

GOD'S WORD TO THE NATION

Old Testament

(Genesis – Job)

Genesis

1 ¹ In the beginning God created heaven and earth.

² The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep water. The Spirit of God was hovering over the water.

³ Then God said, "Let there be light!" So there was light.

⁴ God saw the light was good. So God separated the light from the darkness.

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

⁶ Then God said, "Let there be a horizon in the middle of the water in order to separate the water."

⁷ So God made the horizon and separated the water above and below the horizon. And so it was.

⁸ God named what was above the horizon sky. There was evening, then morning—a second day.

⁹ Then God said, "Let the water under the sky come together in one area, and let the dry land appear." And so it was.

¹⁰ God named the dry land earth. The water which came together he named sea. God saw that it was good.

¹¹ Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: plants bearing seeds, each according to its own type, and fruit trees bearing fruit with seeds, each according to its own type." And so it was.

¹² The earth produced vegetation: plants bearing seeds, each according to its own type, and trees bearing fruit with

seeds, each according to its own type.
God saw that they were good.

¹³ There was evening, then morning—a third day.

¹⁴ Then God said, "Let there be lights in the sky to separate the day from the night. They will be signs and will mark religious festivals, days, and years.

¹⁵ They will be lights in the sky to shine on the earth." And so it was.

¹⁶ God made the two bright lights: the larger light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night. He also made the stars.

¹⁷ God put them in the sky to give light to the earth,

¹⁸ to dominate the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good.

¹⁹ There was evening, then morning—a fourth day.

²⁰ Then God said, "Let the water swarm with swimming creatures, and let birds fly through the sky over the earth."

²¹ So God created the large sea creatures, every type of creature that swims around in the water and every type of flying bird. God saw that they were good.

²² God blessed them and said, "Be fertile, increase in number, fill the sea, and let there be many birds on the earth."

²³ There was evening, then morning—a fifth day.

²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth produce every type of living creature: every type of domestic animal, crawling animal, and wild animal." And so it was.

²⁵ God made every type of wild animal, every type of domestic animal, and every type of creature that crawls on the ground. God saw that they were good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make humans in our image, in our likeness. Let them rule the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the domestic animals all over the earth, and all the animals that crawl on the earth."

²⁷ So God created humans in his image. In the image of God he created them. He created them male and female.

²⁸ God blessed them and said, "Be fertile, increase in number, fill the earth, and be its master. Rule the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that crawl on the earth."

²⁹ God said, "I have given you every plant with seeds on the face of the earth and every tree that has fruit with seeds. This will be your food.

³⁰ I have given all green plants as food to every land animal, every bird in the sky, and every animal that crawls on the

earth—every living, breathing animal." And so it was.

³¹ And God saw everything that he had made and that it was very good. There was evening, then morning—the sixth day.

2 ¹ Heaven and earth and everything in them were finished.

² By the seventh day God had finished work he had been doing. On the seventh day he stopped the work he had been doing.

³ Then God blessed the seventh day and set it apart as holy, because on that day he stopped all his work of creation.

⁴ This is the account of heaven and earth when they were created, at the time when the LORD God made earth and heaven.

⁵ Wild bushes and plants were not on the earth yet because the LORD God

hadn't sent rain on the earth. Also, there was no one to farm the land.

⁶ Instead, underground water would come up from the earth and water the entire surface of the ground.

⁷ Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the earth and blew the breath of life into his nostrils. The man became a living being.

⁸ The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east. That's where he put the man whom he had formed.

⁹ The LORD God made all the trees grow out of the ground. These trees were nice to look at, and their fruit was good to eat. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil grew in the middle of the garden.

¹⁰ A river flowed from Eden to water the garden. Outside the garden it divided into four rivers.

¹¹ The name of the first river is Pishon. This is the one that winds throughout Havilah, where there is gold.

¹² (The gold of that land is pure. Bdelium and onyx are also found there.)

¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon. This is the one that winds throughout Sudan.

¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris. This is the one that flows east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to farm the land and to take care of it.

¹⁶ The LORD God commanded the man. He said, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden.

¹⁷ But you must never eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because when you eat from it, you will certainly die."

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is right for him."

¹⁹ The LORD God had formed all the wild animals and all the birds out of the ground. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever the man called each creature became its name.

²⁰ So the man named all the domestic animals, all the birds, and all the wild animals. But the man found no helper who was right for him.

²¹ So the LORD God caused him to fall into a deep sleep. While the man was sleeping, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

²² Then the LORD God formed a woman from the rib that he had taken from the man. He brought her to the man.

²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She will be named woman because she was taken from man."

²⁴ That is why a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh.

²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked, but they weren't ashamed of it.

3 ¹ The snake was more clever than all the wild animals the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must never eat the fruit of any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman answered the snake, "We're allowed to eat the fruit from any tree in the garden

³ except the tree in the middle of the garden. God said, 'You must never eat it or touch it. If you do, you will die!'"

⁴ "You certainly won't die!" the snake told the woman.

⁵ "God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened. You'll be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ The woman saw that the tree had fruit that was good to eat, nice to look at, and desirable for making someone wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

⁷ Then their eyes were opened, and they both realized that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together and made clothes for themselves.

⁸ In the cool of the evening, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking around in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees in the garden.

⁹ The LORD God called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden. I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

¹¹ God asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat fruit from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man answered, "That woman, the one you gave me, gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?" "The snake deceived me, and I ate," the woman answered.

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the snake, "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all the wild or domestic animals. You will crawl on your belly. You will be the lowest of animals as long as you live.

¹⁵ I will make you and the woman hostile toward each other. I will make your descendants and her descendant

hostile toward each other. He will crush your head, and you will bruise his heel."

¹⁶ He said to the woman, "I will increase your pain and your labor when you give birth to children. Yet, you will long for your husband, and he will rule you."

¹⁷ Then he said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree, although I commanded you, 'You must never eat its fruit.' The ground is cursed because of you. Through hard work you will eat food that comes from it every day of your life.

¹⁸ The ground will grow thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat wild plants.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow, you will produce food to eat until you return to the ground, because you were taken from it. You are dust, and you will return to dust."

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve [Life] because she became the mother of every living person.

²¹ The LORD God made clothes from animal skins for the man and his wife and dressed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, "The man has become like one of us, since he knows good and evil. He must not reach out and take the fruit from the tree of life and eat. Then he would live forever."

²³ So the LORD God sent the man out of the Garden of Eden to farm the ground from which the man had been formed.

²⁴ After he sent the man out, God placed angels and a flaming sword that turned in all directions east of the Garden of Eden. He placed them there to guard the way to the tree of life.

4 ¹ Adam made love to his wife Eve. She became pregnant and gave birth

to Cain. She said, "I have gotten the man that the LORD promised."

² Then she gave birth to another child, Abel, Cain's brother. Abel was a shepherd, and Cain was a farmer.

³ Later Cain brought some crops from the land as an offering to the LORD.

⁴ Abel also brought some choice parts of the firstborn animals from his flock. The LORD approved of Abel and his offering,

⁵ but he didn't approve of Cain and his offering. So Cain became very angry and was disappointed.

⁶ Then the LORD asked Cain, "Why are you angry, and why do you look disappointed?"

⁷ If you do well, won't you be accepted? But if you don't do well, sin is lying outside your door ready to attack. It wants to control you, but you must master it."

⁸ Cain talked to his brother Abel. Later, when they were in the fields, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

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

¹⁰ The LORD asked, "What have you done? Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground.

¹¹ So now you are cursed from the ground, which has received the blood of your brother whom you killed.

¹² When you farm the ground, it will no longer yield its best for you. You will be a fugitive, a wanderer on the earth."

¹³ But Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can stand!

¹⁴ You have forced me off this land today. I have to hide from you and become a fugitive, a wanderer on the

earth. Now anyone who finds me will kill me!"

¹⁵ So the LORD said to him, "Not so! Anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." The LORD gave Cain a sign so that anyone meeting him would not kill him.

¹⁶ Then Cain left the LORD'S presence and lived in Nod [The Land of Wandering], east of Eden.

¹⁷ Cain made love to his wife. She became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was building a city, and he named it Enoch after his son.

¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad. Irad was the father of Mehujael. Mehujael was the father of Methushael. And Methushael was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹ Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah.

²⁰ Adah gave birth to Jabal. He was the first person to live in tents and have livestock.

²¹ His brother's name was Jubal. He was the first person to play the harp and the flute.

²² Zillah also had a son, Tubalcain, who made bronze and iron tools. Tubalcain's sister was Naamah.

²³ Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me! Wives of Lamech, hear what I say! I killed a man for bruising me, a young man for wounding me.

²⁴ If Cain is avenged 7 times, then Lamech, 77 times."

²⁵ Adam made love to his wife again. She gave birth to a son and named him Seth, because she said, "God has given me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him."

²⁶ A son was also born to Seth, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to worship the LORD.

5 ¹ This is the written account of Adam and his descendants. When God created humans, he made them in the likeness of God.

² He created them male and female. He blessed them and called them humans when he created them.

³ When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, in his own image. He named him Seth.

⁴ After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

⁶ When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of Enosh.

⁷ After he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

⁹ When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan.

¹⁰ After he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

¹² When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel.

¹³ After he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

¹⁵ When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared.

¹⁶ After he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

¹⁸ When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch.

¹⁹ After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

²¹ When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah.

²² After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God for 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

²³ Enoch lived a total of 365 years.

²⁴ Enoch walked with God; then he was gone because God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech.

²⁶ After he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

²⁸ When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son.

²⁹ He named him Noah [Relief], and said, "This child will bring us relief from the work and painful labor of our hands since the LORD has cursed the ground."

³⁰ After Lamech became the father of Noah, he lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

³² When Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

6 ¹ The number of people increased all over the earth, and daughters were born to them.

² The sons of God saw that the daughters of other humans were beautiful. So they married any woman they chose.

³ Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not struggle with humans forever, because they are flesh and blood. They will live 120 years."

⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, as well as later, when the sons of God slept with the daughters of other humans and had children by them. These children were famous long ago.

⁵ The LORD saw how evil humans had become on the earth. All day long their deepest thoughts were nothing but evil.

⁶ The LORD was sorry that he had made humans on the earth, and he was heartbroken.

⁷ So he said, "I will wipe off the face of the earth these humans that I created. I will wipe out not only humans, but also domestic animals, crawling animals, and birds. I'm sorry that I made them."

⁸ But the LORD was pleased with Noah.

⁹ This is the account of Noah and his descendants. Noah had God's approval and was a man of integrity among the people of his time. He walked with God.

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

¹¹ The world was corrupt in God's sight and full of violence.

¹² God saw the world and how corrupt it was because all people on earth lived evil lives.

¹³ God said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to all people because the earth is full of their violence. Now I'm going to destroy them along with the earth."

¹⁴ Make yourself a ship of cypress wood. Make rooms in the ship and coat it inside and out with tar.

¹⁵ This is how you should build it: the ship is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

¹⁶ Make a roof for the ship, and leave an 18-inch-high opening at the top. Put a door in the side of the ship. Build the ship with lower, middle, and upper decks.

¹⁷ I'm about to send a flood on the earth to destroy all people under the sky—every living, breathing human. Everything on earth will die.

¹⁸ "But I will make my promise to you. You, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives will go into the ship.

¹⁹ Bring two of every living creature into the ship in order to keep them alive with you. They must be male and female.

²⁰ Two of every type of bird, every type of domestic animal, and every type of creature that crawls on the ground will come to you to be kept alive.

