust in your God and return to him. Be loyal and just, and wait patiently for your God to act.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD says, The people of Israel are as dishonest as the Canaanites; they love to cheat their customers with false scales.

<sup>8</sup>We are rich, they say. We've made a fortune. And no one can accuse us of getting rich dishonestly.

<sup>9</sup>But I, the LORD your God who led you out of Egypt, I will make you live in tents again, as you did when I came to you in the desert.

<sup>10</sup>I spoke to the prophets and gave them many visions, and through the prophets I gave my people warnings.

<sup>11</sup>Yet idols are worshiped in Gilead, and those who worship them will die. Bulls are sacrificed in Gilgal, and the altars there will become piles of stone in the open fields.

<sup>12</sup>Our ancestor Jacob had to flee to Mesopotamia, where, in order to get a wife, he worked for another man and took care of his sheep.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD sent a prophet to rescue the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and to take care of them.

<sup>14</sup>The people of Israel have made the LORD bitterly angry; they deserve death for their crimes. Their Lord will punish them for the disgrace they have brought on him.

**13**<sup>1</sup>In the past, when the tribe of Ephraim spoke, the other tribes of Israel were afraid; they looked up to Ephraim. But the people sinned by worshiping Baal, and for this they will die.

<sup>2</sup>They still keep on sinning by making metal images to worship -- idols of silver, designed by human minds, made by human hands. And then they say, Offer sacrifices to them! How can anyone kiss those idols -- idols in the shape of bulls!

<sup>3</sup>And so these people will disappear like morning mist, like the dew that vanishes early in the day. They will be like chaff which the wind blows from the threshing place, like smoke from a chimney.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD says, I am the LORD your God, who led you out of Egypt. You have no God but me. I alone am your savior.

<sup>5</sup>I took care of you in a dry, desert land.

<sup>6</sup>But when you entered the good land, you became full and satisfied, and then you grew proud and forgot me.

<sup>7</sup>So I will attack you like a lion. Like a leopard I will lie in wait along your path.

<sup>8</sup>I will attack you like a bear that has lost her cubs, and I will tear you open. Like a lion I will devour you on the spot, and will tear you to pieces like a wild animal.

<sup>9</sup>I will destroy you, people of Israel! Then who can help you?

<sup>10</sup>You asked for a king and for leaders, but how can they save the nation?

<sup>11</sup>In my anger I have given you kings, and in my fury I have taken them away.

<sup>12</sup>Israel's sin and guilt are on record, and the records are safely stored away.

<sup>13</sup>Israel has a chance to live, but is too foolish to take it -- like a child about to be born, who refuses to come out of the womb.

<sup>14</sup>I will not save this people from the world of the dead or rescue them from the power of death. Bring on your plagues, death! Bring on your



destruction, world of the dead! I will no longer have pity for this people.

<sup>15</sup>Even though Israel flourishes like weeds, I will send a hot east wind from the desert, and it will dry up their springs and wells. It will take away everything of value.

<sup>16</sup>Samaria must be punished for rebelling against me. Her people will die in war; babies will be dashed to the ground, and pregnant women will be ripped open.

**14**<sup>1</sup>Return to the LORD your God, people of Israel. Your sin has made you stumble and fall.

<sup>2</sup>Return to the LORD, and let this prayer be your offering to him: Forgive all our sins and accept our prayer, and we will praise you as we have promised.

<sup>3</sup>Assyria can never save us, and war horses cannot protect us. We will never again say to our idols that they are our God. O LORD, you show mercy to those who have no one else to turn to.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD says, I will bring my people back to me. I will love them with all my heart; no longer am I angry with them.

<sup>5</sup>I will be to the people of Israel like rain in a dry land. They will blossom like flowers; they will be firmly rooted like the trees of Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup>They will be alive with new growth, and beautiful like olive trees. They will be fragrant like the cedars of Lebanon.

<sup>7</sup>Once again they will live under my protection. They will grow crops of grain and be fruitful like a vineyard. They will be as famous as the wine of Lebanon.

<sup>8</sup>The people of Israel will have nothing more to do with idols; I will answer their prayers and take care of them. Like an evergreen tree I will shelter them; I am the source of all their blessings.

<sup>9</sup>May those who are wise understand what is written here, and may they take it to heart. The LORD's ways are right, and righteous people live by following them, but sinners stumble and fall because they ignore them.

# Joel

**1** <sup>1</sup> This is the LORD's message to Joel son of Pethuel.

<sup>2</sup> Pay attention, you older people; everyone in Judah, listen. Has anything like this ever happened in your time or the time of your ancestors?

<sup>3</sup> Tell your children about it; they will tell their children, who in turn will tell the next generation.

<sup>4</sup> Swarm after swarm of locusts settled on the crops; what one swarm left, the next swarm devoured.

<sup>5</sup> Wake up and weep, you drunkards; cry, you wine-drinkers; the grapes for making new wine have been destroyed.

<sup>6</sup> An army of locusts has attacked our land; they are powerful and too many to count; their teeth are as sharp as those of a lion.

<sup>7</sup> They have destroyed our grapevines and chewed up our fig trees. They have stripped off the bark, till the branches are white.

<sup>8</sup>Cry, you people, like a young woman who mourns the death of the man she was going to marry.

<sup>9</sup>There is no grain or wine to offer in the Temple; the priests mourn because they have no offerings for the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>The fields are bare; the ground mourns because the grain is destroyed, the grapes are dried up, and the olive trees are withered.

<sup>11</sup>Grieve, you farmers; cry, you that take care of the vineyards, because the wheat, the barley, yes all the crops are destroyed.

<sup>12</sup>The grapevines and fig trees have withered; all the fruit trees have wilted and died. The joy of the people is gone.

<sup>13</sup>Put on sackcloth and weep, you priests who serve at the altar! Go into the Temple and mourn all night! There is no grain or wine to offer your God.

<sup>14</sup>Give orders for a fast; call an assembly! Gather the leaders and all the people of Judah into the Temple of the LORD your God and cry out to him!

<sup>15</sup>The day of the LORD is near, the day when the Almighty brings destruction. What terror that day will bring!

<sup>16</sup>We look on helpless as our crops are destroyed. There is no joy in the Temple of our God.

<sup>17</sup>The seeds die in the dry earth. There is no grain to be stored, and so the empty granaries are in ruins.

<sup>18</sup>The cattle are bellowing in distress because there is no pasture for them; the flocks of sheep also suffer.

<sup>19</sup>I cry out to you, LORD, because the pastures and trees are dried up, as though a fire had burned them.

<sup>20</sup>Even the wild animals cry out to you because the streams have become dry.

**2**<sup>1</sup> Blow the trumpet; sound the alarm on Zion, God's sacred hill. Tremble, people of Judah! The day of the LORD is coming soon.

<sup>2</sup>It will be a dark and gloomy day, a black and cloudy day. The great army of locusts advances like darkness spreading over the mountains. There has never been anything like it, and there never will be again.

<sup>3</sup>Like fire they eat up the plants. In front of them the land is like the Garden of Eden, but behind them it is a barren desert. Nothing escapes them.

<sup>4</sup>They look like horses; they run like war-horses.

<sup>5</sup>As they leap on the tops of the mountains, they rattle like chariots; they crackle like dry grass on fire. They are lined up like a great army ready for battle.

<sup>6</sup>As they approach, everyone is terrified; every face turns pale.

<sup>7</sup>They attack like warriors; they climb the walls like soldiers. They all keep marching straight ahead and do not change direction

<sup>8</sup>or get in each other's way. They swarm through defenses, and nothing can stop them.

<sup>9</sup>They rush against the city; they run over the walls; they climb up the houses and go in through the windows like thieves.

<sup>10</sup>The earth shakes as they advance; the sky trembles. The sun and the moon grow dark, and the stars no longer shine.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD thunders commands to his army. The troops that obey him are many and mighty. How terrible is the day of the LORD! Who will survive it?

<sup>12</sup>But even now, says the LORD, repent sincerely and return to me with fasting and weeping and mourning.

<sup>13</sup>Let your broken heart show your sorrow; tearing your clothes is not enough. Come back to the LORD your God. He is kind and full of mercy; he is patient and keeps his promise; he is always ready to forgive and not punish.

<sup>14</sup>Perhaps the LORD your God will change his mind and bless you with abundant crops. Then you can offer him grain and wine.

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet on Mount Zion; give orders for a fast and call an assembly!

<sup>16</sup>Gather the people together; prepare them for a sacred meeting; bring the old people; gather the children and the babies too. Even newly married couples must leave their homes and come.

<sup>17</sup>The priests, serving the LORD between the altar and the entrance of the Temple, must weep and pray: Have pity on your people, LORD. Do not let other nations despise us and mock us by saying, Where is your God?

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD showed concern for his land; he had mercy on his people.

<sup>19</sup>He answered them: Now I am going to give you grain and wine and olive oil, and you will be satisfied. Other nations will no longer despise you.

<sup>20</sup>I will remove the locust army that came from the north and will drive some of them into the desert. Their front ranks will be driven into the Dead Sea, their rear ranks into the Mediterranean. Their dead bodies will stink. I will destroy them because of all they have done to you.

<sup>21</sup>Fields, don't be afraid, but be joyful and glad because of all the LORD has done for you.

<sup>22</sup>Animals, don't be afraid. The pastures are green; the trees bear their fruit, and there are plenty of figs and grapes.

<sup>23</sup>Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice at what the LORD your God has done for you. He has given you the right amount of autumn rain; he has poured down the winter rain for you and the spring rain as before.

<sup>24</sup>The threshing places will be full of grain; the pits beside the presses will overflow with wine and olive oil.



<sup>25</sup> I will give you back what you lost in the years when swarms of locusts ate your crops. It was I who sent this army against you.

<sup>26</sup> Now you will have plenty to eat, and be satisfied. You will praise the LORD your God, who has done wonderful things for you. My people will never be despised again.

<sup>27</sup> Then, Israel, you will know that I am among you and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other. My people will never be despised again.

<sup>28</sup> Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.

<sup>29</sup> At that time I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, both men and women.

<sup>30</sup> I will give warnings of that day in the sky and on the earth; there will be bloodshed, fire, and clouds of smoke.

<sup>31</sup> The sun will be darkened, and the moon will turn red as blood before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

<sup>32</sup> But all who ask the LORD for help will be saved. As the LORD has said, Some in Jerusalem will escape; those whom I choose will survive.

**3**<sup>1</sup> The LORD says, At that time I will restore the prosperity of Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> I will gather all the nations and bring them to the Valley of Judgment. There I will judge them for all they have done to my people. They have scattered the Israelites in foreign countries and divided Israel, my land.

<sup>3</sup> They threw dice to decide who would get the captives. They sold boys and girls into slavery to pay for prostitutes and wine.

<sup>4</sup> What are you trying to do to me, Tyre, Sidon, and all of Philistia? Are you trying to pay me back for something? If you are, I will quickly pay you back!

<sup>5</sup> You have taken my silver and gold and carried my rich treasures into your temples.

<sup>6</sup> You have taken the people of Judah and Jerusalem far from their own country and sold them to the Greeks.

<sup>7</sup> Now I am going to bring them out of the places to which you have sold them. I will do to you what you have done to them.

<sup>8</sup> I will let your sons and daughters be sold to the people of Judah; they will sell them to the far-off Sabeans. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>9</sup> Make this announcement among the nations: Prepare for war; call your warriors; gather all your soldiers and march!

<sup>10</sup> Hammer the points of your plows into swords and your pruning knives into spears. Even the weak must fight.

<sup>11</sup> Hurry and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather in the valley. Send down, O LORD, your army to attack them!

<sup>12</sup> The nations must get ready and come to the Valley of Judgment. There I, the LORD, will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

<sup>13</sup> They are very wicked; cut them down like grain at harvest time; crush them as grapes are crushed in a full wine press until the wine runs over.

<sup>14</sup>Thousands and thousands are in the Valley of Judgment. It is there that the day of the LORD will soon come.

<sup>15</sup>The sun and the moon grow dark, and the stars no longer shine.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD roars from Mount Zion; his voice thunders from Jerusalem; earth and sky tremble. But he will defend his people.

<sup>17</sup>Then, Israel, you will know that I am the LORD your God. I live on Zion, my sacred hill. Jerusalem will be a sacred city; foreigners will never conquer it again.

<sup>18</sup>At that time the mountains will be covered with vineyards, and cattle will be found on every hill; there will be plenty of water for all of Judah. A stream will flow from the Temple of the LORD, and it will water Acacia Valley.

<sup>19</sup>Egypt will become a desert, and Edom a ruined waste, because they attacked the land of Judah and killed its innocent people.

<sup>20</sup>I will avenge those who were killed; I will not spare the guilty. But Judah and Jerusalem will be inhabited forever, and I, the LORD, will live on Mount Zion.

21 (3: 20)

# Amos

**1** <sup>1</sup> These are the words of Amos, a shepherd from the town of Tekoa. Two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel, God revealed to Amos all these things about Israel.

<sup>2</sup> Amos said, The LORD roars from Mount Zion; his voice thunders from Jerusalem. The pastures dry up, and the grass on Mount Carmel turns brown.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD says, The people of Damascus have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They treated the people of Gilead with savage cruelty.

<sup>4</sup> So I will send fire upon the palace built by King Hazael and I will burn down the fortresses of King Benhadad.

<sup>5</sup> I will smash the city gates of Damascus and remove the inhabitants of Aven Valley and the ruler of Betheden. The people of Syria will be taken away as prisoners to the land of Kir.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD says, The people of Gaza have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They carried off a whole nation and sold them as slaves to the people of Edom.

<sup>7</sup>So I will send fire upon the city walls of Gaza and burn down its fortresses.

<sup>8</sup>I will remove the rulers of the cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon. I will punish the city of Ekron, and all the Philistines who are left will die.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD says, The people of Tyre have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They carried off a whole nation into exile in the land of Edom, and did not keep the treaty of friendship they had made.

<sup>10</sup>So I will send fire upon the city walls of Tyre and burn down its fortresses.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, The people of Edom have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They hunted down their relatives, the Israelites, and showed them no mercy. Their anger had no limits, and they never let it die.