²¹ Take every kind of food that can be eaten and store it. It will be food for you and the animals."

²² Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.

7 ¹ The LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ship with your whole family because I have seen that you alone are righteous among the people of today.

² Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal (a male and a female of each) and one pair of every kind of unclean animal (a male and a female).

³ Also, take seven pairs of every kind of bird (a male and a female of each) to preserve animal life all over the earth after the flood.

⁴ In seven days I will send rain to the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. I will wipe off the face of the earth every living creature that I have made."

⁵ So Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him.

⁶ Noah was 600 years old when the flood came to the earth.

⁷ Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ship to escape the floodwaters.

⁸ Clean and unclean animals, birds, and creatures that crawl on the ground

⁹ came to Noah to go into the ship in pairs (a male and female of each) as God had commanded Noah.

¹⁰ Seven days later the flood came on the earth.

¹¹ On the seventeenth day of the second month of the six hundredth year of Noah's life, all the deep springs burst open. The sky opened,

¹² and rain came pouring down on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights.

¹³ On that same day Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, as well as Noah's wife and his three daughters-in-law went into the ship.

¹⁴ They had with them every type of wild animal, every type of domestic animal, every type of creature that crawls on the earth, and every type of bird (every creature with wings).

¹⁵ A pair of every living, breathing animal came to Noah to go into the ship.

¹⁶ A male and a female of every animal went in as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

¹⁷ The flood continued for 40 days on the earth. The water increased and lifted the ship so that it rose high above the ground.

¹⁸ As the water rose and became very deep, the ship floated on top of the water.

¹⁹ The water rose very high above the earth. It covered all the high mountains everywhere under the sky.

²⁰ It rose 23 feet above the mountaintops.

²¹ Every creature that crawls on the earth died, including birds, domestic and wild animals, and everything that swarms over the earth, along with every human.

²² Everything on dry land (every living, breathing creature) died.

²³ Every living creature on the face of the earth was wiped out. Humans, domestic animals, crawling creatures, and birds were wiped off the earth. Only Noah and those with him in the ship were left.

²⁴ The floodwaters were on the earth for 150 days.

8 ¹ God remembered Noah and all the wild and domestic animals with him in the ship. So God made a wind blow over the earth, and the water started to go down.

² The deep springs and the sky had been shut, and the rain had stopped pouring.

³ The water began to recede from the land. At the end of 150 days the water had decreased.

⁴ On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ship came to rest in the mountains of Ararat.

⁵ The water kept decreasing until the tenth month. On the first day of the tenth month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

⁶ After 40 more days Noah opened the window he had made in the ship

⁷ and sent out a raven. It kept flying back and forth until the water on the land had dried up.

⁸ Next, he sent out a dove to see if the water was gone from the surface of the ground.

⁹ The dove couldn't find a place to land because the water was still all over the earth. So it came back to Noah in the ship. He reached out and brought the dove back into the ship.

¹⁰ He waited seven more days and again sent the dove out of the ship.

¹¹ The dove came to him in the evening, and in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf. Then Noah knew that the water was gone from the earth.

¹² He waited seven more days and sent out the dove again, but it never came back to him.

¹³ By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the

water on the land had dried up. Noah opened the top of the ship, looked out, and saw the surface of the ground.

¹⁴ By the twenty–seventh day of the second month the land was dry.

¹⁵ Then God spoke to Noah,

¹⁶ "Come out of the ship with your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives.

¹⁷ Bring out every animal that's with you: birds, domestic animals, and every creature that crawls on the earth. Be fertile, increase in number, and spread over the earth."

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

¹⁹ Every animal, crawling creature, and bird—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ship, one kind after another.

²⁰ Noah built an altar to the LORD. On it he made a burnt offering of each type of clean animal and clean bird.

²¹ The LORD smelled the soothing aroma. He said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of humans, even though from birth their hearts are set on nothing but evil. I will never again kill every living creature as I have just done.

²² As long as the earth exists, planting and harvesting, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never stop."

9¹ God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fertile, increase in number, and fill the earth.

² All the wild animals and all the birds will fear you and be terrified of you. Every creature that crawls on the ground and all the fish in the sea have been put under your control.

³ Everything that lives and moves will be your food. I gave you green plants as food; I now give you everything else.

⁴ "But you are not to eat meat with blood in it. (Blood is life.)

⁵ In addition, I will demand your blood for your life. I will demand it from any animal or from any person. I will demand the life of any person who kills another person.

⁶ Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, because in the image of God, God made humans.

⁷ Be fertile, and increase in number. Spread over the earth, and increase."

⁸ God also said to Noah and his sons,

⁹ "I am going to make my promise to you, your descendants,

¹⁰ and every living being that is with you—birds, domestic animals, and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ship—every living thing on earth.

¹¹ I am making my promise to you. Never again will all life be killed by

floodwaters. Never again will there be a flood that destroys the earth."

¹² God said, "This is the sign of the promise I am giving to you and every living being that is with you for generations to come.

¹³ I will put my rainbow in the clouds to be a sign of my promise to the earth.

¹⁴ Whenever I form clouds over the earth, a rainbow will appear in the clouds.

¹⁵ Then I will remember my promise to you and every living animal. Never again will water become a flood to destroy all life.

¹⁶ Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember my everlasting promise to every living animal on earth."

¹⁷ So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the promise I am making to all life on earth."

¹⁸ Noah's sons, who came out of the ship, were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹⁹ These were Noah's three sons. From them the whole earth was populated. Ham was the father of Canaan.

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

²¹ He drank some wine, got drunk, and lay naked inside his tent.

²² Ham, father of Canaan, saw his father naked. So he went outside and told his two brothers.

²³ Shem and Japheth took a blanket and laid it over their shoulders. Then they walked in backwards and covered their father's naked body. They turned their faces away so that they didn't see their father naked.

²⁴ When Noah sobered up, he found out what his youngest son had done to him.

²⁵ So he said, "Canaan is cursed! He will be the lowest slave to his brothers.

²⁶ Praise the LORD, the God of Shem! Canaan will be his slave.

²⁷ May God expand the territory of Japheth. May he live in the tents of Shem. Canaan will be his slave."

²⁸ Noah lived 350 years after the flood.

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

10 ¹ This is the account of Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their descendants. Shem, Ham and Japheth had children after the flood.

² Japheth's descendants were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³ Gomer's descendants were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴ Javan's descendants were the people from Elishah, Tarshish, Cyprus, and Rhodes.

⁵ From these descendants the people of the coastlands spread into their own countries. Each nation had its own language and families.

⁶ Ham's descendants were Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan.

⁷ Cush's descendants were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. Raamah's descendants were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸ Cush was the father of Nimrod, the first mighty warrior on the earth.

⁹ He was a mighty hunter whom the LORD blessed. That's why people used to say, "He's like Nimrod, a mighty hunter whom the LORD blessed."

¹⁰ The first cities in his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh in Shinar [Babylonia].

¹¹ He went from that land to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah,

¹² and Resen, the great city between Nineveh and Calah.

¹³ Egypt was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites,

¹⁴ Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came), and the Caphtorites.

¹⁵ Canaan was the father of Sidon his firstborn, then Heth,

¹⁶ also the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites,

¹⁷ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites,

¹⁸ the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Later the Canaanite families scattered.

¹⁹ The border of the Canaanites extended from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim as far as Lasha.

²⁰ These were Ham's descendants by families and languages within their countries and nations.

²¹ Shem, Japheth's older brother, also had children. Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber.

²² Shem's descendants were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram.

²³ Aram's descendants were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

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

²⁵ Two sons were born to Eber. The name of the one was Peleg [Division], because in his day the earth was divided. His brother's name was Joktan.

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

²⁷ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

²⁸ Obal, Abimael, Sheba,

²⁹ Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. These were Joktan's sons.

³⁰ The region where they lived extended from Mesha toward Sephar in the eastern mountains.

³¹ These were Shem's descendants by families and languages within their countries according to their nations.

³² These were the families of Noah's sons listed by their genealogies, nation by nation. From these descendants the nations spread over the earth after the flood.

11 ¹ The whole world had one language with a common vocabulary.

² As people moved toward the east, they found a plain in Shinar [Babylonia] and settled there.

³ They said to one another, "Let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used bricks as stones and tar as mortar.

⁴ Then they said, "Let's build a city for ourselves and a tower with its top in the

sky. Let's make a name for ourselves so that we won't become scattered all over the face of the earth."

⁵ The LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the descendants of Adam were building.

⁶ The LORD said, "They are one people with one language. This is only the beginning of what they will do! Now nothing they plan to do will be too difficult for them.

⁷ Let us go down there and mix up their language so that they won't understand each other."

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

⁹ This is why it was named Babel, because there the LORD turned the language of the whole earth into babble. From that place the LORD scattered them all over the face of the earth.

¹⁰ This is the account of Shem and his descendants. Two years after the flood when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arpachshad.

¹¹ After he became the father of Arpachshad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹² Arpachshad was 35 years old when he became the father of Shelah.

¹³ After he became the father of Shelah, Arpachshad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴ Shelah was 30 years old when he became the father of Eber.

¹⁵ After he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶ Eber was 34 years old when he became the father of Peleg.

¹⁷ After he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸ Peleg was 30 years old when he became the father of Reu.

¹⁹ After he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰ Reu was 32 years old when he became the father of Serug.

²¹ After he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²² Serug was 30 years old when he became the father of Nahor.

²³ After he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴ Nahor was 29 years old when he became the father of Terah.

²⁵ After he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

²⁷ This is the account of Terah and his descendants. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot.

²⁸ While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, his native land.

²⁹ Both Abram and Nahor married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, daughter of Haran. (Haran was the father of Milcah and Iscah.)

³⁰ Sarai was not able to have children.

³¹ Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (son of Haran), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, wife of his son Abram. They set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. When

they came as far as Haran, they stayed there.

³² Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran.

12 ¹ The LORD said to Abram, "Leave your land, your relatives, and your father's home. Go to the land that I will show you.

² I will make you a great nation, I will bless you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse. Through you every family on earth will be blessed."

⁴ So Abram left, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.

⁵ Abram set out for Canaan. He took along his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions they had

accumulated and the servants they had acquired in Haran.

⁶ They arrived in Canaan, and Abram traveled through the land to the oak tree belonging to Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I'm going to give this land to your descendants." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

⁸ He moved on to the hills east of Bethel, and he put up his tent—with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He also built an altar to the LORD there and worshiped the LORD.

⁹ Abram kept moving toward the Negev.

¹⁰ There was a famine in the land. Abram went to Egypt to stay awhile because the famine was severe.

¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, Abram said to his wife Sarai, "I know that you're a beautiful woman.

¹² When the Egyptians see you, they'll say, 'This is his wife!' Then they'll kill me but let you live.

¹³ Please say that you're my sister. Then everything will be alright for me, and because of you I will live."

¹⁴ When Abram arrived in Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful his wife was.

¹⁵ When Pharaoh's officials saw her, they raved about her to Pharaoh, so Sarai was taken to Pharaoh's palace.

¹⁶ Everything went well for Abram because of her, and he was given sheep, cattle, donkeys, male and female slaves, and camels.

¹⁷ However, the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with terrible plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

¹⁸ Then Pharaoh called for Abram.

"What have you done to me?" he asked.

"Why didn't you tell me that she's your wife?"

¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She's my sister' and allow me to take her for my wife? Here's your wife! Take her and go!"

²⁰ Pharaoh gave his men orders concerning Abram. They sent Abram away with his wife and everything that he had.

13 ¹ Abram left Egypt with his wife and everything he had and went to the Negev. Lot was with him.

² Abram was very rich because he had livestock, silver, and gold.

³ He traveled from place to place. He went from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the area between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been originally,

⁴ where he had first made an altar. There Abram worshiped the LORD.

⁵ Lot, who had been traveling with Abram, also had his own sheep, cattle, and tents.

⁶ There wasn't enough pastureland for both of them. They had so many possessions that they were unable to remain together.

⁷ Quarrels broke out between Abram's herders and Lot's herders. (Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in that area.)

⁸ Abram said to Lot, "Please, let's not have any more quarrels between us or between our herders. After all, we're relatives.

⁹ Isn't all this land yours also? Let's separate. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right, and if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

¹⁰ Then Lot looked in the direction of Zoar as far as he could see. He saw that the whole Jordan Plain was wellwatered

like the LORD'S garden or like Egypt.
(This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

¹¹ Lot chose the whole Jordan Plain for himself. He moved toward the east. They each went their own way.

¹² Abram lived in Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain, moving his tents as far as Sodom.

¹³ (The people who lived in Sodom were very wicked. They committed terrible sins against the LORD.)

¹⁴ After Lot left, the LORD said to Abram, "Look north, south, east, and west of where you are.

¹⁵ I will give all the land you see to you and to your descendants for an indefinite period of time.

¹⁶ I will also give you as many descendants as the dust of the earth. If anyone could count the dust of the

earth, then he could also count your descendants.

¹⁷ Go! Walk back and forth across the entire land because I will give it to you."

¹⁸ So Abram moved his tents and went to live by the oak trees belonging to Mamre at Hebron. There he built an altar for the LORD.

14 ¹ At that time four kings—King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim—

² went to war against five kings—King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

³ The five kings joined forces and met in the valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea).

⁴ For 12 years they had been subject to Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

⁵ In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and his allies came and defeated the Rephaim at Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emim at Shaveh Kiriathaim,

⁶ and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, going as far as El Paran on the edge of the desert.

⁷ On their way back, they came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites and also the Amorites who were living at Hazazon Tamar.

⁸ Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and prepared for battle in the valley of Siddim.

⁹ They fought against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal

of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five.

¹⁰ The valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. As the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell because of the tar pits, but the other kings fled to the hills.

¹¹ So the four kings took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as all their food, and left.

¹² They also took Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions since he was living in Sodom.

¹³ Then a soldier who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew what had happened. He was living next to the oak trees belonging to Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner. (These men were Abram's allies.)

¹⁴ When Abram heard that his nephew had been captured, he armed his 318

trained men, born in his own household, and pursued the four kings all the way to Dan.

¹⁵ He split up his men to attack them at night. He defeated them, pursuing them all the way to Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

¹⁶ He brought back everything they had, including women and soldiers. He also brought back his relative Lot and his possessions.

¹⁷ After Abram came back from defeating Chedorlaomer and his allies, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸ Then King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was a priest of God Most High.

¹⁹ He blessed Abram, and said, "Blessed is Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth.

²⁰ Blessed is God Most High, who has handed your enemies over to you." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, and keep everything else for yourself."

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I now raise my hand and solemnly swear to the LORD God Most High, maker of heaven and earth,

²³ that I won't take a thread or a sandal strap. I won't take anything that is yours so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'

²⁴ I won't take one single thing except what my men have eaten. But let my allies Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."

15 ¹ Later the LORD spoke his word to Abram in a vision. He said, "Abram, don't be afraid. I am your shield. Your reward will be very great."

² Abram asked, "Almighty LORD, what will you give me? Since I'm going to die without children, Eliezer of Damascus will inherit my household.

³ You have given me no children, so this member of my household will be my heir."

⁴ Suddenly, the LORD spoke his word to Abram again. He said, "This man will not be your heir. Your own son will be your heir."

⁵ He took Abram outside and said, "Now look up at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." He also said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!"

⁶ Then Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD regarded that faith to be his approval of Abram.

⁷ Then the LORD said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the

Chaldeans to give you this land so that you will take possession of it."

⁸ Abram asked, "Almighty LORD, how can I be certain that I will take possession of it?"

⁹ He answered Abram, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a mourning dove, and a pigeon."

¹⁰ So Abram brought all these animals to him. He cut each of them in half and laid each half opposite the other. However, he did not cut the birds in half.

¹¹ When birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was just about to set, a deep sleep—a dreadful, deep darkness—came over Abram.

¹³ God said to Abram, "You can know for sure that your descendants will live in a land that is not their own, where they

will be slaves, and they will be oppressed for 400 years.

¹⁴ But I will punish the nation they serve, and after that they will come out with many possessions.

¹⁵ But you will die in peace and be buried at a very old age.

¹⁶ In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, because the sin of the Amorites will not have run its course until then."

¹⁷ The sun had gone down, and it was dark. Suddenly a smoking oven and a flaming torch passed between the animal pieces.

¹⁸ At that time the LORD made a promise to Abram. He said, "I will give this land to your descendants. This is the land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.

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

²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

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

16 ¹ Sarai, Abram's wife, was not able to have children. She owned an Egyptian slave named Hagar.

² So Sarai said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Why don't you sleep with my slave? Maybe I can build a family through her." Abram agreed with Sarai.

³ After Abram had lived in Canaan for ten years, Abram's wife Sarai took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar realized that she was pregnant, she began to be disrespectful to Sarai, her owner.

⁵ So Sarai complained to Abram, "I'm being treated unfairly! And it's your

fault! I know that I gave my slave to you, but now that she's pregnant, she's being disrespectful to me. May the LORD decide who is right—you or me."

⁶ Abram answered Sarai, "Here, she's your slave. Do what you like with her." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar so much that she ran away.

⁷ The Messenger of the LORD found her by a spring in the desert, the spring on the way to Shur.

⁸ He said, "Hagar, Sarai's slave, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She answered, "I'm running away from my owner Sarai."

⁹ The Messenger of the LORD said to her, "Go back to your owner, and place yourself under her authority."

¹⁰ The Messenger of the LORD also said to her, "I will give you many descendants. No one will be able to

count them because there will be so many."

¹¹ Then the Messenger of the LORD said to her, "You are pregnant, and you will give birth to a son. You will name him Ishmael [God Hears], because the LORD has heard your cry of distress.

¹² He will be as free and wild as an untamed donkey. He will fight with everyone, and everyone will fight with him. He will have conflicts with all his relatives."

¹³ Hagar named the LORD, who had been speaking to her, "You Are the God Who Watches Over Me." She said, "This is the place where I watched the one who watches over me."

¹⁴ This is why the well is named Beer Lahai Roi [Well of the Living One Who Watches Over Me]. It is still there between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ Hagar gave birth to Abram's son. Abram named him Ishmael.

¹⁶ Abram was 86 years old when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael.

17 ¹ When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said to Abram, "I am God Almighty. Live in my presence with integrity.

² I will give you my promise, and I will give you very many descendants."

³ Immediately, Abram bowed with his face touching the ground, and again God spoke to him,

⁴ "My promise is still with you. You will become the father of many nations.

⁵ So your name will no longer be Abram [Exalted Father], but Abraham [Father of Many] because I have made you a father of many nations.

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

⁷ I will make my promise to you and your descendants for generations to come as an everlasting promise. I will be your God and the God of your descendants.

⁸ I am also giving this land where you are living—all of Canaan—to you and your descendants as your permanent possession. And I will be your God."

⁹ God also said to Abraham, "You and your descendants in generations to come are to be faithful to my promise.

¹⁰ This is how you are to be faithful to my promise: Every male among you is to be circumcised.

¹¹ All of you must be circumcised. That will be the sign of the promise from me to you.

¹² For generations to come every male child who is eight days old must be circumcised, whether he is born in your

household or bought with money from a foreigner who's not related to you.

¹³ Every male born in your household or bought with your money is to be circumcised without exception. So my promise will be a sign on your flesh, an everlasting promise.

¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male must be excluded from his people because he has rejected my promise."

¹⁵ God said to Abraham, "Don't call your wife by the name Sarai anymore. Instead, her name is Sarah [Princess].

¹⁶ I will bless her, and I will also give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will become a mother of nations, and kings will come from her."

¹⁷ Immediately, Abraham bowed with his face touching the ground. He laughed as he thought to himself, "Can a son be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can

Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, have a child?"

¹⁸ Then Abraham said to God, "Why not let Ishmael be my heir?"

¹⁹ God replied, "No! Your wife Sarah will give you a son, and you will name him Isaac [He Laughs]. I will make an everlasting promise to him and his descendants.

²⁰ I have heard your request about Ishmael. Yes, I will bless him, make him fertile, and increase the number of his descendants. He will be the father of 12 princes, and I will make him a great nation.

²¹ But I will make my promise to Isaac. Sarah will give birth to him at this time next year."

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

²³ So Abraham took his son Ishmael, everyone born in his household, and

everyone bought with money—every male in his household—and circumcised them that day, as God had told him.

²⁴ Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised.

²⁵ His son Ishmael was 13 years old when he was circumcised.

²⁶ That same day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised.

²⁷ All the men of his household, whether born in the household or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

18 ¹ The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oak trees belonging to Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the hottest part of the day.

² Abraham looked up, and suddenly he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them, and

he bowed with his face touching the ground.

³ "Please, sir," Abraham said, "stop by to visit me for a while.

⁴ Why don't we let someone bring a little water? After you wash your feet, you can stretch out and rest under the tree.

⁵ Let me bring some bread so that you can regain your strength. After that you can leave, since this is why you stopped by to visit me." They answered, "That's fine. Do as you say."

⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to find Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three measures of flour, knead it, and make bread."

⁷ Then Abraham ran to the herd and took one of his best calves. He gave it to his servant, who prepared it quickly.

⁸ Abraham took cheese and milk, as well as the meat, and set these in front

of them. Then he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

⁹ They asked him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" He answered, "Over there, in the tent."

¹⁰ The LORD said, "I promise I'll come back to you next year at this time, and your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah happened to be listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind him.

¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were old. Sarah was past the age of childbearing.

¹² And so Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, "Now that I've become old, will I enjoy myself again? What's more, my husband is old!"

¹³ The LORD asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Can I really have a child now that I'm old?'"

¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will come back to you next year at this time, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Because she was afraid, Sarah denied that she had laughed. But the LORD said, "Yes, you did laugh."

¹⁶ Then the men got up to leave. As Abraham was walking with them to see them off, they looked toward Sodom.

¹⁷ The LORD said, "I shouldn't hide what I am going to do from Abraham.

¹⁸ After all, Abraham is going to become a great and mighty nation and through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

¹⁹ I have chosen him so that he will direct his children and his family after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. In this way I, the LORD, will do what I have promised Abraham."

²⁰ The LORD also said, "Sodom and Gomorrah have many complaints against them, and their sin is very serious.

²¹ I must go down and see whether these complaints are true. If not, I will know it."

²² From there the men turned and went on toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing in front of the LORD.

²³ Abraham came closer and asked, "Are you really going to sweep away the innocent with the guilty?"

²⁴ What if there are 50 innocent people in the city? Are you really going to sweep them away? Won't you spare that place for the sake of the 50 innocent people who are in it?

²⁵ It would be unthinkable for you to do such a thing, to treat the innocent and the guilty alike and to kill the innocent with the guilty. That would be unthinkable! Won't the judge of the whole earth do what is fair?"