<sup>12</sup>So I will send fire upon the city of Teman and burn down the fortresses of Bozrah.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD says, The people of Ammon have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. In their wars for more territory they even ripped open pregnant women in Gilead.

<sup>14</sup>So I will send fire upon the city walls of Rabbah and burn down its fortresses. Then there will be shouts on the day of battle, and the fighting will rage like a storm.

<sup>15</sup>Their king and his officers will go into exile.

**2**<sup>1</sup>The LORD says, The people of Moab have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They dishonored the bones of the king of Edom by burning them to ashes.

<sup>2</sup>I will send fire upon the land of Moab and burn down the fortresses of Kerioth. The people of Moab will die in the noise of battle while soldiers are shouting and trumpets are sounding.

<sup>3</sup>I will kill the ruler of Moab and all the leaders of the land.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD says, The people of Judah have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They have despised my teachings and have



not kept my commands. They have been led astray by the same false gods that their ancestors served.

<sup>5</sup>So I will send fire upon Judah and burn down the fortresses of Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD says, The people of Israel have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They sell into slavery honest people who cannot pay their debts, the poor who cannot repay even the price of a pair of sandals.

<sup>7</sup>They trample down the weak and helpless and push the poor out of the way. A man and his father have intercourse with the same slave woman, and so profane my holy name.

<sup>8</sup>At every place of worship people sleep on clothing that they have taken from the poor as security for debts. In the temple of their God they drink wine which they have taken from those who owe them money.

<sup>9</sup>And yet, my people, it was for your sake that I totally destroyed the Amorites, who were as tall as cedar trees and as strong as oaks.

<sup>10</sup>I brought you out of Egypt, led you through the desert for forty years, and

gave you the land of the Amorites to be your own.

<sup>11</sup>I chose some of your sons to be prophets and some of your young men to be nazirites. Isn't this true, people of Israel? I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>12</sup>But you made the nazirites drink wine, and ordered the prophets not to speak my message.

<sup>13</sup>And now I will crush you to the ground, and you will groan like a cart loaded with grain.

<sup>14</sup>Not even fast runners will escape; strong men will lose their strength, and soldiers will not be able to save their own lives.

<sup>15</sup>Archers will not stand their ground, fast runners will not get away, and men on horses will not escape with their lives.

<sup>16</sup>On that day even the bravest soldiers will drop their weapons and run. The LORD has spoken.

**3**<sup>1</sup> People of Israel, listen to this message which the LORD has spoken about you, the entire nation that he brought out of Egypt:

<sup>2</sup>Of all the nations on earth, you are the only one I have known and cared for.

That is what makes your sins so terrible, and that is why I must punish you for them.

<sup>3</sup>Do two people start traveling together without arranging to meet?

<sup>4</sup>Does a lion roar in the forest unless he has found a victim? Does a young lion growl in his den unless he has caught something?

<sup>5</sup>Does a bird get caught in a trap if the trap has not been baited? Does a trap spring unless something sets it off?

<sup>6</sup>Does the war trumpet sound in a city without making the people afraid? Does disaster strike a city unless the LORD sends it?

<sup>7</sup>The Sovereign LORD never does anything without revealing his plan to his servants, the prophets.

<sup>8</sup>When a lion roars, who can keep from being afraid? When the Sovereign LORD speaks, who can keep from proclaiming his message?

<sup>9</sup>Announce to those who live in the palaces of Egypt and Ashdod: Gather together in the hills around Samaria and see the great disorder and the crimes being committed there.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says, These people fill their mansions with things taken by crime and violence. They don't even know how to be honest.

<sup>11</sup>And so an enemy will surround their land, destroy their defenses, and plunder their mansions.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD says, As a shepherd recovers only two legs or an ear of a sheep that a lion has eaten, so only a few will survive of Samaria's people, who now recline on luxurious couches.

<sup>13</sup>Listen now, and warn the descendants of Jacob, says the Sovereign LORD Almighty.

<sup>14</sup>On the day when I punish the people of Israel for their sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel. The corners of every altar will be broken off and will fall to the ground.

<sup>15</sup>I will destroy winter houses and summer houses. The houses decorated with ivory will fall in ruins; every large house will be destroyed.

**4**<sup>1</sup>Listen to this, you women of Samaria, who grow fat like the well-fed cows of Bashan, who mistreat the weak, oppress the poor, and demand

that your husbands keep you supplied with liquor!

<sup>2</sup>As the Sovereign LORD is holy, he has promised, The days will come when they will drag you away with hooks; every one of you will be like a fish on a hook.

<sup>3</sup>You will be dragged to the nearest break in the wall and thrown out.

<sup>4</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, People of Israel, go to the holy place in Bethel and sin, if you must! Go to Gilgal and sin with all your might! Go ahead and bring animals to be sacrificed morning after morning, and bring your tithes every third day.

<sup>5</sup>Go on and offer your bread in thanksgiving to God, and brag about the extra offerings you bring! This is the kind of thing you love to do.

<sup>6</sup>I was the one who brought famine to all your cities, yet you did not come back to me.

<sup>7</sup>I kept it from raining when your crops needed it most. I sent rain on one city, but not on another. Rain fell on one field, but another field dried up.

<sup>8</sup>Weak with thirst, the people of several cities went to a city where they hoped to

find water, but there was not enough to drink. Still you did not come back to me.

<sup>9</sup>I sent a scorching wind to dry up your crops. The locusts ate up all your gardens and vineyards, your fig trees and olive trees. Still you did not come back to me.

<sup>10</sup>I sent a plague on you like the one I sent on Egypt. I killed your young men in battle and took your horses away. I filled your nostrils with the stink of dead bodies in your camps. Still you did not come back to me.

<sup>11</sup>I destroyed some of you as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Those of you who survived were like a burning stick saved from a fire. Still you did not come back to me, says the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>So then, people of Israel, I am going to punish you. And because I am going to do this, get ready to face my judgment!

<sup>13</sup>God is the one who made the mountains and created the winds. He makes his thoughts known to people; he changes day into night. He walks on the heights of the earth. This is his name: the LORD God Almighty!

**5**<sup>1</sup> Listen, people of Israel, to this funeral song which I sing over you:

<sup>2</sup>Virgin Israel has fallen, Never to rise again! She lies abandoned on the ground, And no one helps her up.

<sup>3</sup>The Sovereign LORD says, A city in Israel sends out a thousand soldiers, but only a hundred return; another city sends out a hundred, but only ten come back.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD says to the people of Israel, Come to me, and you will live.

<sup>5</sup>Do not go to Beersheba to worship. Do not try to find me at Bethel -- Bethel will come to nothing. Do not go to Gilgal -- her people are doomed to exile.

<sup>6</sup>Go to the LORD, and you will live. If you do not go, he will sweep down like fire on the people of Israel. The fire will burn up the people of Bethel, and no one will be able to put it out.

<sup>7</sup>You are doomed, you that twist justice and cheat people out of their rights!

<sup>8</sup>The LORD made the stars, the Pleiades and Orion. He turns darkness into daylight and day into night. He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the earth. His name is the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>He brings destruction on the mighty and their strongholds.

<sup>10</sup>You people hate anyone who challenges injustice and speaks the whole truth in court.

<sup>11</sup>You have oppressed the poor and robbed them of their grain. And so you will not live in the fine stone houses you build or drink wine from the beautiful vineyards you plant.

<sup>12</sup>I know how terrible your sins are and how many crimes you have committed. You persecute good people, take bribes, and prevent the poor from getting justice in the courts.

<sup>13</sup>And so, keeping quiet in such evil times is the smart thing to do!

<sup>14</sup>Make it your aim to do what is right, not what is evil, so that you may live. Then the LORD God Almighty really will be with you, as you claim he is.

<sup>15</sup>Hate what is evil, love what is right, and see that justice prevails in the courts. Perhaps the LORD will be merciful to the people of this nation who are still left alive.

<sup>16</sup>And so the Sovereign LORD Almighty says, There will be wailing and cries of



sorrow in the city streets. Even farmers will be called to mourn the dead along with those who are paid to mourn.

<sup>17</sup>There will be wailing in all the vineyards. All this will take place because I am coming to punish you. The LORD has spoken.

<sup>18</sup>How terrible it will be for you who long for the day of the LORD! What good will that day do you? For you it will be a day of darkness and not of light.

<sup>19</sup>It will be like someone who runs from a lion and meets a bear! Or like someone who comes home and puts his hand on the wall -- only to be bitten by a snake!

<sup>20</sup>The day of the LORD will bring darkness and not light; it will be a day of gloom, without any brightness.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD says, I hate your religious festivals; I cannot stand them!

<sup>22</sup>When you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; I will not accept the animals you have fattened to bring me as offerings.

<sup>23</sup>Stop your noisy songs; I do not want to listen to your harps.

<sup>24</sup> Instead, let justice flow like a stream, and righteousness like a river that never goes dry.

<sup>25</sup> People of Israel, I did not demand sacrifices and offerings during those forty years that I led you through the desert.

<sup>26</sup> But now, because you have worshiped images of Sakkuth, your king god, and of Kaiwan, your star god, you will have to carry those images

<sup>27</sup> when I take you into exile in a land beyond Damascus, says the LORD, whose name is Almighty God.

**6**<sup>1</sup> How terrible it will be for you that have such an easy life in Zion and for you that feel safe in Samaria -- you great leaders of this great nation Israel, you to whom the people go for help!

<sup>2</sup> Go and look at the city of Calneh. Then go on to the great city of Hamath and on down to the Philistine city of Gath. Were they any better than the kingdoms of Judah and Israel? Was their territory larger than yours?

<sup>3</sup> You refuse to admit that a day of disaster is coming, but what you do only brings that day closer.

<sup>4</sup>How terrible it will be for you that stretch out on your luxurious couches, feasting on veal and lamb!

<sup>5</sup>You like to compose songs, as David did, and play them on harps.

<sup>6</sup>You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest perfumes, but you do not mourn over the ruin of Israel.

<sup>7</sup>So you will be the first to go into exile. Your feasts and banquets will come to an end.

<sup>8</sup>The Sovereign LORD Almighty has given this solemn warning: I hate the pride of the people of Israel; I despise their luxurious mansions. I will give their capital city and everything in it to the enemy.

<sup>9</sup>If there are ten men left in a family, they will die.

<sup>10</sup>The dead man's relative, the one in charge of the funeral, will take the body out of the house. The relative will call to whoever is still left in the house, Is anyone else there with you? The person will answer, No! Then the relative will say, Be quiet! We must be careful not even to mention the LORD's name.

<sup>11</sup> When the LORD gives the command, houses large and small will be smashed to pieces.

<sup>12</sup> Do horses gallop on rocks? Does anyone plow the sea with oxen? Yet you have turned justice into poison, and right into wrong.

<sup>13</sup> You brag about capturing the town of Lodebar. You boast, We were strong enough to take Karnaim.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD God Almighty himself says, People of Israel, I am going to send a foreign army to occupy your country. It will oppress you from Hamath Pass in the north to the Brook of the Arabah in the south.

**7** <sup>1</sup> I had a vision from the Sovereign LORD. In it I saw him create a swarm of locusts just after the king's share of the hay had been cut and the grass was starting to grow again.

<sup>2</sup> In my vision I saw the locusts eat up every green thing in the land, and then I said, Sovereign LORD, forgive your people! How can they survive? They are so small and weak!

<sup>3</sup> The LORD changed his mind and said, What you saw will not take place.

<sup>4</sup>I had another vision from the Sovereign LORD. In it I saw him preparing to punish his people with fire. The fire burned up the great ocean under the earth and started to burn up the land.

<sup>5</sup>Then I said, Stop, O Sovereign LORD! How can your people survive? They are so small and weak!

<sup>6</sup>The LORD changed his mind again and said, This will not take place either.

<sup>7</sup>I had another vision from the LORD. In it I saw him standing beside a wall that had been built with the use of a plumb line, and there was a plumb line in his hand.

<sup>8</sup>He asked me, Amos, what do you see? A plumb line, I answered. Then he said, I am using it to show that my people are like a wall that is out of line. I will not change my mind again about punishing them.

<sup>9</sup>The places where Isaac's descendants worship will be destroyed. The holy places of Israel will be left in ruins. I will bring the dynasty of King Jeroboam to an end.

<sup>10</sup>Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, then sent a report to King Jeroboam of Israel: Amos is plotting against you among the people. His speeches will destroy the country.

<sup>11</sup>This is what he says: Jeroboam will die in battle, and the people of Israel will be taken away from their land into exile.

<sup>12</sup>Amaziah then said to Amos, That's enough, prophet! Go on back to Judah and do your preaching there. Let them pay you for it.

<sup>13</sup>Don't prophesy here at Bethel any more. This is the king's place of worship, the national temple.

<sup>14</sup>Amos answered, I am not the kind of prophet who prophesies for pay. I am a herdsman, and I take care of fig trees.

<sup>15</sup>But the LORD took me from my work as a shepherd and ordered me to come and prophesy to his people Israel.

<sup>16</sup>So now listen to what the LORD says. You tell me to stop prophesying, to stop raving against the people of Israel.

<sup>17</sup>And so, Amaziah, the LORD says to you, Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your children will be killed in war. Your land will be divided up and

given to others, and you yourself will die in a heathen country. And the people of Israel will certainly be taken away from their own land into exile.

**8**<sup>1</sup> I had another vision from the Sovereign LORD. In it I saw a basket of fruit.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD asked, Amos, what do you see? A basket of fruit, I answered. The LORD said to me, The end has come for my people Israel. I will not change my mind again about punishing them.

<sup>3</sup> On that day the songs in the palace will become cries of mourning. There will be dead bodies everywhere. They will be cast out in silence.

<sup>4</sup> Listen to this, you that trample on the needy and try to destroy the poor of the country.

<sup>5</sup> You say to yourselves, We can hardly wait for the holy days to be over so that we can sell our grain. When will the Sabbath end, so that we can start selling again? Then we can overcharge, use false measures, and fix the scales to cheat our customers.

<sup>6</sup> We can sell worthless wheat at a high price. We'll find someone poor who can't

pay his debts, not even the price of a pair of sandals, and we'll buy him as a slave.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD, the God of Israel, has sworn, I will never forget their evil deeds.