²⁶ The LORD said, "If I find 50 innocent people inside the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

²⁷ Abraham asked, "Consider now, if I may be so bold as to ask you, although I'm only dust and ashes,

²⁸ what if there are 45 innocent people? Will you destroy the whole city because of 5 fewer people?" The LORD answered, "I will not destroy it if I find 45 there."

²⁹ Abraham asked him again, "What if 40 are found there?" He answered, "For the sake of the 40 I will not do it."

³⁰ "Please don't be angry if I speak again," Abraham said. "What if 30 are found there?" He answered, "If I find 30 there, I will not do it."

³¹ "Look now, if I may be so bold as to ask you," Abraham said. "What if 20 are found there?" He answered, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the 20."

³² "Please don't be angry if I speak only one more time," Abraham said. "What if 10 are found there?" He answered, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the 10."

³³ When the LORD finished speaking to Abraham, he left. Abraham returned home.

19 ¹ The two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gateway. When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed with his face touching the ground.

² He said, "Please, gentlemen, why don't you come to my home and spend the night? You can wash your feet there. Then early tomorrow morning you can continue your journey." "No," they answered, "we'd rather spend the night in the city square."

³ But he insisted so strongly that they came with him and went into his home. He prepared a special dinner for them,

baked some unleavened bread, and they ate.

⁴ Before they had gone to bed, all the young and old male citizens of Sodom surrounded the house.

⁵ They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to stay with you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."

⁶ Then Lot went outside and shut the door behind him.

⁷ "Please, my friends, don't be so wicked," he said.

⁸ "Look, I have two daughters who have never had sex. Why don't you let me bring them out to you? Do whatever you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, since I'm responsible for them."

⁹ But the men yelled, "Get out of the way! This man came here to stay awhile. Now he wants to be our judge! We're

going to treat you worse than those men." They pushed hard against Lot and lunged forward to break down the door.

¹⁰ The men inside reached out, pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.

¹¹ Then they struck all the men who were in the doorway of the house, young and old alike, with blindness so that they gave up trying to find the door.

¹² Then the men asked Lot, "Do you have anyone else here—any in-laws, sons, daughters, or any other relatives in the city? Get them out of here

¹³ because we're going to destroy this place. The complaints to the LORD against its people are so loud that the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

¹⁴ So Lot went out and spoke to the men engaged to his daughters. He said, "Hurry! Get out of this place, because

the LORD is going to destroy the city."
But they thought he was joking.

¹⁵ As soon as it was dawn, the angels urged Lot by saying, "Quick! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you'll be swept away when the city is punished."

¹⁶ When he hesitated, the men grabbed him, his wife, and his two daughters by their hands, because the LORD wanted to spare Lot. They brought them safely outside the city.

¹⁷ As soon as they were outside, one of the angels said, "Run for your lives! Don't look behind you, and don't stop on the plain. Run for the hills, or you'll be swept away!"

¹⁸ Lot answered, "Oh no!"

¹⁹ Even though you've been so good to me and though you've been very kind to me by saving my life, I can't run as far as

the hills. This disaster will overtake me, and I'll die.

²⁰ Look, there's a city near enough to flee to, and it's small. Why don't you let me run there? Isn't it small? Then my life will be saved."

²¹ The angel said to him, "Alright, I will grant you this request too. I will not destroy the city you're talking about.

²² Run there quickly, because I can't do anything until you get there." (The city is named Zoar [Small].)

²³ The sun had just risen over the land as Lot came to Zoar.

²⁴ Then the LORD made burning sulfur and fire rain out of heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah.

²⁵ He destroyed those cities, the whole plain, all who lived in the cities, and whatever grew on the ground.

²⁶ Lot's wife looked back and turned into a column of salt.

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

²⁸ When he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land in the plain, he saw smoke rising from the land like the thick smoke of a furnace.

²⁹ When God destroyed the cities on the plain, he remembered Abraham. Lot was allowed to escape from the destruction that came to the cities where he was living.

³⁰ Lot left Zoar because he was afraid to stay there. He and his two daughters settled in the mountains where they lived in a cave.

³¹ The older daughter said to the younger one, "Our father is old. No men are here. We can't get married as other people do.

³² Let's give our father wine to drink. Then we'll go to bed with him so that

we'll be able to preserve our family line through our father."

³³ That night they gave their father wine to drink. Then the older one went to bed with her father. He didn't know when she came to bed or when she got up.

³⁴ The next day the older daughter said to the younger one, "I did it! Last night I went to bed with my father. Let's give him wine to drink again tonight. Then you go to bed with him so that we'll be able to preserve our family line through our father."

³⁵ That night they gave their father wine to drink again. Then the younger one went to bed with him. He didn't know when she came to bed or when she got up.

³⁶ So Lot's two daughters became pregnant by their father.

³⁷ The older one gave birth to a son and named him Moab. He is the ancestor of the Moabites of today.

³⁸ The younger daughter also gave birth to a son and named him Ben Ammi. He is the ancestor of the Ammonites of today.

20 ¹ Abraham moved to the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was living in Gerar,

² Abraham told everyone that his wife Sarah was his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sent men to take Sarah.

³ God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You're going to die because of the woman that you've taken! She's a married woman!"

⁴ Abimelech hadn't come near her, so he asked, "Lord, will you destroy a nation even if it's innocent?"

⁵ Didn't he tell me himself, 'She's my sister,' and didn't she even say, 'He's my

brother'? I did this in all innocence and with a clear conscience."

⁶ "Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience," God said to him in the dream. "In fact, I kept you from sinning against me. That's why I didn't let you touch her.

⁷ Give the man's wife back to him now, because he's a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't give her back, you and all who belong to you are doomed to die."

⁸ Early in the morning Abimelech called together all his officials. He told them about all of this, and they were terrified.

⁹ Then Abimelech called for Abraham and asked him, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you that you would bring such a serious sin on me and my kingdom? You shouldn't have done this to me."

¹⁰ Abimelech also asked Abraham, "What were you thinking when you did this?"

¹¹ Abraham said, "I thought that because there are no God-fearing people in this place, I'd be killed because of my wife.

¹² Besides, she is my sister—my father's daughter but not my mother's. She is also my wife.

¹³ When God had me leave my father's home and travel around, I said to her, 'Do me a favor: Wherever we go, say that I'm your brother.'"

¹⁴ Then Abimelech took sheep, cattle, and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham. He also gave his wife Sarah back to him.

¹⁵ Abimelech said, "Look, here's my land. Live anywhere you like."

¹⁶ He said to Sarah, "Don't forget, I've given your brother 25 pounds of silver.

This is to silence any criticism against you from everyone with you. You're completely cleared."

¹⁷ Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves so that they could have children.

¹⁸ (The LORD had made it impossible for any woman in Abimelech's household to have children because of Abraham's wife Sarah.)

21 ¹ The LORD came to help Sarah and did for her what he had promised.

² So she became pregnant, and at the exact time God had promised, she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age.

³ Abraham named his newborn son Isaac.

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

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

⁶ Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.

⁷ Who would have predicted to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet, I have given him a son in his old age."

⁸ The child grew and was weaned. On the day Isaac was weaned, Abraham held a big feast.

⁹ Sarah saw that Abraham's son by Hagar the Egyptian was laughing at Isaac.

¹⁰ She said to Abraham, "Get rid of this slave and her son, because this slave's son must never share the inheritance with my son Isaac."

¹¹ Abraham was upset by this because of his son Ishmael.

¹² But God said to Abraham, "Don't be upset about the boy and your slave. Listen to what Sarah says because through Isaac your descendants will carry on your name.

¹³ Besides, I will make the slave's son into a nation also, because he is your child."

¹⁴ Early the next morning Abraham took bread and a container of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder. He also gave her the boy and sent her on her way. So she left and wandered around in the desert near Beersheba.

¹⁵ When the water in the container was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes.

¹⁶ Then she went about as far away as an arrow can be shot and sat down. She said to herself, "I don't want to watch the

boy die." So she sat down and sobbed loudly.

¹⁷ God heard the boy crying, and the Messenger of God called to Hagar from heaven. "What's the matter, Hagar?" he asked her. "Don't be afraid! God has heard the boy crying from the bushes.

¹⁸ Come on, help the boy up! Take him by the hand, because I'm going to make him into a great nation."

¹⁹ God opened her eyes. Then she saw a well. She filled the container with water and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰ God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became a skilled archer.

²¹ He lived in the desert of Paran, and his mother got him a wife from Egypt.

²² At that time Abimelech, accompanied by Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.

²³ Now, swear an oath to me here in front of God that you will never cheat me, my children, or my descendants. Show me and the land where you've been living the same kindness that I have shown you."

²⁴ Abraham said, "I so swear."

²⁵ Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well which Abimelech's servants had seized.

²⁶ Abimelech replied, "I don't know who did this. You didn't tell me, and I didn't hear about it until today."

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

²⁸ Then Abraham set apart seven female lambs from the flock.

²⁹ Abimelech asked him, "What is the meaning of these seven female lambs you have set apart?"

³⁰ Abraham answered, "Accept these lambs from me so that they may be proof that I dug this well."

³¹ This is why that place is called Beersheba, because both of them swore an oath there.

³² After they made the treaty at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, left and went back to the land of the Philistines.

³³ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba and worshiped the LORD, the Everlasting God, there.

³⁴ Abraham lived a long time in the land of the Philistines.

22 ¹ Later God tested Abraham and called to him, "Abraham!" "Yes, here I am!" he answered.

² God said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt

offering on one of the mountains that I will show you."

³ Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut the wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place that God had told him about.

⁴ Two days later Abraham saw the place in the distance.

⁵ Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the donkey while the boy and I go over there. We'll worship. After that we'll come back to you."

⁶ Then Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and gave it to his son Isaac. Abraham carried the burning coals and the knife. The two of them went on together.

⁷ Isaac spoke up and said, "Father?" "Yes, Son?" Abraham answered. Isaac asked, "We have the burning coals and

the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

⁸ Abraham answered, "God will provide a lamb for the burnt offering, Son." The two of them went on together.

⁹ When they came to the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied up his son Isaac and laid him on top of the wood on the altar.

¹⁰ Next, Abraham picked up the knife and took it in his hand to sacrifice his son.

¹¹ But the Messenger of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Yes?" he answered.

¹² "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you did not refuse to give me your son, your only son."

¹³ When Abraham looked around, he saw a ram behind him caught by its horns in a bush. So Abraham took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

¹⁴ Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide. It is still said today, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

¹⁵ Then the Messenger of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time

¹⁶ and said, "I am taking an oath on my own name, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not refused to give me your son, your only son,

¹⁷ I will certainly bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of their enemies' cities.

¹⁸ Through your descendant all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

¹⁹ Then Abraham returned to his servants, and together they left for Beersheba. Abraham remained in Beersheba.

²⁰ Later Abraham was told, "Milcah has given birth to these children of your brother Nahor:

²¹ Uz (the firstborn), Buz (his brother), Kemuel (father of Aram),

²² Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

²³ Bethuel is the father of Rebekah. Milcah had these eight sons by Abraham's brother Nahor.

²⁴ Nahor's concubine, whose name was Reumah, had the following children: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah."

23 ¹ Sarah lived to be 127 years old. This was the length of her life.

² She died in Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in Canaan. Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to cry about her death.

³ Then Abraham left the side of his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites,

⁴ "I'm a stranger with no permanent home. Let me have some of your property for a tomb so that I can bury my dead wife."