<sup>8</sup>And so the earth will quake, and everyone in the land will be in distress. The whole country will be shaken; it will rise and fall like the Nile River.

<sup>9</sup>The time is coming when I will make the sun go down at noon and the earth grow dark in daytime. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

<sup>10</sup>I will turn your festivals into funerals and change your glad songs into cries of grief. I will make you shave your heads and wear sackcloth, and you will be like parents mourning for their only child. That day will be bitter to the end.

<sup>11</sup>The time is coming when I will send famine on the land. People will be hungry, but not for bread; they will be thirsty, but not for water. They will hunger and thirst for a message from the LORD. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.



<sup>12</sup> People will wander from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean and then on around from the north to the east. They will look everywhere for a message from the LORD, but they will not find it.

<sup>13</sup> On that day even healthy young men and women will collapse from thirst.

<sup>14</sup> Those who swear by the idols of Samaria, who say, 'By the god of Dan or By the god of Beersheba' -- those people will fall and not rise again.

**9**<sup>1</sup> I saw the Lord standing by the altar. He gave the command: Strike the tops of the Temple columns so hard that the foundation will shake. Break them off and let them fall on the heads of the people. I will kill the rest of the people in war. No one will get away; not one will escape.

<sup>2</sup> Even if they dig their way down to the world of the dead, I will catch them. Even if they climb up to heaven, I will bring them down.

<sup>3</sup> If they hide on the top of Mount Carmel, I will search for them and catch them. If they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, I will command the sea monster to bite them.

<sup>4</sup>If they are taken away into captivity by their enemies, I will order them to be put to death. I am determined to destroy them, not to help them.

<sup>5</sup>The Sovereign LORD Almighty touches the earth, and it quakes; all who live there mourn. The whole world rises and falls like the Nile River.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD builds his home in the heavens, and over the earth he puts the dome of the sky. He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the earth. His name is the LORD!

<sup>7</sup>The LORD says, People of Israel, I think as much of the people of Ethiopia as I do of you. I brought the Philistines from Crete and the Syrians from Kir, just as I brought you from Egypt.

<sup>8</sup>I, the Sovereign LORD, am watching this sinful kingdom of Israel, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth. But I will not destroy all the descendants of Jacob.

<sup>9</sup>I will give the command and shake the people of Israel like grain in a sieve. I will shake them among the nations to remove all who are worthless.

<sup>10</sup>The sinners among my people will be killed in war -- all those who say, God will not let any harm come near us.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, A day is coming when I will restore the kingdom of David, which is like a house fallen into ruins. I will repair its walls and restore it. I will rebuild it and make it as it was long ago.

<sup>12</sup>And so the people of Israel will conquer what is left of the land of Edom and all the nations that were once mine, says the LORD, who will cause this to happen.

<sup>13</sup>The days are coming, says the LORD, when grain will grow faster than it can be harvested, and grapes will grow faster than the wine can be made. The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with it.

<sup>14</sup>I will bring my people back to their land. They will rebuild their ruined cities and live there; they will plant vineyards and drink the wine; they will plant gardens and eat what they grow.

<sup>15</sup>I will plant my people on the land I gave them, and they will not be pulled up again. The LORD your God has spoken.

# Obadiah

**1** <sup>1</sup>This is the prophecy of Obadiah -- what the Sovereign LORD said about the nation of Edom. The LORD has sent his messenger to the nations, and we have heard his message: Get ready! Let us go to war against Edom!

<sup>2</sup>The LORD says to Edom, I will make you weak; everyone will despise you.

<sup>3</sup>Your pride has deceived you. Your capital is a fortress of solid rock; your home is high in the mountains, and so you say to yourself, Who can ever pull me down?

<sup>4</sup>Even though you make your home as high as an eagle's nest, so that it seems to be among the stars, yet I will pull you down.

<sup>5</sup>When thieves come at night, they take only what they want. When people gather grapes, they always leave a few. But your enemies have wiped you out completely.

<sup>6</sup>Descendants of Esau, your treasures have been looted.

<sup>7</sup>Your allies have deceived you; they have driven you from your country. People who were at peace with you have now conquered you. Those friends who ate with you have laid a trap for you; they say of you, 'Where is all that cleverness he had?'

<sup>8</sup>On the day I punish Edom, I will destroy their clever men and wipe out all their wisdom.

<sup>9</sup>The fighting men of Teman will be terrified, and every soldier in Edom will be killed.

<sup>10</sup>Because you robbed and killed your relatives, the descendants of Jacob, you will be destroyed and dishonored forever.

<sup>11</sup>You stood aside on that day when enemies broke down their gates. You were as bad as those strangers who carried off Jerusalem's wealth and divided it among themselves.

<sup>12</sup>You should not have gloated over the misfortune of your relatives in Judah. You should not have been glad on the day of their ruin. You should not have laughed at them in their distress.

<sup>13</sup>You should not have entered the city of my people to gloat over their suffering

and to seize their riches on the day of their disaster.

<sup>14</sup>You should not have stood at the crossroads to catch those trying to escape. You should not have handed them over to the enemy on the day of their distress.

<sup>15</sup>The day is near when I, the LORD, will judge all nations. Edom, what you have done will be done to you. You will get back what you have given.

<sup>16</sup>My people have drunk a bitter cup of punishment on my sacred hill. But all the surrounding nations will drink a still more bitter cup of punishment; they will drink it all and vanish away.

<sup>17</sup>But on Mount Zion some will escape, and it will be a sacred place. The people of Jacob will possess the land that is theirs by right.

<sup>18</sup>The people of Jacob and of Joseph will be like fire; they will destroy the people of Esau as fire burns stubble. No descendant of Esau will survive. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>19</sup>People from southern Judah will occupy Edom; those from the western foothills will capture Philistia. Israelites

will possess the territory of Ephraim and Samaria; the people of Benjamin will take Gilead.

<sup>20</sup>The army of exiles from northern Israel will return and conquer Phoenicia as far north as Zarephath. The exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sardis will capture the towns of southern Judah.

<sup>21</sup>The victorious men of Jerusalem will attack Edom and rule over it. And the LORD himself will be king.

# Jonah

**1** <sup>1</sup> One day the LORD spoke to Jonah son of Amittai.

<sup>2</sup> He said, Go to Nineveh, that great city, and speak out against it; I am aware of how wicked its people are.

<sup>3</sup> Jonah, however, set out in the opposite direction in order to get away from the LORD. He went to Joppa, where he found a ship about to go to Spain. He paid his fare and went aboard with the crew to sail to Spain, where he would be away from the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD sent a strong wind on the sea, and the storm was so violent that the ship was in danger of breaking up.

<sup>5</sup> The sailors were terrified and cried out for help, each one to his own god. Then, in order to lessen the danger, they threw the cargo overboard. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone below and was lying in the ship's hold, sound asleep.

<sup>6</sup> The captain found him there and said to him, What are you doing asleep? Get



up and pray to your god for help. Maybe he will feel sorry for us and spare our lives.

<sup>7</sup>The sailors said to each other, Let's draw lots and find out who is to blame for getting us into this danger. They did so, and Jonah's name was drawn.

<sup>8</sup>So they said to him, Now, then, tell us! Who is to blame for this? What are you doing here? What country do you come from? What is your nationality?

<sup>9</sup>I am a Hebrew, Jonah answered. I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made land and sea.

<sup>10</sup>Jonah went on to tell them that he was running away from the LORD. The sailors were terrified, and said to him, That was an awful thing to do!

<sup>11</sup>The storm was getting worse all the time, so the sailors asked him, What should we do to you to stop the storm?

<sup>12</sup>Jonah answered, Throw me into the sea, and it will calm down. I know it is my fault that you are caught in this violent storm.

<sup>13</sup>Instead, the sailors tried to get the ship to shore, rowing with all their might.

But the storm was becoming worse and worse, and they got nowhere.

<sup>14</sup>So they cried out to the LORD, O LORD, we pray, don't punish us with death for taking this man's life! You, O LORD, are responsible for all this; it is your doing.

<sup>15</sup>Then they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and it calmed down at once.

<sup>16</sup>This made the sailors so afraid of the LORD that they offered a sacrifice and promised to serve him.

<sup>17</sup>At the LORD's command a large fish swallowed Jonah, and he was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

**2**<sup>1</sup>From deep inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God:

<sup>2</sup>In my distress, O LORD, I called to you, and you answered me. From deep in the world of the dead I cried for help, and you heard me.

<sup>3</sup>You threw me down into the depths, to the very bottom of the sea, where the waters were all around me, and all your mighty waves rolled over me.

<sup>4</sup>I thought I had been banished from your presence and would never see your holy Temple again.

<sup>5</sup>The water came over me and choked me; the sea covered me completely, and seaweed wrapped around my head.

<sup>6</sup>I went down to the very roots of the mountains, into the land whose gates lock shut forever. But you, O LORD my God, brought me back from the depths alive.

<sup>7</sup>When I felt my life slipping away, then, O LORD, I prayed to you, and in your holy Temple you heard me.

<sup>8</sup>Those who worship worthless idols have abandoned their loyalty to you.

<sup>9</sup>But I will sing praises to you; I will offer you a sacrifice and do what I have promised. Salvation comes from the LORD!

<sup>10</sup>Then the LORD ordered the fish to spit Jonah up on the beach, and it did.

**3**<sup>1</sup>Once again the LORD spoke to Jonah.

<sup>2</sup>He said, Go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to the people the message I have given you.

<sup>3</sup> So Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to walk through it.

<sup>4</sup> Jonah started through the city, and after walking a whole day, he proclaimed, In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!

<sup>5</sup> The people of Nineveh believed God's message. So they decided that everyone should fast, and all the people, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth to show that they had repented.

<sup>6</sup> When the king of Nineveh heard about it, he got up from his throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat down in ashes.

<sup>7</sup> He sent out a proclamation to the people of Nineveh: This is an order from the king and his officials: No one is to eat anything; all persons, cattle, and sheep are forbidden to eat or drink.

<sup>8</sup> All persons and animals must wear sackcloth. Everyone must pray earnestly to God and must give up their wicked behavior and their evil actions.

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps God will change his mind; perhaps he will stop being angry, and we will not die!

<sup>10</sup> God saw what they did; he saw that they had given up their wicked behavior. So he changed his mind and did not punish them as he had said he would.

**4** <sup>1</sup> Jonah was very unhappy about this and became angry.

<sup>2</sup> So he prayed, LORD, didn't I say before I left home that this is just what you would do? That's why I did my best to run away to Spain! I knew that you are a loving and merciful God, always patient, always kind, and always ready to change your mind and not punish.

<sup>3</sup> Now then, LORD, let me die. I am better off dead than alive.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD answered, What right do you have to be angry?

<sup>5</sup> Jonah went out east of the city and sat down. He made a shelter for himself and sat in its shade, waiting to see what would happen to Nineveh.

<sup>6</sup> Then the LORD God made a plant grow up over Jonah to give him some shade, so that he would be more comfortable. Jonah was extremely pleased with the plant.

<sup>7</sup> But at dawn the next day, at God's command, a worm attacked the plant, and it died.

<sup>8</sup> After the sun had risen, God sent a hot east wind, and Jonah was about to faint from the heat of the sun beating down on his head. So he wished he were dead. I am better off dead than alive, he said.

<sup>9</sup> But God said to him, What right do you have to be angry about the plant? Jonah replied, I have every right to be angry -- angry enough to die!

<sup>10</sup> The LORD said to him, This plant grew up in one night and disappeared the next; you didn't do anything for it and you didn't make it grow -- yet you feel sorry for it!

<sup>11</sup> How much more, then, should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120,000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals!

# Micah

**1** <sup>1</sup> During the time that Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, the LORD gave this message to Micah, who was from the town of Moresheth. The LORD revealed to Micah all these things about Samaria and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Hear this, all you nations; listen to this, all who live on earth! The Sovereign LORD will testify against you. Listen! He speaks from his heavenly temple.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD is coming from his holy place; he will come down and walk on the tops of the mountains.

<sup>4</sup> Then the mountains will melt under him like wax in a fire; they will pour down into the valleys like water pouring down a hill.

<sup>5</sup> All this will happen because the people of Israel have sinned and rebelled against God. Who is to blame for Israel's rebellion? Samaria, the capital city itself! Who is guilty of idolatry in Judah? Jerusalem itself!

<sup>6</sup>So the LORD says, I will make Samaria a pile of ruins in the open country, a place for planting grapevines. I will pour the rubble of the city down into the valley, and will lay bare the city's foundations.

<sup>7</sup>All its precious idols will be smashed to pieces, everything given to its temple prostitutes will be destroyed by fire, and all its images will become a desolate heap. Samaria acquired these things for its fertility rites, and now her enemies will carry them off for temple prostitutes elsewhere.

<sup>8</sup>Then Micah said, Because of this I will mourn and lament. To show my sorrow, I will walk around barefoot and naked. I will howl like a jackal and wail like an ostrich.

<sup>9</sup>Samaria's wounds cannot be healed, and Judah is about to suffer in the same way; destruction has reached the gates of Jerusalem itself, where my people live.

<sup>10</sup>Don't tell our enemies in Gath about our defeat; don't let them see you weeping. People of Beth Leaphrah, show your despair by rolling in the dust!



<sup>11</sup> You people of Shaphir, go into exile, naked and ashamed. Those who live in Zaanan do not dare to come out of their city. When you hear the people of Bethazel mourn, you will know that there is no refuge there.

<sup>12</sup> The people of Maroth anxiously wait for relief, because the LORD has brought disaster close to Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> You that live in Lachish, hitch the horses to the chariots. You imitated the sins of Israel and so caused Jerusalem to sin.

<sup>14</sup> And now, people of Judah, say good-bye to the town of Moresheth Gath. The kings of Israel will get no help from the town of Achzib.

<sup>15</sup> People of Mareshah, the LORD will hand you over to an enemy, who is going to capture your town. The leaders of Israel will go and hide in the cave at Adullam.

<sup>16</sup> People of Judah, cut off your hair in mourning for the children you love. Make yourselves as bald as vultures, because your children will be taken away from you into exile.

**2**<sup>1</sup> How terrible it will be for those who lie awake and plan evil! When morning comes, as soon as they have the chance, they do the evil they planned.

<sup>2</sup> When they want fields, they seize them; when they want houses, they take them. No one's family or property is safe.

<sup>3</sup> And so the LORD says, I am planning to bring disaster on you, and you will not be able to escape it. You are going to find yourselves in trouble, and then you will not walk so proudly any more.

<sup>4</sup> When that time comes, people will use the story about you as an example of disaster, and they will sing this song of despair about your experience: We are completely ruined! The LORD has taken our land away And given it to those who took us captive.

<sup>5</sup> So then, when the time comes for the land to be given back to the LORD's people, there will be no share for any of you.

<sup>6</sup> The people preach at me and say, Don't preach at us. Don't preach about all that. God is not going to disgrace us.

<sup>7</sup> Do you think the people of Israel are under a curse? Has the LORD lost his patience? Would he really do such things? Doesn't he speak kindly to those who do right?

<sup>8</sup> The LORD replies, You attack my people like enemies. Men return from battle, thinking they are safe at home, but there you are, waiting to steal the coats off their backs.

<sup>9</sup> You drive the women of my people out of the homes they love, and you have robbed their children of my blessings forever.

<sup>10</sup> Get up and go; there is no safety here any more. Your sins have doomed this place to destruction.

<sup>11</sup> These people want the kind of prophet who goes around full of lies and deceit and says, I prophesy that wine and liquor will flow for you.

<sup>12</sup> But I will gather you together, all you people of Israel that are left. I will bring you together like sheep returning to the fold. Like a pasture full of sheep, your land will once again be filled with many people.

<sup>13</sup> God will open the way for them and lead them out of exile. They will break out of the city gates and go free. Their king, the LORD himself, will lead them out.

**3**<sup>1</sup> Listen, you rulers of Israel! You are supposed to be concerned about justice,

<sup>2</sup> yet you hate what is good and you love what is evil. You skin my people alive and tear the flesh off their bones.

<sup>3</sup> You eat my people up. You strip off their skin, break their bones, and chop them up like meat for the pot.

<sup>4</sup> The time is coming when you will cry out to the LORD, but he will not answer you. He will not listen to your prayers, for you have done evil.

<sup>5</sup> My people are deceived by prophets who promise peace to those who pay them, but threaten war for those who don't. To these prophets the LORD says,

<sup>6</sup> Prophets, your day is almost over; the sun is going down on you. Because you mislead my people, you will have no more prophetic visions, and you will not be able to predict anything.

<sup>7</sup> Those who predict the future will be disgraced by their failure. They will all be humiliated because God does not answer them.

<sup>8</sup> But as for me, the LORD fills me with his spirit and power, and gives me a sense of justice and the courage to tell the people of Israel what their sins are.

<sup>9</sup> Listen to me, you rulers of Israel, you that hate justice and turn right into wrong.

<sup>10</sup> You are building God's city, Jerusalem, on a foundation of murder and injustice.

<sup>11</sup> The city's rulers govern for bribes, the priests interpret the Law for pay, the prophets give their revelations for money -- and they all claim that the LORD is with them. No harm will come to us, they say. The LORD is with us.

<sup>12</sup> And so, because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a pile of ruins, and the Temple hill will become a forest.

**4**<sup>1</sup> In days to come the mountain where the Temple stands will be the highest one of all, towering above all the hills. Many nations will come streaming to it,

<sup>2</sup>and their people will say, Let us go up the hill of the LORD, to the Temple of Israel's God. He will teach us what he wants us to do; we will walk in the paths he has chosen. For the LORD's teaching comes from Jerusalem; from Zion he speaks to his people.

<sup>3</sup>He will settle disputes among the nations, among the great powers near and far. They will hammer their swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives. Nations will never again go to war, never prepare for battle again.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone will live in peace among their own vineyards and fig trees, and no one will make them afraid. The LORD Almighty has promised this.

<sup>5</sup>Each nation worships and obeys its own god, but we will worship and obey the LORD our God forever and ever.

<sup>6</sup>The time is coming, says the LORD, when I will gather together the people I punished, those who have suffered in exile.

<sup>7</sup>They are crippled and far from home, but I will make a new beginning with those who are left, and they will become a great nation. I will rule over them

on Mount Zion from that time on and forever.

<sup>8</sup>And you, Jerusalem, where God, like a shepherd from his lookout tower, watches over his people, will once again be the capital of the kingdom that was yours.

<sup>9</sup>Why do you cry out so loudly? Why are you suffering like a woman in labor? Is it because you have no king, and your counselors are dead?

<sup>10</sup>Twist and groan, people of Jerusalem, like a woman giving birth, for now you will have to leave the city and live in the open country. You will have to go to Babylon, but there the LORD will save you from your enemies.

<sup>11</sup>Many nations have gathered to attack you. They say, Jerusalem must be destroyed! We will see this city in ruins!

<sup>12</sup>But these nations do not know what is in the LORD's mind. They do not realize that they have been gathered together to be punished in the same way that grain is brought in to be threshed.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD says, People of Jerusalem, go and punish your enemies! I will make you as strong as a bull with iron horns

and bronze hoofs. You will crush many nations, and the wealth they got by violence you will present to me, the Lord of the whole world.

**5**<sup>1</sup> People of Jerusalem, gather your forces! We are besieged! They are attacking the leader of Israel!

<sup>2</sup>The LORD says, Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times.

<sup>3</sup>So the LORD will abandon his people to their enemies until the woman who is to give birth has her son. Then those Israelites who are in exile will be reunited with their own people.

<sup>4</sup>When he comes, he will rule his people with the strength that comes from the LORD and with the majesty of the LORD God himself. His people will live in safety because people all over the earth will acknowledge his greatness,

<sup>5</sup>and he will bring peace. When the Assyrians invade our country and break through our defenses, we will send our strongest leaders to fight them.



<sup>6</sup>By force of arms they will conquer Assyria, the land of Nimrod, and they will save us from the Assyrians when they invade our territory.

<sup>7</sup>The people of Israel who survive will be like refreshing dew sent by the LORD for many nations, like showers on growing plants. They will depend on God, not people.

<sup>8</sup>Those who are left among the nations will be like a lion hunting for food in a forest or a pasture: it gets in among the sheep, pounces on them, and tears them to pieces -- and there is no hope of rescue.

<sup>9</sup>Israel will conquer her enemies and destroy them all.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says, At that time I will take away your horses and destroy your chariots.

<sup>11</sup>I will destroy the cities in your land and tear down all your defenses.

<sup>12</sup>I will destroy the magic charms you use and leave you without any fortunetellers.

<sup>13</sup>I will destroy your idols and sacred stone pillars; no longer will you worship

the things that you yourselves have made.

<sup>14</sup>I will pull down the images of the goddess Asherah in your land and destroy your cities.

<sup>15</sup>And in my great anger I will take revenge on all nations that have not obeyed me.

**6**<sup>1</sup> Listen to the LORD's case against Israel. Arise, O LORD, and present your case; let the mountains and the hills hear what you say.

<sup>2</sup>You mountains, you everlasting foundations of the earth, listen to the LORD's case! The LORD has a case against his people. He is going to bring an accusation against Israel.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD says, My people, what have I done to you? How have I been a burden to you? Answer me.

<sup>4</sup>I brought you out of Egypt; I rescued you from slavery; I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to lead you.

<sup>5</sup>My people, remember what King Balak of Moab planned to do to you and how Balaam son of Beor answered him. Remember the things that happened on the way from the camp at Acacia to

Gilgal. Remember these things and you will realize what I did in order to save you.

<sup>6</sup>What shall I bring to the LORD, the God of heaven, when I come to worship him? Shall I bring the best calves to burn as offerings to him?

<sup>7</sup>Will the LORD be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep or endless streams of olive oil? Shall I offer him my first-born child to pay for my sins?

<sup>8</sup>No, the LORD has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.

<sup>9</sup>It is wise to fear the LORD. He calls to the city, Listen, you people who assemble in the city!

<sup>10</sup>In the houses of evil people are treasures which they got dishonestly. They use false measures, a thing that I hate.

<sup>11</sup>How can I forgive those who use false scales and weights?

<sup>12</sup>Your rich people exploit the poor, and all of you are liars.

<sup>13</sup> So I have already begun your ruin and destruction because of your sins.

<sup>14</sup> You will eat, but not be satisfied -- in fact you will still be hungry. You will carry things off, but you will not be able to save them; anything you do save I will destroy in war.

<sup>15</sup> You will sow grain, but not harvest the crop. You will press oil from olives, but never get to use it. You will make wine, but never drink it.

<sup>16</sup> This will happen because you have followed the evil practices of King Omri and of his son, King Ahab. You have continued their policies, and so I will bring you to ruin, and everyone will despise you. People everywhere will treat you with contempt.

**7** <sup>1</sup> It's hopeless! I am like a hungry person who finds no fruit left on the trees and no grapes on the vines. All the grapes and all the tasty figs have been picked.

<sup>2</sup> There is not an honest person left in the land, no one loyal to God. Everyone is waiting for a chance to commit murder. Everyone hunts down their own people.

<sup>3</sup>They are all experts at doing evil. Officials and judges ask for bribes. The influential people tell them what they want, and so they scheme together.

<sup>4</sup>Even the best and most honest of them are as worthless as weeds. The day has come when God will punish the people, as he warned them through their watchmen, the prophets. Now they are in confusion.

<sup>5</sup>Don't believe your neighbor or trust your friend. Be careful what you say even to your husband or wife.

<sup>6</sup>In these times sons treat their fathers like fools, daughters oppose their mothers, and young women quarrel with their mothers-in-law; your enemies are the members of your own family.

<sup>7</sup>But I will watch for the LORD; I will wait confidently for God, who will save me. My God will hear me.

<sup>8</sup>Our enemies have no reason to gloat over us. We have fallen, but we will rise again. We are in darkness now, but the LORD will give us light.

<sup>9</sup>We have sinned against the LORD, so now we must endure his anger for a while. But in the end he will defend

us and right the wrongs that have been done to us. He will bring us out to the light; we will live to see him save us.

<sup>10</sup>Then our enemies will see this and be disgraced -- the same enemies who taunted us by asking, Where is the LORD your God? We will see them defeated, trampled down like mud in the streets.

<sup>11</sup>People of Jerusalem, the time to rebuild the city walls is coming. At that time your territory will be enlarged.

<sup>12</sup>Your people will return to you from everywhere -- from Assyria in the east, from Egypt in the south, from the region of the Euphrates River, from distant seas and far-off mountains.

<sup>13</sup>But the earth will become a desert because of the wickedness of those who live on it.

<sup>14</sup>Be a shepherd to your people, LORD, the people you have chosen. Although they live apart in the wilderness, there is fertile land around them. Let them go and feed in the rich pastures of Bashan and Gilead, as they did long ago.

<sup>15</sup>Work miracles for us, LORD, as you did in the days when you brought us out of Egypt.

<sup>16</sup>The nations will see this and be frustrated in spite of all their strength. In dismay they will close their mouths and cover their ears.

<sup>17</sup>They will crawl in the dust like snakes; they will come from their fortresses, trembling and afraid. They will turn in fear to the LORD our God.

<sup>18</sup>There is no other god like you, O LORD; you forgive the sins of your people who have survived. You do not stay angry forever, but you take pleasure in showing us your constant love.

<sup>19</sup>You will be merciful to us once again. You will trample our sins underfoot and send them to the bottom of the sea!

<sup>20</sup>You will show your faithfulness and constant love to your people, the descendants of Abraham and of Jacob, as you promised our ancestors long ago.

# Nahum

**1** <sup>1</sup>This is a message about Nineveh, the account of a vision seen by Nahum, who was from Elkosh.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD God tolerates no rivals; he punishes those who oppose him. In his anger he pays them back.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD does not easily become angry, but he is powerful and never lets the guilty go unpunished. Where the LORD walks, storms arise; the clouds are the dust raised by his feet!

<sup>4</sup>He commands the sea, and it dries up! He makes the rivers go dry. The fields of Bashan wither, Mount Carmel turns brown, and the flowers of Lebanon fade.

<sup>5</sup>Mountains quake in the presence of the LORD; hills melt before him. The earth shakes when the LORD appears; the world and all its people tremble.

<sup>6</sup>When he is angry, who can survive? Who can survive his terrible fury? He pours out his flaming anger; rocks crumble to dust before him.



<sup>7</sup>The LORD is good; he protects his people in times of trouble; he takes care of those who turn to him.

<sup>8</sup>Like a great rushing flood he completely destroys his enemies; he sends to their death those who oppose him.

<sup>9</sup>What are you plotting against the LORD? He will destroy you. No one opposes him more than once.

<sup>10</sup>Like tangled thorns and dry straw you drunkards will be burned up!

<sup>11</sup>From you, Nineveh, there came someone full of wicked schemes, who plotted against the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>This is what the LORD says to his people Israel: Even though the Assyrians are strong and numerous, they will be destroyed and disappear. My people, I made you suffer, but I will not do it again.

<sup>13</sup>I will now end Assyria's power over you and break the chains that bind you.

<sup>14</sup>This is what the LORD has decreed about the Assyrians: They will have no descendants to carry on their name. I will destroy the idols that are in the temples of their gods. I am preparing

a grave for the Assyrians -- they don't deserve to live!

<sup>15</sup>Look, a messenger is coming over the mountains with good news! He is on his way to announce the victory! People of Judah, celebrate your festivals and give God what you solemnly promised him. The wicked will never invade your land again. They have been totally destroyed!

**2**<sup>1</sup>Nineveh, you are under attack! The power that will shatter you has come. Prepare the defenses! Guard the road! Prepare for battle!

<sup>2</sup>(The LORD is about to restore the glory of Israel, as it was before her enemies plundered her.)

<sup>3</sup>The enemy soldiers carry red shields and wear uniforms of red. They are preparing to attack! Their chariots flash like fire! Their horses prance!

<sup>4</sup>Chariots dash wildly through the streets, rushing back and forth in the city squares. They flash like torches and dart about like lightning.

<sup>5</sup>The officers are summoned; they stumble as they press forward. The attackers rush to the wall and set up the shield for the battering ram.