⁵ The Hittites answered Abraham,

⁶ "Listen to us, sir. You are a mighty leader among us. Bury your dead in one of our best tombs. Not one of us will withhold from you his tomb for burying your dead."

⁷ Abraham got up in front of the Hittites, the people of that region, and bowed with his face touching the ground.

⁸ He said to them, "If you are willing to let me bury my wife, listen to me. Encourage Ephron, son of Zohar,

⁹ to let me have the cave of Machpelah that he owns at the end of his field. He should sell it to me for its full price as my property to be used as a tomb among you."

¹⁰ Ephron was sitting among the Hittites. He answered Abraham so that everyone who was entering the city gate could hear him. He said,

¹¹ "No, sir, listen to me. I'm giving you the field together with the cave that is in it. My people are witnesses that I'm giving it to you. Bury your wife!"

¹² Abraham bowed down again in front of the people of that region.

¹³ He spoke to Ephron so that the people of that region could hear him. He said, "If you would only listen to me. I will pay you the price of the field. Take it from me so that I can bury my wife there."

¹⁴ Ephron answered Abraham,

¹⁵ "Sir, listen to me. The land is worth ten pounds of silver. What is that between us? Bury your wife!"

¹⁶ Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms. So he weighed out for Ephron the amount stated in front of the Hittites: ten pounds of silver at the current merchants' exchange rate.

¹⁷ So Ephron's field at Machpelah, east of Mamre, was sold

¹⁸ to Abraham. His property included the field with the cave in it as well as all the trees inside the boundaries of the field. The Hittites together with all who had entered the city gate were the official witnesses for the agreement.

¹⁹ After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre (that is, Hebron).

²⁰ So the field and its cave were sold by the Hittites to Abraham as his property to be used as a tomb.

24 ¹ By now Abraham was old, and the LORD had blessed him in every way.

² So Abraham said to the senior servant of his household who was in charge of all that he owned, "Take a solemn oath.

³ I want you to swear by the LORD God of heaven and earth that you will not get my son a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I'm living.

⁴ Instead, you will go to the land of my relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

⁵ The servant asked him, "What if the woman doesn't want to come back to this land with me? Should I take your son all the way back to the land you came from?"

⁶ "Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said to him.

⁷ "The LORD God of heaven took me from my father's home and the land of my family. He spoke to me and swore this oath: 'I will give this land to your descendants.'" God will send his angel ahead of you, and you will get my son a wife from there.

⁸ If the woman doesn't want to come back with you, then you'll be free from this oath that you swear to me. But don't take my son back there."

⁹ So the servant did as his master Abraham commanded and swore the oath to him concerning this.

¹⁰ Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and left, taking with him all of his master's best things. He traveled to Aram Naharaim, Nahor's city.

¹¹ The servant had the camels kneel down outside the city by the well. It was

evening, when the women would go out to draw water.

¹² Then he prayed, "LORD, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today. Show your kindness to Abraham.

¹³ Here I am standing by the spring, and the girls of the city are coming out to draw water.

¹⁴ I will ask a girl, 'May I please have a drink from your jar?' If she answers, 'Have a drink, and I'll also water your camels,' let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. This way I'll know that you've shown your kindness to my master."

¹⁵ Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor.

¹⁶ The girl was a very attractive virgin. No man had ever had sexual intercourse

with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came back.

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

¹⁸ "Drink, sir," she said. She quickly lowered her jar to her hand and gave him a drink.

¹⁹ When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I'll also keep drawing water for your camels until they've had enough to drink."

²⁰ So she quickly emptied her jar into the water trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.

²¹ The man was silently watching her to see whether or not the LORD had made his trip successful.

²² When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a fifth of an ounce and two gold bracelets weighing four ounces.

²³ He asked, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me whether there is room in your father's house for us to spend the night."

²⁴ She answered him, "I'm the daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah and Nahor.

²⁵ We have plenty of straw and feed for your camels and room for you to spend the night."

²⁶ The man knelt, bowing to the LORD with his face touching the ground.

²⁷ He said, "Praise the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. The LORD hasn't failed to be kind and faithful to my master. The LORD has led me on this trip to the home of my master's relatives."

²⁸ The girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.

²⁹ Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban.

³⁰ He saw the nose ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists and heard

her tell what the man had said to her. Immediately, Laban ran out to the man by the spring. He came to the man, who was standing with the camels by the spring.

³¹ He said, "Come in, you whom the LORD has blessed. Why are you standing out here? I have straightened up the house and made a place for the camels."

³² So the man went into the house. The camels were unloaded and given straw and feed. Then water was brought for him and his men to wash their feet.

³³ When the food was put in front of him, he said, "I won't eat until I've said what I have to say." "Speak up," Laban said.

³⁴ "I am Abraham's servant," he said.

³⁵ "The LORD has blessed my master, and he has become wealthy. The LORD has given him sheep and cattle, silver

and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys.

³⁶ My master's wife Sarah gave him a son in her old age, and my master has given that son everything he has.

³⁷ My master made me swear this oath: 'Don't get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I'm living.

³⁸ Instead, go to my father's home and to my relatives, and get my son a wife.'

³⁹ "I asked my master, 'What if the woman won't come back with me?'

⁴⁰ "He answered me, 'I have been living the way the LORD wants me to. The LORD will send his angel with you to make your trip successful. You will get my son a wife from my relatives and from my father's family.

⁴¹ Then you will be free from your oath to me. You will also be free of your oath

to me if my relatives are not willing to do this when you go to them.'

⁴² "When I came to the spring today, I prayed, 'LORD God of my master Abraham, please make my trip successful.

⁴³ I'm standing by the spring. I'll say to the young woman who comes out to draw water, "Please give me a drink of water."

⁴⁴ If she says to me, "Not only may you have a drink, but I will also draw water for your camels," let her be the woman the LORD has chosen for my master's son.'

⁴⁵ "Before I had finished praying, Rebekah came with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water." So I asked her, 'May I have a drink?'

⁴⁶ She quickly lowered her jar and said, 'Have a drink, and I'll water your camels

too.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels.

⁴⁷ "Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' "She answered, 'The daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor and Milcah.' "I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her wrists.

⁴⁸ I knelt, bowing down to the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. The LORD led me in the right direction to get the daughter of my master's relative for his son.

⁴⁹ Tell me whether or not you're going to show my master true kindness so that I will know what to do."

⁵⁰ Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the LORD. We can't say anything to you one way or another.

⁵¹ Here's Rebekah! Take her and go! She will become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has said."

⁵² When Abraham's servant heard their answer, he bowed down to the LORD.

⁵³ The servant took out gold and silver jewelry and clothes and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave expensive presents to her brother and mother.

⁵⁴ Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they got up in the morning, he said, "Let me go back to my master."

⁵⁵ Her brother and mother replied, "Let the girl stay with us ten days or so. After that she may go."

⁵⁶ He said to them, "Don't delay me now that the LORD has made my trip successful. Let me go back to my master."

⁵⁷ So they said, "We'll call the girl and ask her."

⁵⁸ They called for Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "Yes, I'll go."

⁵⁹ So they let their sister Rebekah and her nurse go with Abraham's servant and his men.

⁶⁰ They gave Rebekah a blessing: "May you, our sister, become the mother of many thousands of children. May your descendants take possession of their enemies' cities."

⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her maids left. Riding on camels, they followed the man. The servant took Rebekah and left.

⁶² Isaac had just come back from Beer Lahai Roi, since he was living in the Negev.

⁶³ Toward evening Isaac went out into the field to meditate. When he looked up, he saw camels coming.

⁶⁴ When Rebekah saw Isaac, she got down from her camel.

⁶⁵ She asked the servant, "Who is that man over there coming through the field to meet us?" "That is my master," the

servant answered. Then she took her veil and covered herself.

⁶⁶ The servant reported to Isaac everything he had done.

⁶⁷ Isaac took her into his mother Sarah's tent. He married Rebekah. She became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

25 ¹ Abraham married again, and his wife's name was Keturah.

² Keturah gave birth to these sons of Abraham: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

³ Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's descendants were the Assyrians, the Letushites, and the Leummites.

⁴ The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. These were the descendants of Keturah.

⁵ Abraham left everything he had to Isaac.

⁶ But while he was still living, Abraham had given gifts to the sons of his concubines. He sent them away from his son Isaac to a land in the east.

⁷ Abraham lived 175 years.

⁸ Then he took his last breath, and died at a very old age. After a long and full life, he joined his ancestors in death.

⁹ His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron, son of Zohar the Hittite. The cave is east of Mamre.

¹⁰ This was the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah.

¹¹ After Abraham died, God blessed his son Isaac, who settled near Beer Lahai Roi.

¹² This is the account of the descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael. He was the son of Sarah's Egyptian slave Hagar and Abraham.

¹³ These are the names of the sons of Ishmael listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth (Ishmael's firstborn), Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

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

¹⁶ These are the sons of Ishmael and their names listed by their settlements and camps—12 leaders of their tribes.

¹⁷ Ishmael lived 137 years. Then he took his last breath and died. He joined his ancestors in death.

¹⁸ His descendants lived as nomads from the region of Havilah to Shur, which is near Egypt, in the direction of Assyria. They all fought with each other.

¹⁹ This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac and his descendants. Abraham was the father of Isaac.

²⁰ Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel

the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹ Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.

²² When the children inside her were struggling with each other, she said, "If it's like this now, what will become of me?" So she went to ask the LORD.

²³ The LORD said to her, "Two countries are in your womb. Two nations will go their separate ways from birth. One nation will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

²⁴ When the time came for her to give birth, she had twins.

²⁵ The first one born was red. His whole body was covered with hair, so they named him Esau [Hairy].

²⁶ Afterwards, his brother was born with his hand holding on to Esau's heel,

and so he was named Jacob [Heel]. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.

²⁷ They grew up. Esau became an expert hunter, an outdoorsman. Jacob remained a quiet man, staying around the tents.

²⁸ Because Isaac liked to eat the meat of wild animals, he loved Esau. However, Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹ Once, Jacob was preparing a meal when Esau, exhausted, came in from outdoors.

³⁰ So Esau said to Jacob, "Let me have the whole pot of red stuff to eat—that red stuff—I'm exhausted." This is why he was called Edom.

³¹ Jacob responded, "First, sell me your rights as firstborn."

³² "I'm about to die." Esau said. "What good is my inheritance to me?"

³³ "First, swear an oath," Jacob said. So Esau swore an oath to him and sold him his rights as firstborn.

³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau a meal of bread and lentils. He ate and drank, and then he got up and left. This is how Esau showed his contempt for his rights as firstborn.

26 ¹ There was a famine in the land in addition to the earlier one during Abraham's time. So Isaac went to King Abimelech of the Philistines in Gerar.

² The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Don't go to Egypt. Stay where I tell you.

³ Live here in this land for a while, and I will be with you and bless you. I will give all these lands to you and your descendants. I will keep the oath that I swore to your father Abraham.

⁴ I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and

give all these lands to your descendants. Through your descendant all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

⁵ I will bless you because Abraham obeyed me and completed the duties, commands, laws, and instructions I gave him."

⁶ So Isaac lived in Gerar.

⁷ When the men of that place asked about his wife, Isaac answered, "She's my sister." He was afraid to say "my wife." He thought that the men of that place would kill him to get Rebekah, because she was an attractive woman.

⁸ When he had been there a long time, King Abimelech of the Philistines looked out of his window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah.

⁹ Abimelech called for Isaac and said, "So she's really your wife! How could you say, 'She's my sister'?" Isaac answered

him, "I thought I would be killed because of her."