<sup>6</sup>The gates by the river burst open; the palace is filled with terror.

<sup>7</sup>The queen is taken captive; her servants moan like doves and beat their breasts in sorrow.

<sup>8</sup>Like water from a broken dam the people rush from Nineveh! Stop! Stop! the cry rings out -- but no one turns back.

<sup>9</sup>Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! The city is full of treasure!

<sup>10</sup>Nineveh is destroyed, deserted, desolate! Hearts melt with fear; knees tremble, strength is gone; faces grow pale.

<sup>11</sup>Where now is the city that was like a den of lions, the place where young lions were fed, where the lion and the lioness would go and their cubs would be safe?

<sup>12</sup>The lion killed his prey and tore it to pieces for his mate and her cubs; he filled his den with torn flesh.

<sup>13</sup>I am your enemy! says the LORD Almighty. I will burn up your chariots. Your soldiers will be killed in war, and I will take away everything that you took from others. The demands of your envoys will no longer be heard.

**3**<sup>1</sup> Doomed is the lying, murderous city, full of wealth to be looted and plundered!

<sup>2</sup> Listen! The crack of the whip, the rattle of wheels, the gallop of horses, the jolting of chariots!

<sup>3</sup> Cavalry troops charge, swords flash, spears gleam! Corpses are piled high, dead bodies without number -- men stumble over them!

<sup>4</sup> Nineveh the whore is being punished. Attractive and full of deadly charms, she enchanted nations and enslaved them.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD Almighty says, I will punish you, Nineveh! I will strip you naked and let the nations see you, see you in all your shame.

<sup>6</sup> I will treat you with contempt and cover you with filth. People will stare at you in horror.

<sup>7</sup> All who see you will shrink back. They will say, Nineveh lies in ruins! Who has any sympathy for her? Who will want to comfort her?

<sup>8</sup> Nineveh, are you any better than Thebes, the capital of Egypt? She too had a river to protect her like a wall -- the Nile was her defense.

<sup>9</sup>She ruled Ethiopia and Egypt, there was no limit to her power; Libya was her ally.

<sup>10</sup>Yet the people of Thebes were carried off into exile. At every street corner their children were beaten to death. Their leading men were carried off in chains and divided among their captors.

<sup>11</sup>Nineveh, you too will fall into a drunken stupor! You too will try to escape from your enemies.

<sup>12</sup>All your fortresses will be like fig trees with ripe figs: shake the trees, and the fruit falls right into your mouth!

<sup>13</sup>Your soldiers are helpless, and your country stands defenseless before your enemies. Fire will destroy the bars across your gates.

<sup>14</sup>Draw water to prepare for a siege, and strengthen your fortresses! Trample the clay to make bricks, and get the brick molds ready!

<sup>15</sup>No matter what you do, you will still be burned to death or killed in battle. You will be wiped out like crops eaten up by locusts. You multiplied like locusts!

<sup>16</sup>You produced more merchants than there are stars in the sky! But now they

are gone, like locusts that spread their wings and fly away.

<sup>17</sup>Your officials are like a swarm of locusts that stay in the walls on a cold day. But when the sun comes out, they fly away, and no one knows where they have gone!

<sup>18</sup>Emperor of Assyria, your governors are dead, and your noblemen are asleep forever! Your people are scattered on the mountains, and there is no one to bring them home again.

<sup>19</sup>There is no remedy for your injuries, and your wounds cannot be healed. All those who hear the news of your destruction clap their hands for joy. Did anyone escape your endless cruelty?

# Habakkuk

**1** <sup>1</sup> This is the message that the LORD revealed to the prophet Habakkuk.

<sup>2</sup> O LORD, how long must I call for help before you listen, before you save us from violence?

<sup>3</sup> Why do you make me see such trouble? How can you stand to look on such wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are all around me, and there is fighting and quarreling everywhere.

<sup>4</sup> The law is weak and useless, and justice is never done. Evil people get the better of the righteous, and so justice is perverted.

<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD said to his people, Keep watching the nations around you, and you will be astonished at what you see. I am going to do something that you will not believe when you hear about it.

<sup>6</sup> I am bringing the Babylonians to power, those fierce, restless people. They are marching out across the world to conquer other lands.

<sup>7</sup>They spread fear and terror, and in their pride they are a law to themselves.

<sup>8</sup>Their horses are faster than leopards, fiercer than hungry wolves. Their cavalry troops come riding from distant lands; their horses paw the ground. They come swooping down like eagles attacking their prey.

<sup>9</sup>Their armies advance in violent conquest, and everyone is terrified as they approach. Their captives are as numerous as grains of sand.

<sup>10</sup>They treat kings with contempt and laugh at high officials. No fortress can stop them -- they pile up earth against it and capture it.

<sup>11</sup>Then they sweep on like the wind and are gone, these men whose power is their god.

<sup>12</sup>LORD, from the very beginning you are God. You are my God, holy and eternal. LORD, my God and protector, you have chosen the Babylonians and made them strong so that they can punish us.

<sup>13</sup>But how can you stand these treacherous, evil men? Your eyes are too holy to look at evil, and you cannot stand



the sight of people doing wrong. So why are you silent while they destroy people who are more righteous than they are?

<sup>14</sup>How can you treat people like fish or like a swarm of insects that have no ruler to direct them?

<sup>15</sup>The Babylonians catch people with hooks, as though they were fish. They drag them off in nets and shout for joy over their catch!

<sup>16</sup>They even worship their nets and offer sacrifices to them, because their nets provide them with the best of everything.

<sup>17</sup>Are they going to use their swords forever and keep on destroying nations without mercy?

**2**<sup>1</sup> I will climb my watchtower and wait to see what the LORD will tell me to say and what answer he will give to my complaint.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD gave me this answer: Write down clearly on tablets what I reveal to you, so that it can be read at a glance.

<sup>3</sup>Put it in writing, because it is not yet time for it to come true. But the time is coming quickly, and what I show you will come true. It may seem slow in coming,

but wait for it; it will certainly take place, and it will not be delayed.

<sup>4</sup>And this is the message: Those who are evil will not survive, but those who are righteous will live because they are faithful to God.

<sup>5</sup>Wealth is deceitful. Greedy people are proud and restless -- like death itself they are never satisfied. That is why they conquer nation after nation for themselves.

<sup>6</sup>The conquered people will taunt their conquerors and show their scorn for them. They will say, You take what isn't yours, but you are doomed! How long will you go on getting rich by forcing your debtors to pay up?

<sup>7</sup>But before you know it, you that have conquered others will be in debt yourselves and be forced to pay interest. Enemies will come and make you tremble. They will plunder you!

<sup>8</sup>You have plundered the people of many nations, but now those who have survived will plunder you because of the murders you have committed and because of your violence against the people of the world and its cities.

<sup>9</sup>You are doomed! You have made your family rich with what you took by violence, and have tried to make your own home safe from harm and danger!

<sup>10</sup>But your schemes have brought shame on your family; by destroying many nations you have only brought ruin on yourself.

<sup>11</sup>Even the stones of the walls cry out against you, and the rafters echo the cry.

<sup>12</sup>You are doomed! You founded a city on crime and built it up by murder.

<sup>13</sup>The nations you conquered wore themselves out in useless labor, and all they have built goes up in flames. The LORD Almighty has done this.

<sup>14</sup>But the earth will be as full of the knowledge of the LORD's glory as the seas are full of water.

<sup>15</sup>You are doomed! In your fury you humiliated and disgraced your neighbors; you made them stagger as though they were drunk.

<sup>16</sup>You in turn will be covered with shame instead of honor. You yourself will drink and stagger. The LORD will make you drink your own cup of punishment,

and your honor will be turned to disgrace.

<sup>17</sup>You have cut down the forests of Lebanon; now you will be cut down. You killed its animals; now animals will terrify you. This will happen because of the murders you have committed and because of your violence against the people of the world and its cities.

<sup>18</sup>What's the use of an idol? It is only something that a human being has made, and it tells you nothing but lies. What good does it do for its maker to trust it -- a god that can't even talk!

<sup>19</sup>You are doomed! You say to a piece of wood, Wake up! or to a block of stone, Get up! Can an idol reveal anything to you? It may be covered with silver and gold, but there is no life in it.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD is in his holy Temple; let everyone on earth be silent in his presence.

**3**<sup>1</sup>This is a prayer of the prophet Habakkuk:

<sup>2</sup>O LORD, I have heard of what you have done, and I am filled with awe. Now do again in our times the great deeds

you used to do. Be merciful, even when you are angry.

<sup>3</sup>God is coming again from Edom; the holy God is coming from the hills of Paran. His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise.

<sup>4</sup>He comes with the brightness of lightning; light flashes from his hand, there where his power is hidden.

<sup>5</sup>He sends disease before him and commands death to follow him.

<sup>6</sup>When he stops, the earth shakes; at his glance the nations tremble. The eternal mountains are shattered; the everlasting hills sink down, the hills where he walked in ancient times.

<sup>7</sup>I saw the people of Cushan afraid and the people of Midian tremble.

<sup>8</sup>Was it the rivers that made you angry, LORD? Was it the sea that made you furious? You rode upon the clouds; the storm cloud was your chariot, as you brought victory to your people.

<sup>9</sup>You got ready to use your bow, ready to shoot your arrows. Your lightning split open the earth.

<sup>10</sup>When the mountains saw you, they trembled; water poured down from

the skies. The waters under the earth roared, and their waves rose high.

<sup>11</sup>At the flash of your speeding arrows and the gleam of your shining spear, the sun and the moon stood still.

<sup>12</sup>You marched across the earth in anger; in fury you trampled the nations.

<sup>13</sup>You went out to save your people, to save your chosen king. You struck down the leader of the wicked and completely destroyed his followers.

<sup>14</sup>Your arrows pierced the commander of his army when it came like a storm to scatter us, gloating like those who secretly oppress the poor.

<sup>15</sup>You trampled the sea with your horses, and the mighty waters foamed.

<sup>16</sup>I hear all this, and I tremble; my lips quiver with fear. My body goes limp, and my feet stumble beneath me. I will quietly wait for the time to come when God will punish those who attack us.

<sup>17</sup>Even though the fig trees have no fruit and no grapes grow on the vines, even though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no grain, even though the sheep all die and the cattle stalls are empty,

<sup>18</sup>I will still be joyful and glad, because the LORD God is my savior.

<sup>19</sup>The Sovereign LORD gives me strength. He makes me sure-footed as a deer and keeps me safe on the mountains.

# Zephaniah

**1** <sup>1</sup>This is the message that the LORD gave to Zephaniah during the time that Josiah son of Amon was king of Judah. (Zephaniah was descended from King Hezekiah through Amariah, Gedaliah, and Cushi.)

<sup>2</sup>The LORD said, I am going to destroy everything on earth,

<sup>3</sup>all human beings and animals, birds and fish. I will bring about the downfall of the wicked. I will destroy everyone, and no survivors will be left. I, the LORD, have spoken.

<sup>4</sup>I will punish the people of Jerusalem and of all Judah. I will destroy the last trace of the worship of Baal there, and no one will even remember the pagan priests who serve him.

<sup>5</sup>I will destroy anyone who goes up on the roof and worships the sun, the moon, and the stars. I will also destroy those who worship me and swear loyalty to me, but then take oaths in the name of the god Molech.



<sup>6</sup>I will destroy those who have turned back and no longer follow me, those who do not come to me or ask me to guide them.

<sup>7</sup>The day is near when the LORD will sit in judgment; so be silent in his presence. The LORD is preparing to sacrifice his people and has invited enemies to plunder Judah.

<sup>8</sup>On that day of slaughter, says the LORD, I will punish the officials, the king's sons, and all who practice foreign customs.

<sup>9</sup>I will punish all who worship like pagans and who steal and kill in order to fill their master's house with loot.

<sup>10</sup>On that day, says the LORD, you will hear the sound of crying at the Fish Gate in Jerusalem. You will hear wailing in the newer part of the city and a great crashing sound in the hills.

<sup>11</sup>Wail and cry when you hear this, you that live in the lower part of the city, because all the merchants will be dead!

<sup>12</sup>At that time I will take a lamp and search Jerusalem. I will punish the people who are self-satisfied and confident, who say to themselves, The

LORD never does anything, one way or the other.

<sup>13</sup>Their wealth will be looted and their houses destroyed. They will never live in the houses they are building or drink wine from the vineyards they are planting.

<sup>14</sup>The great day of the LORD is near -- very near and coming fast! That day will be bitter, for even the bravest soldiers will cry out in despair!

<sup>15</sup>It will be a day of fury, a day of trouble and distress, a day of ruin and destruction, a day of darkness and gloom, a black and cloudy day,

<sup>16</sup>a day filled with the sound of war trumpets and the battle cry of soldiers attacking fortified cities and high towers.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD says, I will bring such disasters on the human race that everyone will grope about like someone blind. They have sinned against me, and now their blood will be poured out like water, and their dead bodies will lie rotting on the ground.

<sup>18</sup>On the day when the LORD shows his fury, not even all their silver and gold will save them. The whole earth will be

destroyed by the fire of his anger. He will put an end -- a sudden end -- to everyone who lives on earth.

**2**<sup>1</sup> Shameless nation, come to your senses

<sup>2</sup> before you are driven away like chaff blown by the wind, before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day when he shows his fury.

<sup>3</sup> Turn to the LORD, all you humble people of the land, who obey his commands. Do what is right, and humble yourselves before the LORD. Perhaps you will escape punishment on the day when the LORD shows his anger.

<sup>4</sup> No one will be left in the city of Gaza. Ashkelon will be deserted. The people of Ashdod will be driven out in half a day, and the people of Ekron will be driven from their city.

<sup>5</sup> You Philistines are doomed, you people who live along the coast. The LORD has passed sentence on you. He will destroy you, and not one of you will be left.

<sup>6</sup> Your land by the sea will become open fields with shepherd's huts and sheep pens.

<sup>7</sup>The people of Judah who survive will occupy your land. They will pasture their flocks there and sleep in the houses of Ashkelon. The LORD their God will be with them and make them prosper again.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD Almighty says, I have heard the people of Moab and Ammon insulting and taunting my people, and boasting that they would seize their land.

<sup>9</sup>As surely as I am the living LORD, the God of Israel, I swear that Moab and Ammon are going to be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. They will become a place of salt pits and everlasting ruin, overgrown with weeds. Those of my people who survive will plunder them and take their land.

<sup>10</sup>That is how the people of Moab and Ammon will be punished for their pride and arrogance and for insulting the people of the LORD Almighty.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD will terrify them. He will reduce the gods of the earth to nothing, and then every nation will worship him, each in its own land.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD will also put the people of Ethiopia to death.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD will use his power to destroy Assyria. He will make the city of Nineveh a deserted ruin, a waterless desert.

<sup>14</sup>It will be a place where flocks, herds, and animals of every kind will lie down. Owls will live among its ruins and hoot from the windows. Crows will caw on the doorsteps. The cedar wood of her buildings will be stripped away.

<sup>15</sup>That is what will happen to the city that is so proud of its own power and thinks it is safe. Its people think that their city is the greatest in the world. What a desolate place it will become, a place where wild animals will rest! Everyone who passes by will shrink back in horror.

**3**<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem is doomed, that corrupt, rebellious city that oppresses its own people.

<sup>2</sup>It has not listened to the LORD or accepted his discipline. It has not put its trust in the LORD or asked for his help.

<sup>3</sup>Its officials are like roaring lions; its judges are like hungry wolves, too greedy to leave a bone until morning.

<sup>4</sup>The prophets are irresponsible and treacherous; the priests defile what is sacred, and twist the law of God to their own advantage.

<sup>5</sup>But the LORD is still in the city; he does what is right and never what is wrong. Every morning without fail, he brings justice to his people. And yet the unrighteous people there keep on doing wrong and are not ashamed.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD says, I have wiped out whole nations; I have destroyed their cities and left their walls and towers in ruins. The cities are deserted; the streets are empty -- no one is left.

<sup>7</sup>I thought that then my people would have reverence for me and accept my discipline, that they would never forget the lesson I taught them. But soon they were behaving as badly as ever.

<sup>8</sup>Just wait, the LORD says. Wait for the day when I rise to accuse the nations. I have made up my mind to gather nations and kingdoms in order to let them feel the force of my anger. The whole earth will be destroyed by the fire of my fury.

<sup>9</sup>Then I will change the people of the nations, and they will pray to me alone

and not to other gods. They will all obey me.

<sup>10</sup>Even from distant Ethiopia my scattered people will bring offerings to me.

<sup>11</sup>At that time you, my people, will no longer need to be ashamed that you rebelled against me. I will remove everyone who is proud and arrogant, and you will never again rebel against me on my sacred hill.

<sup>12</sup>I will leave there a humble and lowly people, who will come to me for help.

<sup>13</sup>The people of Israel who survive will do no wrong to anyone, tell no lies, nor try to deceive. They will be prosperous and secure, afraid of no one.

<sup>14</sup>Sing and shout for joy, people of Israel! Rejoice with all your heart, Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup>The LORD has stopped your punishment; he has removed all your enemies. The LORD, the king of Israel, is with you; there is no reason now to be afraid.

<sup>16</sup>The time is coming when they will say to Jerusalem, Do not be afraid, city of Zion! Do not let your hands hang limp!

<sup>17</sup>The LORD your God is with you; his power gives you victory. The LORD will take delight in you, and in his love he will give you new life. He will sing and be joyful over you,

<sup>18</sup>as joyful as people at a festival. The LORD says, I have ended the threat of doom and taken away your disgrace.

<sup>19</sup>The time is coming! I will punish your oppressors; I will rescue all the lame and bring the exiles home. I will turn their shame to honor, and all the world will praise them.

<sup>20</sup>The time is coming! I will bring your scattered people home; I will make you famous throughout the world and make you prosperous once again. The LORD has spoken.



# Haggai

**1** <sup>1</sup> During the second year that Darius was emperor of Persia, on the first day of the sixth month, the LORD spoke through the prophet Haggai. The message was for the governor of Judah, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and for the High Priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD Almighty said to Haggai, These people say that this is not the right time to rebuild the Temple.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD then gave this message to the people through the prophet Haggai:

<sup>4</sup> My people, why should you be living in well-built houses while my Temple lies in ruins?

<sup>5</sup> Don't you see what is happening to you?

<sup>6</sup> You have planted much grain, but have harvested very little. You have food to eat, but not enough to make you full. You have wine to drink, but not enough to get drunk on! You have clothing, but not enough to keep you warm. And workers cannot earn enough to live on.

<sup>7</sup> Can't you see why this has happened?

<sup>8</sup> Now go up into the hills, get lumber, and rebuild the Temple; then I will be pleased and will be worshiped as I should be.

<sup>9</sup> You hoped for large harvests, but they turned out to be small. And when you brought the harvest home, I blew it away. Why did I do that? Because my Temple lies in ruins while every one of you is busy working on your own house.

<sup>10</sup> That is why there is no rain and nothing can grow.

<sup>11</sup> I have brought drought on the land -- on its hills, grainfields, vineyards, and olive orchards -- on every crop the ground produces, on people and animals, on everything you try to grow.

<sup>12</sup> Then Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the people who had returned from the exile in Babylonia, did what the LORD their God told them to do. They were afraid and obeyed the prophet Haggai, the LORD's messenger.

<sup>13</sup> Then Haggai gave the LORD's message to the people: I will be with you -- that is my promise.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD inspired everyone to work on the Temple: Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah; Joshua, the High Priest, and all the people who had returned from the exile. They began working on the Temple of the LORD Almighty, their God,

<sup>15</sup>on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was emperor.

**2**<sup>1</sup>On the twenty-first day of the seventh month of that same year, the LORD spoke again through the prophet Haggai.

<sup>2</sup>He told Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, to Joshua, the High Priest, and to the people, and to say to them,

<sup>3</sup>Is there anyone among you who can still remember how splendid the Temple used to be? How does it look to you now? It must seem like nothing at all.

<sup>4</sup>But now don't be discouraged, any of you. Do the work, for I am with you.

<sup>5</sup>When you came out of Egypt, I promised that I would always be with you. I am still with you, so do not be afraid.

<sup>6</sup>Before long I will shake heaven and earth, land and sea.

<sup>7</sup>I will overthrow all the nations, and their treasures will be brought here, and the Temple will be filled with wealth.

<sup>8</sup>All the silver and gold of the world is mine.

<sup>9</sup>The new Temple will be more splendid than the old one, and there I will give my people prosperity and peace. The LORD Almighty has spoken.

<sup>10</sup>On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of the second year that Darius was emperor, the LORD Almighty spoke again to the prophet Haggai.

<sup>11</sup>He said, Ask the priests for a ruling on this question:

<sup>12</sup>Suppose someone takes a piece of consecrated meat from a sacrifice and carries it in a fold of his robe. If he then lets his robe touch any bread, cooked food, wine, olive oil, or any kind of food at all, will it make that food consecrated also? When the question was asked, the priests answered, No.

<sup>13</sup>Then Haggai asked, Suppose someone is defiled because he has touched a dead body. If he then touches

any of these foods, will that make them defiled too? The priests answered, Yes.

<sup>14</sup>Then Haggai said, The LORD says that the same thing applies to the people of this nation and to everything they produce; and so everything they offer on the altar is defiled.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD says, Can't you see what has happened to you? Before you started to rebuild the Temple,

<sup>16</sup>you would go to a pile of grain expecting to find twenty bushels, but there would be only ten. You would go to draw fifty gallons of wine from a vat, but find only twenty.

<sup>17</sup>I sent scorching winds and hail to ruin everything you tried to grow, but still you did not repent.

<sup>18</sup>Today is the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, the day that the foundation of the Temple has been completed. See what is going to happen from now on.

<sup>19</sup>Although there is no grain left, and the grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, and olive trees have not yet produced, yet from now on I will bless you.

<sup>20</sup>On that same day, the twenty-fourth of the month, the LORD gave Haggai a second message

<sup>21</sup>for Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah: I am about to shake heaven and earth

<sup>22</sup>and overthrow kingdoms and end their power. I will overturn chariots and their drivers; the horses will die, and their riders will kill one another.

<sup>23</sup>On that day I will take you, Zerubbabel my servant, and I will appoint you to rule in my name. You are the one I have chosen. The LORD Almighty has spoken.

# Zechariah

**1** <sup>1</sup>In the eighth month of the second year that Darius was emperor of Persia, the LORD gave this message to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah and grandson of Iddo.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD Almighty told Zechariah to say to the people, I, the LORD, was very angry with your ancestors,

<sup>3</sup>but now I say to you, Return to me, and I will return to you.

<sup>4</sup>Do not be like your ancestors. Long ago the prophets gave them my message, telling them not to live evil, sinful lives any longer. But they would not listen to me or obey me.

<sup>5</sup>Your ancestors and those prophets are no longer alive.

<sup>6</sup>Through my servants the prophets I gave your ancestors commands and warnings, but they disregarded them and suffered the consequences. Then they repented and acknowledged that I, the LORD Almighty, had punished

them as they deserved and as I had determined to do.

<sup>7</sup>In the second year that Darius was emperor, on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (the month of Shebat), the LORD gave me a message in a vision at night.

<sup>8</sup>I saw someone riding a red horse. He had stopped among some myrtle trees in a valley, and behind him were other horses -- red, dappled, and white.

<sup>9</sup>I asked him, Sir, what do these horses mean? He answered, I will show you what they mean.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD sent them to go and inspect the earth.

<sup>11</sup>They reported to the angel: We have been all over the world and have found that the whole world lies helpless and subdued.

<sup>12</sup>Then the angel said, Almighty LORD, you have been angry with Jerusalem and the cities of Judah for seventy years now. How much longer will it be before you show them mercy?

<sup>13</sup>The LORD answered the angel with comforting words,



<sup>14</sup> and the angel told me to proclaim what the LORD Almighty had said: I have a deep love and concern for Jerusalem, my holy city,

<sup>15</sup> and I am very angry with the nations that enjoy quiet and peace. For while I was holding back my anger against my people, those nations made the sufferings of my people worse.

<sup>16</sup> So I have come back to Jerusalem to show mercy to the city. My Temple will be restored, and the city will be rebuilt.

<sup>17</sup> The angel also told me to proclaim: The LORD Almighty says that his cities will be prosperous again and that he will once again help Jerusalem and claim the city as his own.

<sup>18</sup> In another vision I saw four ox horns.

<sup>19</sup> I asked the angel that had been speaking to me, What do these horns mean? He answered, They stand for the world powers that have scattered the people of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

<sup>20</sup> Then the LORD showed me four workers with hammers.

<sup>21</sup> I asked, What have they come to do? He answered, They have come to terrify and overthrow the nations that

completely crushed the land of Judah and scattered its people.

**2**<sup>1</sup> In another vision I saw a man with a measuring line in his hand.

<sup>2</sup> Where are you going? I asked. To measure Jerusalem, he answered, to see how long and how wide it is.

<sup>3</sup> Then I saw the angel who had been speaking to me step forward, and another angel came to meet him.

<sup>4</sup> The first one said to the other, Run and tell that young man with the measuring line that there are going to be so many people and so much livestock in Jerusalem that it will be too big to have walls.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD has promised that he himself will be a wall of fire around the city to protect it and that he will live there in all his glory.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD said to his people, I scattered you in all directions. But now, you exiles, escape from Babylonia and return to Jerusalem.

<sup>7</sup> (2: 6)

<sup>8</sup> Anyone who strikes you strikes what is most precious to me. So the LORD Almighty sent me with this message

for the nations that had plundered his people:

<sup>9</sup>The LORD himself will fight against you, and you will be plundered by the people who were once your servants. When this happens, everyone will know that the LORD Almighty sent me.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD said, Sing for joy, people of Jerusalem! I am coming to live among you!

<sup>11</sup>At that time many nations will come to the LORD and become his people. He will live among you, and you will know that he has sent me to you.

<sup>12</sup>Once again Judah will be the special possession of the LORD in his sacred land, and Jerusalem will be the city he loves most of all.

<sup>13</sup>Be silent, everyone, in the presence of the LORD, for he is coming from his holy dwelling place.

**3**<sup>1</sup>In another vision the LORD showed me the High Priest Joshua standing before the angel of the LORD. And there beside Joshua stood Satan, ready to bring an accusation against him.

<sup>2</sup>The angel of the LORD said to Satan, May the LORD condemn you, Satan!

May the LORD, who loves Jerusalem, condemn you. This man is like a stick snatched from the fire.

<sup>3</sup>Joshua was standing there, wearing filthy clothes.

<sup>4</sup>The angel said to his heavenly attendants, Take away the filthy clothes this man is wearing. Then he said to Joshua, I have taken away your sin and will give you new clothes to wear.

<sup>5</sup>He commanded the attendants to put a clean turban on Joshua's head. They did so, and then they put the new clothes on him while the angel of the LORD stood there.

<sup>6</sup>Then the angel told Joshua that

<sup>7</sup>the LORD Almighty had said: If you obey my laws and perform the duties I have assigned you, then you will continue to be in charge of my Temple and its courts, and I will hear your prayers, just as I hear the prayers of the angels who are in my presence.

<sup>8</sup>Listen then, Joshua, you who are the High Priest; and listen, you fellow priests of his, you that are the sign of a good future: I will reveal my servant, who is called The Branch!

<sup>9</sup>I am placing in front of Joshua a single stone with seven facets. I will engrave an inscription on it, and in a single day I will take away the sin of this land.

<sup>10</sup>When that day comes, each of you will invite your neighbor to come and enjoy peace and security, surrounded by your vineyards and fig trees.

**4**<sup>1</sup>The angel who had been speaking to me came again and roused me as if I had been sleeping.

<sup>2</sup>What do you see? he asked. A lampstand made of gold, I answered. At the top is a bowl for the oil. On the lampstand are seven lamps, each one with places for seven wicks.

<sup>3</sup>There are two olive trees beside the lampstand, one on each side of it.

<sup>4</sup>Then I asked the angel, What do these things stand for, sir?

<sup>5</sup>Don't you know? he asked me. No, I don't, sir, I replied.