¹⁰ Then Abimelech said, "What have you done to us! One of the people might have easily gone to bed with your wife, and then you would have made us guilty of sin."

¹¹ So Abimelech ordered his people, "Anyone who touches this man or his wife will be put to death."

¹² Isaac planted crops in that land. In that same year he harvested a hundred times as much as he had planted because the LORD had blessed him.

¹³ He continued to be successful, becoming very rich.

¹⁴ Because he owned so many flocks, herds, and servants, the Philistines became jealous of him.

¹⁵ So the Philistines filled in all the wells that his father's servants had dug during his father Abraham's lifetime.

¹⁶ Finally, Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us! You've become more powerful than we are."

¹⁷ So Isaac moved away. He set up his tents in the Gerar Valley and lived there.

¹⁸ He dug out the wells that had been dug during his father Abraham's lifetime. The Philistines had filled them in after Abraham's death. He gave them the same names that his father had given them.

¹⁹ Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found a spring-fed well.

²⁰ The herders from Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herders, claiming, "This water is ours!" So Isaac named the well Esek [Argument], because they had argued with him.

²¹ Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one too. So Isaac named it Sitnah [Accusation].

²² He moved on from there and dug another well. They didn't quarrel over this one. So he named it Rehoboth [Roomy] and said, "Now the LORD has made room for us, and we will prosper in this land."

²³ He went from there to Beersheba.

²⁴ That night the LORD appeared to Isaac, and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Don't be afraid, because I am with you. I will bless you and increase the number of your descendants for my servant Abraham's sake."

²⁵ So Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the LORD. He also pitched his tent in that place, and his servants dug a well there.

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

²⁷ Isaac asked them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and sent me away from you?"

²⁸ They answered, "We have seen that the LORD is with you. So we thought, 'There should be a solemn agreement between us.' We'd like to make an agreement with you

²⁹ that you will not harm us, since we have not touched you. We have done only good to you and let you go in peace. Now you are blessed by the LORD."

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

³¹ Early the next morning they exchanged oaths. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left peacefully.

³² That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about a well they had dug. They said to him, "We've found water."

³³ So he named it Shibah [Oath]. That is why the name of the city is still Beersheba today.

³⁴ When Esau was 40 years old, he married Judith, daughter of Beerli the Hittite. He also married Basemath, daughter of Elon the Hittite.

³⁵ These women brought Isaac and Rebekah a lot of grief.

27 ¹ When Isaac was old and going blind, he called his older son Esau and said to him, "Son!" Esau answered, "Here I am."

² Isaac said, "I'm old. I don't know when I'm going to die.

³ Now take your hunting equipment, your quiver and bow, and go out into the open country and hunt some wild game for me.

⁴ Prepare a good-tasting meal for me, just the way I like it. Bring it to me to eat so that I will bless you before I die."

⁵ Rebekah was listening while Isaac was speaking to his son Esau. When Esau went into the open country to hunt for some wild game to bring back,

⁶ Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I've just heard your father speaking to your brother Esau.

⁷ He said, 'Bring me some wild game, and prepare a good-tasting meal for me to eat so that I will bless you in the presence of the LORD before I die.'

⁸ Now listen to me, Son, and do what I tell you.

⁹ Go to the flock, and get me two good young goats. I'll prepare them as a good-tasting meal for your father, just the way he likes it.

¹⁰ Then take it to your father to eat so that he will bless you before he dies."

¹¹ Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, "My brother Esau is a hairy man, and my skin is smooth.

¹² My father will feel my skin and think I'm mocking him. Then I'll bring a curse on myself instead of a blessing."

¹³ His mother responded, "Let any curse on you fall on me, Son. Just obey me and go! Get me the young goats."

¹⁴ He went and got them and brought them to his mother. She prepared a good-tasting meal, just the way his father liked it.

¹⁵ Then Rebekah took her older son Esau's good clothes, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob.

¹⁶ She put the skins from the young goats on his hands and on the back of his neck.

¹⁷ Then she gave her son Jacob the good-tasting meal and the bread she had prepared.

¹⁸ He went to his father and said, "Father?" "Yes?" he answered. "Who are you, Son?"

¹⁹ Jacob answered his father, "I'm Esau, your firstborn. I've done what you told me. Sit up and eat this meat I've hunted for you so that you may bless me."

²⁰ Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, Son?" "The LORD your God brought it to me," he answered.

²¹ Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come over here so that I can feel your skin, Son, to find out whether or not you really are my son Esau."

²² So Jacob went over to his father. Isaac felt his skin. "The voice is Jacob's," he said, "but the hands are Esau's."

²³ He didn't recognize Jacob, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him.

²⁴ "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked him. "I am," Jacob answered.

²⁵ Isaac said, "Bring me some of the game, and I will eat it, Son, so that I will bless you." Jacob brought it to Isaac, and he ate it. Jacob also brought him wine, and he drank it.

²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here and give me a kiss, Son."

²⁷ He went over and gave him a kiss. When Isaac smelled his clothes, he blessed him and said, "The smell of my son is like the smell of open country that the LORD has blessed.

²⁸ May God give you dew from the sky, fertile fields on the earth, and plenty of fresh grain and new wine.

²⁹ May nations serve you. May people bow down to you. Be the master of your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed. May those who bless you be blessed."

³⁰ Isaac finished blessing Jacob. Jacob had barely left when his brother Esau came in from hunting.

³¹ He, too, prepared a good-tasting meal and brought it to his father. Then he said to his father, "Please, Father, eat some of the meat I've hunted for you so that you will bless me."

³² "Who are you?" his father Isaac asked him. "I'm your firstborn son Esau," he answered.

³³ Trembling violently all over, Isaac asked, "Who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it before you came in. I blessed him, and he will stay blessed."

³⁴ When Esau heard these words from his father, he shouted out a very loud and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me too, Father!"

³⁵ Isaac said, "Your brother came and deceived me and has taken away your blessing."

³⁶ Esau said, "Isn't that why he's named Jacob? He's cheated me twice already: He took my rights as firstborn, and now he's taken my blessing." So he asked, "Haven't you saved a blessing for me?"

³⁷ Isaac answered Esau, "I have made him your master, and I have made all his brothers serve him. I've provided fresh grain and new wine for him. What is left for me to do for you, Son?"

³⁸ Esau asked, "Do you have only one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!" And Esau sobbed loudly.

³⁹ His father Isaac answered him, "The place where you live will lack the fertile fields of the earth and the dew from the sky above.

⁴⁰ You will use your sword to live, and you will serve your brother. But eventually you will gain your freedom and break his yoke off your neck."

⁴¹ So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing that his father had given him. Esau said to himself, "The time to mourn for my father is near. Then I'll kill my brother Jacob."

⁴² When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Watch out! Your brother Esau is comforting himself by planning to kill you."

⁴³ So now, Son, obey me. Quick! Run away to my brother Laban in Haran.

⁴⁴ Stay with him awhile, until your brother's anger cools down.

⁴⁵ When your brother's anger is gone and he has forgotten what you did to him, I'll send for you and get you back. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

⁴⁶ Rebekah said to Isaac, "I can't stand Hittite women! If Jacob marries a Hittite

woman like one of those from around here, I might as well die."

28 ¹ Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him, "You are not to marry any of the Canaanite women.

² Quick! Go to Paddan Aram. Go to the home of Bethuel, your mother's father, and get yourself a wife from there from the daughters of your uncle Laban.

³ May God Almighty bless you, make you fertile, and increase the number of your descendants so that you will become a community of people.

⁴ May he give to you and your descendants the blessing of Abraham so that you may take possession of the land where you are now living, the land that God gave to Abraham."

⁵ Isaac sent Jacob to Paddan Aram. Jacob went to live with Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean and brother of

Rebekah. She was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶ Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him away to Paddan Aram to get a wife from there. He learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had commanded him not to marry any of the Canaanite women.

⁷ He also learned that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had left for Paddan Aram.

⁸ Esau realized that his father Isaac disapproved of Canaanite women.

⁹ So he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth, in addition to the wives he had.

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran.

¹¹ When he came to a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had gone down. He took one of the

stones from that place, put it under his head, and lay down there.

¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway set up on the earth with its top reaching up to heaven. He saw the angels of God going up and coming down on it.

¹³ The LORD was standing above it, saying, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give the land on which you are lying to you and your descendants.

¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust on the earth. You will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. Through you and through your descendant every family on earth will be blessed.

¹⁵ Remember, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I will also bring you back to this land because

I will not leave you until I do what I've promised you."

¹⁶ Then Jacob woke up from his sleep and exclaimed, "Certainly, the LORD is in this place, and I didn't know it!"

¹⁷ Filled with awe, he said, "How awe-inspiring this place is! Certainly, this is the house of God and the gateway to heaven!"

¹⁸ Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had put under his head. He set it up as a marker and poured olive oil on top of it.

¹⁹ He named that place Bethel [House of God]. Previously, the name of the city was Luz.

²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow: "If God will be with me and will watch over me on my trip and give me food to eat and clothes to wear,

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

²² This stone that I have set up as a marker will be the house of God, and I will surely give you a tenth of everything you give me."

29 ¹ Jacob continued on his trip and came to the land in the east.

² He looked around, and out in a field he saw a well with a large stone over the opening. Three flocks of sheep were lying down near it, because the flocks were watered from that well.

³ When all the flocks were gathered there, the stone would be rolled off the opening of the well so that the sheep could be watered. Then the stone would be put back in place over the opening of the well.

⁴ Jacob asked some people, "My friends, where are you from?" "We're from Haran," they replied.

⁵ He asked them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?" They answered, "We do."

⁶ "How is he doing?" Jacob asked them. "He's fine," they answered. "Here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."

⁷ "It's still the middle of the day," he said. "It isn't time yet to gather the livestock. Water the sheep. Then let them graze."

⁸ They replied, "We can't until all the flocks are gathered. When the stone is rolled off the opening of the well, we can water the sheep."

⁹ While he was still talking to them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, because she was a shepherd.

¹⁰ Jacob saw Rachel, daughter of his uncle Laban, with his uncle Laban's sheep. He came forward and rolled the stone off the opening of the well and watered his uncle Laban's sheep.

¹¹ Then Jacob kissed Rachel and sobbed loudly.

¹² When Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's nephew and that he was Rebekah's son, she ran and told her father.

¹³ As soon as Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran to meet him. He hugged and kissed him and brought him into his home. Then Jacob told Laban all that had happened.

¹⁴ Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood." Jacob stayed with him for a whole month.

¹⁵ Then Laban said to him, "Just because you're my relative doesn't mean that you should work for nothing. Tell me what your wages should be."

¹⁶ Laban had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger one was Rachel.

¹⁷ Leah had attractive eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and beautiful features.

¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel. So he offered, "I'll work seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

¹⁹ Laban responded, "It's better that I give her to you than to any other man. Stay with me."

²⁰ Jacob worked seven years in return for Rachel, but the years seemed like only a few days to him because he loved her.

²¹ At the end of the seven years Jacob said to Laban, "The time is up; give me my wife! I want to sleep with her."

²² So Laban invited all the people of that place and gave a wedding feast.

²³ In the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob. Jacob slept with her. When morning came, he realized it was Leah.

²⁴ (Laban had given his slave Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her slave.)

²⁵ "What have you done to me?" Jacob asked Laban. "Didn't I work for you in return for Rachel? Why did you cheat me?"

²⁶ Laban answered, "It's not our custom to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one.