<sup>6</sup>The angel told me to give Zerubbabel this message from the LORD: You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my spirit.

<sup>7</sup>Obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you. You will rebuild

the Temple, and as you put the last stone in place, the people will shout, Beautiful, beautiful!

<sup>8</sup>Another message came to me from the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>He said, Zerubbabel has laid the foundation of the Temple, and he will finish the building. When this happens, my people will know that it is I who sent you to them.

<sup>10</sup>(4:10b) The angel said to me, The seven lamps are the seven eyes of the LORD, which see all over the earth.

(4:10a) They are disappointed because so little progress is being made. But they will see Zerubbabel continuing to build the Temple, and they will be glad.

<sup>11</sup>Then I asked him, What do the two olive trees on either side of the lampstand mean?

<sup>12</sup>And what is the meaning of the two olive branches beside the two gold pipes from which the olive oil pours?

<sup>13</sup>He asked me, Don't you know? No, I don't, sir, I answered.

<sup>14</sup>Then he said, These are the two men whom God has chosen and anointed to serve him, the Lord of the whole earth.

**5**<sup>1</sup> I looked again, and this time I saw a scroll flying through the air.

<sup>2</sup>The angel asked me what I saw. I answered, A scroll flying through the air; it is thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide.

<sup>3</sup>Then he said to me, On it is written the curse that is to go out over the whole land. On one side of the scroll it says that every thief will be removed from the land; and on the other side it says that everyone who tells lies under oath will also be taken away.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD Almighty says that he will send this curse out, and it will enter the house of every thief and the house of everyone who tells lies under oath. It will remain in their houses and leave them in ruins.

<sup>5</sup>The angel appeared again and said, Look! Something else is coming!

<sup>6</sup>What is it? I asked. He replied, It is a basket, and it stands for the sin of the whole land.

<sup>7</sup>The basket had a lid made of lead. As I watched, the lid was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman!

<sup>8</sup>The angel said, This represents wickedness. Then he pushed her down

into the basket and put the lid back down.

<sup>9</sup>I looked up and saw two women flying toward me with powerful wings like those of a stork. They picked up the basket and flew off with it.

<sup>10</sup>I asked the angel, Where are they taking it?

<sup>11</sup>He answered, To Babylonia, where they will build a temple for it. When the temple is finished, the basket will be placed there to be worshiped.

**6**<sup>1</sup>I had another vision. This time I saw four chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains.

<sup>2</sup>The first chariot was pulled by red horses, the second by black horses,

<sup>3</sup>the third by white horses, and the fourth by dappled horses.

<sup>4</sup>Then I asked the angel, Sir, what do these chariots mean?

<sup>5</sup>He answered, These are the four winds; they have just come from the presence of the Lord of all the earth.

<sup>6</sup>The chariot pulled by the black horses was going north to Babylonia, the white horses were going to the west, and



the dappled horses were going to the country in the south.

<sup>7</sup>As the dappled horses came out, they were impatient to go and inspect the earth. The angel said, Go and inspect the earth! -- and they did.

<sup>8</sup>Then the angel cried out to me, The horses that went north to Babylonia have quieted the LORD's anger.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD gave me this message.

<sup>10</sup>He said, Take the gifts given by the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, and go at once to the home of Josiah son of Zephaniah. All of them have returned from exile in Babylonia.

<sup>11</sup>Make a crown out of the silver and gold they have given, and put it on the head of the High Priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak.

<sup>12</sup>Tell him that the LORD Almighty says, The man who is called The Branch will flourish where he is and rebuild the LORD's Temple.

<sup>13</sup>He is the one who will build it and receive the honor due a king, and he will rule his people. A priest will stand by his throne, and they will work together in peace and harmony.

<sup>14</sup>The crown will be a memorial in the LORD's Temple in honor of Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Josiah.

<sup>15</sup>Men who live far away will come and help to rebuild the Temple of the LORD. And when it is rebuilt, you will know that the LORD Almighty sent me to you. This will all happen if you fully obey the commands of the LORD your God.

**7**<sup>1</sup>In the fourth year that Darius was emperor, on the fourth day of the ninth month (the month of Kislev), the LORD gave me a message.

<sup>2</sup>The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech and their men to the Temple of the LORD Almighty to pray for the LORD's blessing

<sup>3</sup>and to ask the priests and the prophets this question: Should we continue to mourn because of the destruction of the Temple, by fasting in the fifth month as we have done for so many years now?

<sup>4</sup>This is the message of the LORD that came to me.

<sup>5</sup>He said, Tell the people of the land and the priests that when they fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh

months during these seventy years, it was not in honor of me.

<sup>6</sup>And when they ate and drank, it was for their own satisfaction.

<sup>7</sup>This is what the LORD said through the earlier prophets at the time when Jerusalem was prosperous and filled with people and when there were many people living not only in the towns around the city but also in the southern region and in the western foothills.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD gave this message to Zechariah:

<sup>9</sup>Long ago I gave these commands to my people: You must see that justice is done, and must show kindness and mercy to one another.

<sup>10</sup>Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners who live among you, or anyone else in need. And do not plan ways of harming one another.

<sup>11</sup>But my people stubbornly refused to listen. They closed their minds

<sup>12</sup>and made their hearts as hard as rock. Because they would not listen to the teaching which I sent through the prophets who lived long ago, I became very angry.

<sup>13</sup> Because they did not listen when I spoke, I did not answer when they prayed.

<sup>14</sup> Like a storm I swept them away to live in foreign countries. This good land was left a desolate place, with no one living in it.

**8**<sup>1</sup> The LORD Almighty gave this message to Zechariah:

<sup>2</sup> I have longed to help Jerusalem because of my deep love for her people, a love which has made me angry with her enemies.

<sup>3</sup> I will return to Jerusalem, my holy city, and live there. It will be known as the faithful city, and the hill of the LORD Almighty will be called the sacred hill.

<sup>4</sup> Once again old men and women, so old that they use canes when they walk, will be sitting in the city squares.

<sup>5</sup> And the streets will again be full of boys and girls playing.

<sup>6</sup> This may seem impossible to those of the nation who are now left, but it's not impossible for me.

<sup>7</sup> I will rescue my people from the lands where they have been taken,

<sup>8</sup>and will bring them back from east and west to live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their God, ruling over them faithfully and justly.

<sup>9</sup>Have courage! You are now hearing the same words the prophets spoke at the time the foundation was being laid for rebuilding my Temple.

<sup>10</sup>Before that time no one could afford to hire either men or animals, and no one was safe from enemies. I turned people against one another.

<sup>11</sup>But now I am treating the survivors of this nation differently.

<sup>12</sup>They will plant their crops in peace. Their vines will bear grapes, the earth will produce crops, and there will be plenty of rain. I will give all these blessings to the people of my nation who survive.

<sup>13</sup>People of Judah and Israel! In the past foreigners have cursed one another by saying, May the same disasters fall on you that fell on Judah and Israel! But I will save you, and then those foreigners will say to one another, May you receive the same blessings that came to Judah

and Israel! So have courage and don't be afraid.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD Almighty says, When your ancestors made me angry, I planned disaster for them and did not change my mind, but carried out my plans.

<sup>15</sup>But now I am planning to bless the people of Jerusalem and Judah. So don't be afraid.

<sup>16</sup>These are the things you should do: Speak the truth to one another. In the courts give real justice -- the kind that brings peace.

<sup>17</sup>Do not plan ways of harming one another. Do not give false testimony under oath. I hate lying, injustice, and violence.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD Almighty gave this message to Zechariah:

<sup>19</sup>The fasts held in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months will become festivals of joy and gladness for the people of Judah. You must love truth and peace.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD Almighty says, The time is coming when people from many cities will come to Jerusalem.

<sup>21</sup> Those from one city will say to those from another, We are going to worship the LORD Almighty and pray for his blessing. Come with us!

<sup>22</sup> Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to worship the LORD Almighty and to pray for his blessing.

<sup>23</sup> In those days ten foreigners will come to one Jew and say, We want to share in your destiny, because we have heard that God is with you.

**9**<sup>1</sup> This is the LORD's message: He has decreed punishment for the land of Hadrach and for the city of Damascus. Not only the tribes of Israel but also the capital of Syria belong to the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> Hamath, which borders on Hadrach, also belongs to him, and so do the cities of Tyre and Sidon, with all their skill.

<sup>3</sup> Tyre has built fortifications for herself and has piled up so much silver and gold that it is as common as dirt!

<sup>4</sup> But the Lord will take away everything she has. He will throw her wealth into the sea, and the city will be burned to the ground.

<sup>5</sup>The city of Ashkelon will see this and be afraid. The city of Gaza will see it and suffer great pain. So will Ekron, and her hopes will be shattered. Gaza will lose her king, and Ashkelon will be left deserted.

<sup>6</sup>People of mixed race will live in Ashdod. The LORD says, I will humble all these proud Philistines.

<sup>7</sup>They will no longer eat meat with blood in it, or other forbidden food. All the survivors will become part of my people and be like a clan in the tribe of Judah. Ekron will become part of my people, as the Jebusites did.

<sup>8</sup>I will guard my land and keep armies from passing through it. I will not allow tyrants to oppress my people any more. I have seen how my people have suffered.

<sup>9</sup>Rejoice, rejoice, people of Zion! Shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you! He comes triumphant and victorious, but humble and riding on a donkey -- on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD says, I will remove the war chariots from Israel and take the horses from Jerusalem; the bows used



in battle will be destroyed. Your king will make peace among the nations; he will rule from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD says, Because of my covenant with you that was sealed by the blood of sacrifices, I will set your people free -- free from the waterless pit of exile.

<sup>12</sup>Return, you exiles who now have hope; return to your place of safety. Now I tell you that I will repay you twice over with blessing for all you have suffered.

<sup>13</sup>I will use Judah like a soldier's bow and Israel like the arrows. I will use the men of Zion like a sword, to fight the men of Greece.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD will appear above his people; he will shoot his arrows like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; he will march in the storms from the south.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD Almighty will protect his people, and they will destroy their enemies. They will shout in battle like drunk men and will shed the blood of their enemies; it will flow like the blood

of a sacrifice poured on the altar from a bowl.

<sup>16</sup>When that day comes, the LORD will save his people, as a shepherd saves his flock from danger. They will shine in his land like the jewels of a crown.

<sup>17</sup>How good and beautiful the land will be! The young people will grow strong on its grain and wine.

**10**<sup>1</sup>Ask the LORD for rain in the spring of the year. It is the LORD who sends rain clouds and showers, making the fields green for everyone.

<sup>2</sup>People consult idols and fortunetellers, but the answers they get are lies and nonsense. Some interpret dreams, but only mislead you; the comfort they give is useless. So the people wander about like lost sheep. They are in trouble because they have no leader.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD says, I am angry with those foreigners who rule my people, and I am going to punish them. The people of Judah are mine, and I, the LORD Almighty, will take care of them. They will be my powerful war-horses.

<sup>4</sup>From among them will come rulers, leaders, and commanders to govern my people.

<sup>5</sup>The people of Judah will be victorious like soldiers who trample their enemies in the mud of the streets. They will fight because the LORD is with them, and they will defeat even the enemy cavalry.

<sup>6</sup>I will make the people of Judah strong; I will rescue the people of Israel. I will have compassion on them and bring them all back home. They will be as though I had never rejected them. I am the LORD their God; I will answer their prayers.

<sup>7</sup>The people of Israel will be strong like soldiers, happy like those who have been drinking wine. Their descendants will remember this victory and be glad because of what the LORD has done.

<sup>8</sup>I will call my people and gather them together. I will rescue them and make them as numerous as they used to be.

<sup>9</sup>Though I have scattered them among the nations, yet in far-off places they will remember me. They and their children will survive and return home together.

<sup>10</sup>From Egypt and Assyria I will bring them home and settle them in their own country. I will settle them in Gilead and Lebanon also; the whole land will be filled with people.

<sup>11</sup>When they pass through their sea of trouble, I, the LORD, will strike the waves, and the depths of the Nile will go dry. Proud Assyria will be humbled, and mighty Egypt will lose her power.

<sup>12</sup>I will make my people strong; they will worship and obey me. The LORD has spoken.

**11** <sup>1</sup>Open your doors, Lebanon, so that fire can burn down your cedar trees!

<sup>2</sup>Weep and wail, cypress trees -- the cedars have fallen; those glorious trees have been destroyed! Weep and wail, oaks of Bashan -- the dense forest has been cut down!

<sup>3</sup>The rulers cry out in grief; their glory is gone! Listen to the roaring of the lions; their forest home along the Jordan is destroyed!

<sup>4</sup>The LORD my God said to me, Act the part of the shepherd of a flock of sheep that are going to be butchered.

<sup>5</sup>Their owners kill them and go unpunished. They sell the meat and say, Praise the LORD! We are rich! Even their own shepherds have no pity on them.

<sup>6</sup>(The LORD said, I will no longer pity anyone on earth. I myself will put all the people in the power of their rulers. These rulers will devastate the earth, and I will not save it from their power.)

<sup>7</sup>Those who bought and sold the sheep hired me, and I became the shepherd of the sheep that were going to be butchered. I took two sticks: one I called Favor and the other Unity. And I took care of the flock.

<sup>8</sup>I lost patience with three other shepherds, who hated me, and I got rid of them all in a single month.

<sup>9</sup>Then I said to the flock, I will not be your shepherd any longer. Let those die who are to die. Let those be destroyed who are to be destroyed. Those who are left will destroy one another.

<sup>10</sup>Then I took the stick called Favor and broke it, to cancel the covenant which the LORD had made with all the nations.

<sup>11</sup>So the covenant was canceled on that day. Those who bought and sold the

sheep were watching me, and they knew that the LORD was speaking through what I did.

<sup>12</sup>I said to them, If you are willing, give me my wages. But if not, keep them. So they paid me thirty pieces of silver as my wages.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD said to me, Put them in the Temple treasury. So I took the thirty pieces of silver -- the magnificent sum they thought I was worth -- and put them in the Temple treasury.

<sup>14</sup>Then I broke the second stick, the one called Unity, and the unity of Judah and Israel was shattered.