²⁷ Finish the week of wedding festivities with this daughter. Then we will give you the other one too. But you'll have to work for me another seven years."

²⁸ That's what Jacob did. He finished the week with Leah. Then Laban gave his daughter Rachel to him as his wife.

²⁹ (Laban had given his slave Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her slave.)

³⁰ Jacob slept with Rachel too. He loved Rachel more than Leah. So he worked for Laban another seven years.

³¹ When the LORD saw Leah was unloved, he made it possible for her to have children, but Rachel had none.

³² Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [Here's My Son], because she said, "Certainly, the LORD has seen my misery; now my husband will love me!"

³³ She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "Certainly, the LORD has heard that I'm unloved, and he also has given me this son." So she named him Simeon [Hearing].

³⁴ She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me because I've given him three sons." So she named him Levi [Attached].

³⁵ She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named

him Judah [Praise]. Then she stopped having children.

30¹ Rachel saw that she could not have children for Jacob, and she became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"

² Jacob became angry with Rachel and asked, "Can I take the place of God, who has kept you from having children?"

³ She said, "Here's my servant Bilhah. Sleep with her. She can have children for me, and I can build a family for myself through her."

⁴ So she gave him her slave Bilhah as his wife, and Jacob slept with her.

⁵ Bilhah became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Jacob.

⁶ Rachel said, "Now God has judged in my favor. He has heard my prayer and has given me a son." So she named him Dan [He Judges].

⁷ Rachel's slave Bilhah became pregnant again and gave birth to a second son for Jacob.

⁸ Rachel said, "I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won!" So she named him Naphtali [My Struggle].

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

¹⁰ Leah's slave Zilpah gave birth to a son for Jacob.

¹¹ Leah said, "I've been lucky!" So she called him Gad [Luck].

¹² Leah's slave Zilpah gave birth to her second son for Jacob.

¹³ Leah said, "I've been blessed! Women will call me blessed." So she named him Asher [Blessing].

¹⁴ During the wheat harvest Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrakes. He brought them to

his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

¹⁵ Leah replied, "Isn't it enough that you took my husband? Are you also going to take my son's mandrakes?" Rachel said, "Very well, Jacob can go to bed with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes."

¹⁶ As Jacob was coming in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. "You are to sleep with me," she said. "You are my reward for my son's mandrakes." So he went to bed with her that night.

¹⁷ God answered Leah's prayer. She became pregnant and gave birth to her fifth son for Jacob.

¹⁸ Leah said, "God has given me my reward because I gave my slave to my husband." So she named him Issachar [Reward].

¹⁹ She became pregnant again and gave birth to her sixth son for Jacob.

²⁰ Leah said, "God has presented me with a beautiful present. This time my husband will honor me because I have given him six sons." So she named him Zebulun [Honor].

²¹ Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

²² Then God remembered Rachel. God answered her prayer and made it possible for her to have children.

²³ So she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Then she said, "God has taken away my disgrace."

²⁴ She named him Joseph [May He Give Another] and said, "May the LORD give me another son."

²⁵ After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Let me go home to my own country."

²⁶ Give me my wives and my children for whom I've worked, and let me go. You know how much work I've done for you."

²⁷ Laban replied, "Listen to me. I've learned from the signs I've seen that the LORD has blessed me because of you."

²⁸ So he offered, "Name your wages, and I'll pay them."

²⁹ Jacob responded, "You know how much work I've done for you and what has happened to your livestock under my care.

³⁰ The little that you had before I came has grown to a large amount. The LORD has blessed you wherever I've been. When can I do something for my own family?"

³¹ Laban asked, "What should I give you?" "Don't give me anything," Jacob answered. "Instead, do something for

me, then I'll go back to taking care of and watching your flocks again.

³² Let me go through all of your flocks today and take every speckled or spotted sheep, every black lamb, and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages.

³³ My honesty will speak for itself whenever you come to check on my wages. Any goat I have that isn't speckled or spotted or any lamb that isn't black will be considered stolen."

³⁴ Laban answered, "Agreed. We'll do as you've said."

³⁵ However, that same day Laban took out the striped and spotted male goats, all the speckled and spotted female goats (every one with white on it), and every black lamb. He had his sons take charge of them.

³⁶ He traveled three days away from Jacob. Jacob continued to take care of the rest of Laban's flocks.

³⁷ Then Jacob took fresh-cut branches of poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled the bark on them in strips of white, uncovering the white which was on the branches.

³⁸ He placed the peeled branches in the troughs directly in front of the flocks, at the watering places where the flocks came to drink. When they were in heat and came to drink,

³⁹ they mated in front of the branches. Then they gave birth to young that were striped, speckled, or spotted.

⁴⁰ Jacob separated the rams from the flock and made the rest of the sheep face any that were striped or black in Laban's flocks. So he made separate herds for himself and did not add them to Laban's flocks.

⁴¹ Whenever the stronger of the flocks were in heat, Jacob would lay the branches in the troughs in front of them so that they would mate by the branches.

⁴² But when the flocks in heat were weak, he didn't lay down the branches. So the weaker ones belonged to Laban and the stronger ones to Jacob.

⁴³ As a result, Jacob became very wealthy. He had large flocks, male and female slaves, camels, and donkeys.

31 ¹ Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has taken everything that belonged to our father and has gained all his wealth from him."

² He also noticed that Laban did not appear as friendly to him as before.

³ Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your ancestors and to your relatives, and I will be with you."

⁴ So Jacob sent a message to Rachel and Leah to come out to the open country where his flocks were.

⁵ He said to them, "I have seen that your father isn't as friendly to me as he was before, but the God of my father has been with me.

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

⁷ Your father has cheated me. He has changed my wages ten times. But God hasn't let him harm me.

⁸ Whenever he said, 'The speckled ones will be your wages,' all the flocks gave birth to speckled young. And whenever he said, 'The striped ones will be your wages,' all the flocks gave birth to striped young.

⁹ So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me.

¹⁰ "During the mating season I had a dream: I looked up and saw that the

male goats which were mating were striped, speckled, or spotted.

¹¹ In the dream the Messenger of God called to me, 'Jacob!' And I answered, 'Yes, here I am.'

¹² He said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, or spotted, because I have seen everything that Laban is doing to you.'

¹³ I am the God who appeared to you at Bethel, where you poured olive oil on a stone marker for a holy purpose and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land, and go back to the land of your relatives.'"

¹⁴ Rachel and Leah answered him, "Is there anything left in our father's household for us to inherit?"

¹⁵ Doesn't he think of us as foreigners? Not only did he sell us, but he has used up the money that was paid for us.

¹⁶ Certainly, all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. Now do whatever God has told you."

¹⁷ Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels.

¹⁸ He drove all his livestock ahead of him and took all the possessions that he had accumulated. He took his own livestock that he had accumulated in Paddan Aram and went back to his father Isaac in Canaan.

¹⁹ When Laban went to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's idols.

²⁰ Jacob also tricked Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was leaving.

²¹ So he left in a hurry with all that belonged to him. He crossed the Euphrates River and went toward the mountains of Gilead.

²² Two days later Laban was told that Jacob had left in a hurry.

²³ He and his relatives pursued Jacob for seven days. Laban caught up with him in the mountains of Gilead.

²⁴ God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything at all to Jacob."

²⁵ When Laban finally caught up with Jacob, Jacob had put up his tents in the mountains. So Laban and his relatives put up their tents in the mountains of Gilead.

²⁶ Then Laban asked Jacob, "What have you done by tricking me? You've carried off my daughters like prisoners of war.

²⁷ Why did you leave secretly and trick me? You didn't even tell me you were leaving. I would have sent you on your way rejoicing, with songs accompanied by tambourines and lyres.

²⁸ You didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters. You've done a foolish thing.

²⁹ I have the power to harm you. Last night the God of your father said to me, 'Be careful not to say anything at all to Jacob.'

³⁰ Now you have left for your father's home because you were so homesick. But why did you steal my gods?"

³¹ Jacob answered Laban, "I left because I was afraid. I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force.

³² If you find your gods, the one who has them will not be allowed to live. In the presence of our relatives, search as much as you want through what I have, and take what is yours." (Jacob didn't know that Rachel had stolen the gods.)

³³ So Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two slaves. But he found nothing. He came

out of Leah's tent and went into Rachel's tent.

³⁴ Rachel had taken the idols and had put them in her camel's saddle-bag and was sitting on them. Laban rummaged through the whole tent but found nothing.

³⁵ Rachel said to her father, "Don't be angry, Father, but I can't get up to greet you; I'm having my period." So even though Laban had made a thorough search, he didn't find the idols.

³⁶ Then Jacob became angry and confronted Laban. "What is my crime?" Jacob demanded of Laban. "What is my offense that you have come chasing after me?"

³⁷ Now that you've rummaged through all my things, did you find anything from your house? Put it here in front of all our relatives. Let them decide which one of us is right.

³⁸ "I've been with you for 20 years. Your sheep and goats never miscarried, and I never ate any rams from your flocks.

³⁹ I never brought you any of the flock that was killed by wild animals. I paid for the loss myself. That's what you demanded of me when any of the flock was stolen during the day or at night.

⁴⁰ The scorching heat during the day and the cold at night wore me down, and I lost a lot of sleep.

⁴¹ I've been with your household 20 years now. I worked for you 14 years for your two daughters and 6 years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times.

⁴² If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would have sent me away empty-handed by now. God has seen my misery and hard work, and last night he made it right."

⁴³ Then Laban answered Jacob, "These are my daughters, my grandchildren, and my flocks. Everything you see is mine! Yet, what can I do today for my daughters or for their children?"

⁴⁴ Now, let's make an agreement and let it stand as a witness between you and me."

⁴⁵ Jacob took a stone and set it up as a marker.

⁴⁶ Then Jacob said to his relatives, "Gather some stones." They took stones, put them into a pile, and ate there by the pile of stones.

⁴⁷ In his language Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha [Witness Pile], but Jacob called it Galeed.

⁴⁸ Laban said, "This pile of stones stands as a witness between you and me today." This is why it was named Galeed

⁴⁹ and also Mizpah [Watchtower], because he said, "May the LORD watch

between you and me when we're unable to see each other.

⁵⁰ If you mistreat my daughters or marry other women behind my back, remember that God stands as a witness between you and me."

⁵¹ Laban said to Jacob, "Here is the pile of stones, and here is the marker that I have set up between you and me.

⁵² This pile of stones and this marker stand as witnesses that I will not go past the pile of stones to harm you, and that you will not go past the pile of stones or marker to harm me.

⁵³ May the God of Abraham and Nahor—the God of their father—judge between us." So Jacob swore this oath by the Fear of his father Isaac

⁵⁴ and offered a sacrifice on the mountain. He invited his relatives to eat the meal with him. They ate with him and spent the night on the mountain.

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

32 ¹ As Jacob went on his way, God's angels met him.

² When he saw them, Jacob said, "This is God's camp!" He named that place Mahanaim [Two Camps].

³ Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in Seir, the country of Edom.

⁴ He commanded them to give this message to Esau, "Sir, this is what Jacob has to say, 'I've been living with Laban and have stayed until now.

⁵ I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, and male and female slaves. I've sent these messengers to tell you this news in order to win your favor.'"

⁶ When the messengers came back to Jacob, they said, "We went to your

brother Esau. He is coming to meet you with 400 men."

⁷ Jacob was terrified and distressed. So he divided the people, the sheep and goats, the cattle, and the camels into two camps.