<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD said to me, Once again act the part of a shepherd, this time a worthless one.

<sup>16</sup>I have put a shepherd in charge of my flock, but he does not help the sheep that are threatened by destruction; nor does he look for the lost, or heal those that are hurt, or feed the healthy. Instead, he eats the meat of the fattest sheep and tears off their hoofs.

<sup>17</sup>That worthless shepherd is doomed! He has abandoned his flock. War will

totally destroy his power. His arm will wither, and his right eye will go blind.

**12**<sup>1</sup> This is a message about Israel from the LORD, the LORD who spread out the skies, created the earth, and gave life to man. He says,

<sup>2</sup> I will make Jerusalem like a cup of wine; the nations around her will drink and stagger like drunks. And when they besiege Jerusalem, the cities of the rest of Judah will also be besieged.

<sup>3</sup> But when that time comes, I will make Jerusalem like a heavy stone -- any nation that tries to lift it will be hurt. All the nations of the world will join forces to attack her.

<sup>4</sup> At that time I will terrify all their horses and make all their riders go crazy. I will watch over the people of Judah, but I will make the horses of their enemies blind.

<sup>5</sup> Then the clans of Judah will say to themselves, The LORD God Almighty gives strength to his people who live in Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup> At that time I will make the clans of Judah like a fire in a forest or in a field of ripe grain -- they will destroy all

the surrounding nations. The people of Jerusalem will remain safe in the city.

<sup>7</sup>I, the LORD, will give victory to the armies of Judah first, so that the honor which the descendants of David and the people of Jerusalem will receive will be no greater than that of the rest of Judah.

<sup>8</sup>At that time the LORD will protect those who live in Jerusalem, and even the weakest among them will become as strong as David was. The descendants of David will lead them like the angel of the LORD, like God himself.

<sup>9</sup>At that time I will destroy every nation that tries to attack Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup>I will fill the descendants of David and the other people of Jerusalem with the spirit of mercy and the spirit of prayer. They will look at the one whom they stabbed to death, and they will mourn for him like those who mourn for an only child. They will mourn bitterly, like those who have lost their first-born son.

<sup>11</sup>At that time the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.



<sup>12</sup>Each family in the land will mourn by itself: the family descended from David, the family descended from Nathan, the family descended from Levi, the family descended from Shimei, and all the other families. Each family will mourn by itself, and the men of each family will mourn separately from the women.

<sup>13</sup>(12: 12)

<sup>14</sup>(12: 12)

**13**<sup>1</sup>When that time comes, says the LORD Almighty, a fountain will be opened to purify the descendants of David and the people of Jerusalem from their sin and idolatry.

<sup>2</sup>At that time I will remove the names of the idols from the land, and no one will remember them any more. I will get rid of anyone who claims to be a prophet and will take away the desire to worship idols.

<sup>3</sup>Then if anyone still insists on prophesying, his own father and mother will tell him that he must be put to death, because he claimed to speak the LORD's word, but spoke lies instead. When he prophesies, his own father and mother will stab him to death.

<sup>4</sup>When that time comes, no prophet will be proud of his visions or act like a prophet or wear a prophet's coarse garment in order to deceive people.

<sup>5</sup>Instead, he will say, I am not a prophet. I am a farmer -- I have farmed the land all my life.

<sup>6</sup>Then if someone asks him, What are those wounds on your chest? he will answer, I got them at a friend's house.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD Almighty says, Wake up, sword, and attack the shepherd who works for me! Kill him, and the sheep will be scattered. I will attack my people

<sup>8</sup>and throughout the land two-thirds of the people will die.

<sup>9</sup>And I will test the third that survives and will purify them as silver is purified by fire. I will test them as gold is tested. Then they will pray to me, and I will answer them. I will tell them that they are my people, and they will confess that I am their God.

**14**<sup>1</sup>The day when the LORD will sit in judgment is near. Then Jerusalem will be looted, and the loot will be divided up before your eyes.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD will bring all the nations together to make war on Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half of the people will go into exile, but the rest of them will not be taken away from the city.

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past.

<sup>4</sup>At that time he will stand on the Mount of Olives, to the east of Jerusalem. Then the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west by a large valley. Half of the mountain will move northward, and half of it southward.

<sup>5</sup>You will escape through this valley that divides the mountain in two. You will flee as your ancestors did when the earthquake struck in the time of King Uzziah of Judah. The LORD my God will come, bringing all the angels with him.

<sup>6</sup>When that time comes, there will no longer be cold or frost,

<sup>7</sup>nor any darkness. There will always be daylight, even at nighttime. When this will happen is known only to the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>When that day comes, fresh water will flow from Jerusalem, half of it to

the Dead Sea and the other half to the Mediterranean. It will flow all year long, in the dry season as well as the wet.

<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD will be king over all the earth; everyone will worship him as God and know him by the same name.

<sup>10</sup>The whole region, from Geba in the north to Rimmon in the south, will be made level. Jerusalem will tower above the land around it; the city will reach from the Benjamin Gate to the Corner Gate, where there had been an earlier gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal wine presses.

<sup>11</sup>The people will live there in safety, no longer threatened by destruction.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD will bring a terrible disease on all the nations that make war on Jerusalem. Their flesh will rot away while they are still alive; their eyes and their tongues will rot away.

<sup>13</sup>At that time the LORD will make them so confused and afraid that everyone will seize the man next to him and attack him.

<sup>14</sup>The men of Judah will fight to defend Jerusalem. They will take as loot the

wealth of all the nations -- gold, silver, and clothing in great abundance.

<sup>15</sup>A terrible disease will also fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, and the donkeys -- on all the animals in the camps of the enemy.

<sup>16</sup>Then all of the survivors from the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go there each year to worship the LORD Almighty as king and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

<sup>17</sup>If any nation refuses to go and worship the LORD Almighty as king, then rain will not fall on their land.

<sup>18</sup>If the Egyptians refuse to celebrate the Festival of Shelters, then they will be struck by the same disease that the LORD will send on every nation that refuses to go.

<sup>19</sup>This will be the punishment that will fall on Egypt and on all the other nations if they do not celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

<sup>20</sup>At that time even the harness bells of the horses will be inscribed with the words Dedicated to the LORD. The cooking pots in the Temple will be as sacred as the bowls before the altar.

<sup>21</sup> Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in all Judah will be set apart for use in the worship of the LORD Almighty. The people who offer sacrifices will use them for boiling the meat of the sacrifices. When that time comes, there will no longer be any merchant in the Temple of the LORD Almighty.

# Malachi

**1** <sup>1</sup>This is the message that the LORD gave Malachi to tell the people of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD says to his people, I have always loved you. But they reply, How have you shown your love for us? The LORD answers, Esau and Jacob were brothers, but I have loved Jacob and his descendants,

<sup>3</sup>and have hated Esau and his descendants. I have devastated Esau's hill country and abandoned the land to jackals.

<sup>4</sup>If Esau's descendants, the Edomites, say, Our towns have been destroyed, but we will rebuild them, then the LORD will reply, Let them rebuild -- I will tear them down again. People will call them The evil country and The nation with whom the LORD is angry forever.

<sup>5</sup>The people of Israel are going to see this with their own eyes, and they will say, The LORD is mighty even outside the land of Israel!

<sup>6</sup>The LORD Almighty says to the priests, Children honor their parents, and servants honor their masters. I am your father -- why don't you honor me? I am your master -- why don't you respect me? You despise me, and yet you ask, How have we despised you?

<sup>7</sup>This is how -- by offering worthless food on my altar. Then you ask, How have we failed to respect you? I will tell you -- by showing contempt for my altar.

<sup>8</sup>When you bring a blind or sick or lame animal to sacrifice to me, do you think there's nothing wrong with that? Try giving an animal like that to the governor! Would he be pleased with you or grant you any favors?

<sup>9</sup>Now, you priests, try asking God to be good to us. He will not answer your prayer, and it will be your fault.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD Almighty says, I wish one of you would close the Temple doors so as to prevent you from lighting useless fires on my altar. I am not pleased with you; I will not accept the offerings you bring me.

<sup>11</sup>People from one end of the world to the other honor me. Everywhere they



burn incense to me and offer acceptable sacrifices. All of them honor me!

<sup>12</sup>But you dishonor me when you say that my altar is worthless and when you offer on it food that you despise.

<sup>13</sup>You say, How tired we are of all this! and you turn up your nose at me. As your offering to me you bring a stolen animal or one that is lame or sick. Do you think I will accept that from you?

<sup>14</sup>A curse on the cheater who sacrifices a worthless animal to me, when he has in his flock a good animal that he promised to give me! For I am a great king, and people of all nations fear me.

**2**<sup>1</sup>The LORD Almighty says to the priests, This command is for you:

<sup>2</sup>You must honor me by what you do. If you will not listen to what I say, then I will bring a curse on you. I will put a curse on the things you receive for your support. In fact, I have already put a curse on them, because you do not take my command seriously.

<sup>3</sup>I will punish your children and rub your faces in the dung of the animals you sacrifice -- and you will be taken out to the dung heap.

<sup>4</sup>Then you will know that I have given you this command, so that my covenant with the priests, the descendants of Levi, will not be broken.

<sup>5</sup>In my covenant I promised them life and well-being, and this is what I gave them, so that they might respect me. In those days they did respect and fear me.

<sup>6</sup>They taught what was right, not what was wrong. They lived in harmony with me; they not only did what was right themselves, but they also helped many others to stop doing evil.

<sup>7</sup>It is the duty of priests to teach the true knowledge of God. People should go to them to learn my will, because they are the messengers of the LORD Almighty.

<sup>8</sup>But now you priests have turned away from the right path. Your teaching has led many to do wrong. You have broken the covenant I made with you.

<sup>9</sup>So I, in turn, will make the people of Israel despise you because you do not obey my will, and when you teach my people, you do not treat everyone alike.

<sup>10</sup>Don't we all have the same father? Didn't the same God create us all?

Then why do we break our promises to one another, and why do we despise the covenant that God made with our ancestors?

<sup>11</sup>The people of Judah have broken their promise to God and done a horrible thing in Jerusalem and all over the country. They have defiled the Temple which the LORD loves. Men have married women who worship foreign gods.

<sup>12</sup>May the LORD remove from the community of Israel those who did this, and never again let them participate in the offerings our nation brings to the LORD Almighty.

<sup>13</sup>This is another thing you do. You drown the LORD's altar with tears, weeping and wailing because he no longer accepts the offerings you bring him.

<sup>14</sup>You ask why he no longer accepts them. It is because he knows you have broken your promise to the wife you married when you were young. She was your partner, and you have broken your promise to her, although you promised before God that you would be faithful to her.

<sup>15</sup> Didn't God make you one body and spirit with her? What was his purpose in this? It was that you should have children who are truly God's people. So make sure that none of you breaks his promise to his wife.

<sup>16</sup> I hate divorce, says the LORD God of Israel. I hate it when one of you does such a cruel thing to his wife. Make sure that you do not break your promise to be faithful to your wife.

<sup>17</sup> You have tired the LORD out with your talk. But you ask, How have we tired him? By saying, The LORD Almighty thinks all evildoers are good; in fact he likes them. Or by asking, Where is the God who is supposed to be just?

**3**<sup>1</sup> The LORD Almighty answers, I will send my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger you long to see will come and proclaim my covenant.

<sup>2</sup> But who will be able to endure the day when he comes? Who will be able to survive when he appears? He will be like strong soap, like a fire that refines metal.

<sup>3</sup>He will come to judge like one who refines and purifies silver. As a metalworker refines silver and gold, so the LORD's messenger will purify the priests, so that they will bring to the LORD the right kind of offerings.

<sup>4</sup>Then the offerings which the people of Judah and Jerusalem bring to the LORD will be pleasing to him, as they used to be in the past.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD Almighty says, I will appear among you to judge, and I will testify at once against those who practice magic, against adulterers, against those who give false testimony, those who cheat employees out of their wages, and those who take advantage of widows, orphans, and foreigners -- against all who do not respect me.

<sup>6</sup>I am the LORD, and I do not change. And so you, the descendants of Jacob, are not yet completely lost.

<sup>7</sup>You, like your ancestors before you, have turned away from my laws and have not kept them. Turn back to me, and I will turn to you. But you ask, What must we do to turn back to you?

<sup>8</sup>I ask you, is it right for a person to cheat God? Of course not, yet you are cheating me. How? you ask. In the matter of tithes and offerings.

<sup>9</sup>A curse is on all of you because the whole nation is cheating me.

<sup>10</sup>Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there. Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things.

<sup>11</sup>I will not let insects destroy your crops, and your grapevines will be loaded with grapes.

<sup>12</sup>Then the people of all nations will call you happy, because your land will be a good place to live.

<sup>13</sup>You have said terrible things about me, says the LORD. But you ask, What have we said about you?

<sup>14</sup>You have said, It's useless to serve God. What's the use of doing what he says or of trying to show the LORD Almighty that we are sorry for what we have done?

<sup>15</sup>As we see it, proud people are the ones who are happy. Evil people not only

prosper, but they test God's patience with their evil deeds and get away with it.

<sup>16</sup>Then the people who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard what they said. In his presence, there was written down in a book a record of those who feared the LORD and respected him.

<sup>17</sup>They will be my people, says the LORD Almighty. On the day when I act, they will be my very own. I will be merciful to them as parents are merciful to the children who serve them.

<sup>18</sup>Once again my people will see the difference between what happens to the righteous and to the wicked, to the person who serves me and the one who does not.

**4**<sup>1</sup>The LORD Almighty says, The day is coming when all proud and evil people will burn like straw. On that day they will burn up, and there will be nothing left of them.

<sup>2</sup>But for you who obey me, my saving power will rise on you like the sun and bring healing like the sun's rays. You will

be as free and happy as calves let out of a stall.

<sup>3</sup>On the day when I act, you will overcome the wicked, and they will be like dust under your feet.

<sup>4</sup>Remember the teachings of my servant Moses, the laws and commands which I gave him at Mount Sinai for all the people of Israel to obey.

<sup>5</sup>But before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes, I will send you the prophet Elijah.

<sup>6</sup>He will bring fathers and children together again; otherwise I would have to come and destroy your country.



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