⁸ He thought, "If Esau attacks the one camp, then the other camp will be able to escape."

⁹ Then Jacob prayed, "God of my grandfather Abraham and God of my father Isaac! LORD, you said to me, 'Go back to your land and to your relatives, and I will make you prosperous.'

¹⁰ I'm not worthy of all the love and faithfulness you have shown me. I only had a shepherd's staff when I crossed the Jordan River, but now I have two camps.

¹¹ Please save me from my brother Esau, because I'm afraid of him. I'm

afraid that he'll come and attack me and the mothers and children too.

¹² But you did say, 'I will make sure that you are prosperous and that your descendants will be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. No one will be able to count them because there are so many.'

¹³ He stayed there that night. Then he prepared a gift for his brother Esau from what he had brought with him:

¹⁴ 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep,

¹⁵ 30 female camels with their young, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys.

¹⁶ He placed servants in charge of each herd. Then he said to his servants, "Go ahead of me, and keep a distance between the herds."

¹⁷ He commanded the first servant, "When my brother Esau meets you and

asks you, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and whose animals are these ahead of you?'

¹⁸ then say, 'Sir, they belong to your servant Jacob. This is a gift sent to you. Jacob is right behind us.'"

¹⁹ He also commanded the second servant, the third, and all the others who followed the herds. He said, "Say the same thing to Esau when you find him.

²⁰ And be sure to add, 'Jacob is right behind us, sir.'" He thought, "I'll make peace with him by giving him this gift that I'm sending ahead of me. After that I will see him, and he'll welcome me back."

²¹ So Jacob sent the gift ahead of him while he stayed in the camp that night.

²² During that night he got up and gathered his two wives, his two slaves and his eleven children and crossed at the shallow part of the Jabbok River.

²³ After he sent them across the stream, he sent everything else across.

²⁴ So Jacob was left alone. Then a man wrestled with him until dawn.

²⁵ When the man saw that he could not win against Jacob, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that it was dislocated as they wrestled.

²⁶ Then the man said, "Let me go; it's almost dawn." But Jacob answered, "I won't let you go until you bless me."

²⁷ So the man asked him, "What's your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

²⁸ The man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob but Israel [He Struggles With God], because you have struggled with God and with men—and you have won."

²⁹ Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." The man answered, "Why do you ask for my name?" Then he blessed Jacob there.

³⁰ So Jacob named that place Peniel [Face of God], because he said, "I have seen God face to face, but my life was saved."

³¹ The sun rose as he passed Penuel. He was limping because of his hip.

³² (Therefore, even today the people of Israel do not eat the muscle of the thigh attached to the hip socket because God touched the socket of Jacob's hip at the muscle of the thigh.)

33 ¹ Jacob saw Esau coming with 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two slaves.

² He put the slaves and their children in front, Leah and her children after them, and Rachel and Joseph last.

³ He went on ahead of them and bowed seven times with his face touching the ground as he came near his brother.

⁴ Then Esau ran to meet Jacob. Esau hugged him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. They both cried.

⁵ When he saw the women and children, Esau asked, "Who are these people here with you?" "The children God has graciously given me, sir," Jacob answered.

⁶ Then the slaves and their children came forward and bowed down.

⁷ Likewise, Leah and her children came forward and bowed down. Finally, Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed down.

⁸ Then Esau asked, "Why did you send this whole group of people and animals I met?" He answered, "To win your favor, sir."

⁹ Esau said, "I have enough. Keep what you have, Brother."

¹⁰ Jacob said, "No, please take the gift I'm giving you, because I've seen your

face as if I were seeing the face of God, and yet you welcomed me so warmly.

¹¹ Please take the present I've brought you, because God has been gracious to me and has given me all that I need." So Esau took it because Jacob insisted.

¹² Then Esau said, "Let's get ready to go, and I'll go with you."

¹³ Jacob said to him, "Sir, you know that the children are frail and that I have to take care of the flocks and cattle that are nursing their young. If they're driven too hard for even one day, all the flocks will die.

¹⁴ Go ahead of me, sir. I will slowly and gently guide the herds that are in front of me at their pace and at the children's pace until I come to you in Seir."

¹⁵ Esau said, "Then let me leave some of my men with you." "Why do that?" Jacob asked. "I only want to win your favor, sir."

¹⁶ That day Esau started back to Seir.

¹⁷ But Jacob moved on to Succoth, where he built a house for himself and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place is named Succoth [Shelters].

¹⁸ So having come from Paddan Aram, Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem in Canaan. He camped within sight of the city.

¹⁹ Then he bought the piece of land on which he had put up his tents. He bought it from the sons of Hamor, father of Shechem, for 100 pieces of silver.

²⁰ He set up an altar there and named it God Is the God of Israel.

34 ¹ Dinah, daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out to visit some of the Canaanite women.

² When Shechem, son of the local ruler Hamor the Hivite, saw her, he took her and raped her.

³ He became very fond of Jacob's daughter Dinah. He loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her.

⁴ So Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get me this girl for my wife."

⁵ Jacob heard that Shechem had dishonored his daughter Dinah. His sons were with his livestock out in the open country, so Jacob kept quiet until they came home.

⁶ So Shechem's father Hamor came to Jacob to speak with him.

⁷ Jacob's sons came in from the open country as soon as they heard the news. The men felt outraged and very angry because Shechem had committed such a godless act against Israel's family by raping Jacob's daughter. This shouldn't have happened.

⁸ Hamor told them. "My son Shechem has his heart set on your daughter. Please let her marry him."

⁹ Intermarry with us; give your daughters to us, and take ours for yourselves.

¹⁰ You can live with us, and the land will be yours. Live here, move about freely in this area, and acquire property here."

¹¹ Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and her brothers, "Do me this favor. I'll give you whatever you ask.

¹² Set the price I must pay for the bride and the gift I must give her as high as you want. I'll pay exactly what you tell me. Give me the girl as my wife."

¹³ Then Jacob's sons gave Shechem and his father Hamor a misleading answer because he had dishonored their sister Dinah.

¹⁴ They said, "We can't do this. We can't give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised. That would be a disgrace to us!

¹⁵ We will give our consent to you only on one condition: Every male must be circumcised as we are.

¹⁶ Then we'll give our daughters to you and take yours for ourselves, and we'll live with you and become one people.

¹⁷ If you won't agree to be circumcised, we'll take our daughter and go."

¹⁸ Their proposal seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem.

¹⁹ The young man didn't waste any time in doing what they said because he took such pleasure in Jacob's daughter. He was the most honored person in all his father's family.

²⁰ So Hamor and his son Shechem went to their city gate to speak to the men of their city. They said,

²¹ "These people are friendly toward us, so let them live in our land and move about freely in the area. Look, there's plenty of room in this land for them. We

can marry their daughters and let them marry ours.

²² These people will consent to live with us and become one nation on one condition: Every male must be circumcised as they are.

²³ Won't their livestock, their personal property, and all their animals be ours? We only need to agree to do this for them. Then they'll live with us."

²⁴ All the men who had come out to the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem. So they were all circumcised at the city gate.

²⁵ Two days later, while the men were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and boldly attacked the city. They killed every man

²⁶ including Hamor and his son Shechem. They took Dinah from Shechem's home and left.

²⁷ Then Jacob's sons stripped the corpses and looted the city where their sister had been dishonored.

²⁸ They took the sheep and goats, cattle, donkeys, and whatever else was in the city or out in the fields.

²⁹ They carried off all the wealth and all the women and children and looted everything in the houses.

³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have caused me a lot of trouble! You've made the people living in the area, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, hate me. There are only a few of us. If they join forces against me and attack me, my family and I will be wiped out."

³¹ Simeon and Levi asked, "Should Shechem have been allowed to treat our sister like a prostitute?"

35 ¹ Then God said to Jacob, "Go to Bethel and live there. Make an altar there. I am the God who appeared

to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

² So Jacob said to his family and those who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods which you have, wash yourselves until you are ritually clean, and change your clothes.

³ Then let's go to Bethel. I will make an altar there to God, who answered me when I was troubled and who has been with me wherever I've gone."

⁴ So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods that they had in their possession as well as the earrings that they had on. Jacob buried these things under the oak tree near Shechem.

⁵ As they moved on, God made the people of the cities that were all around them terrified so that no one pursued them.

⁶ Jacob and all the people who were with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan.

⁷ He built an altar there and called that place El Bethel [God of the House of God]. That's where God had revealed himself to Jacob when he was fleeing from his brother.

⁸ Rebekah's nurse Deborah died and was buried under the oak tree outside Bethel. So Jacob called it the Tree of Crying.

⁹ Then God appeared once more to Jacob after he came back from Paddan Aram, and he blessed him.

¹⁰ God said to him, "Your name is Jacob. You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel.

¹¹ God also said to him, "I am God Almighty. Be fertile, and increase in number. A nation and a community of

nations will come from you, and kings will come from you.

¹² I will give you the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac. I will also give this land to your descendants."

¹³ Then God went up from him at the place where he had spoken with him.

¹⁴ So Jacob set up a memorial, a stone marker, to mark the place where God had spoken with him. He poured a wine offering and olive oil on it.

¹⁵ Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him Bethel [House of God].

¹⁶ Then they moved on from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor and was having severe labor pains.

¹⁷ During one of her pains, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid! You're having another son!"

¹⁸ Rachel was dying. As she took her last breath, she named her son Benoni [Son of My Sorrow], but his father named him Benjamin [Son of My Right Hand].

¹⁹ Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).

²⁰ Then Jacob set up a stone as a marker for her grave. The same marker is at Rachel's grave today.

²¹ Israel moved on again and put up his tent beyond Migdal Eder.

²² While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went to bed with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard about it. Jacob had 12 sons.

²³ The sons of Leah were Jacob's firstborn Reuben, then Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

²⁴ The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵ The sons of Rachel's slave Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶ The sons of Leah's slave Zilpah were Gad and Asher. These were Jacob's sons, who were born in Paddan Aram.

²⁷ Jacob came home to his father Isaac to Mamre's city, Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron). Abraham and Isaac had lived there for a while.

²⁸ Isaac was 180 years old

²⁹ when he took his last breath and died. He joined his ancestors in death at a very old age. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

36 ¹ This is the account of Esau (that is, Edom) and his descendants.

² Esau chose his wives from the women of Canaan: Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite; Oholibamah, daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite;

³ also Basemath, daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.

⁴ Adah gave birth to Eliphaz for Esau, and Basemath gave birth to Reuel.

⁵ Oholibamah gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born in Canaan.

⁶ Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, all the members of his household, his possessions, all his cattle, and everything he had accumulated in Canaan and went to another land away from his brother Jacob.

⁷ He did this because they had too many possessions to live together. There wasn't enough pastureland for all of their livestock.

⁸ So Esau, who was also known as Edom, lived in the mountains of Seir.

⁹ This is the account of Esau and his descendants. He was the father of the people of Edom in the mountains of Seir.

¹⁰ These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel, son of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹¹ The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.

¹² Timna was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz. She gave birth to Amalek for Eliphaz. These were the grandsons of Esau's wife Adah.

¹³ These were Reuel's sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁴ These were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon. She gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah for Esau.

¹⁵ These were the tribal leaders among Esau's descendants: The sons of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn, were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz,

¹⁶ Korah, Gatam, and Amalek. These were the tribal leaders descended from Eliphaz in Edom. They were the grandsons of Adah.

¹⁷ These were the tribal leaders among the descendants of Esau's son Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the tribal leaders descended from Reuel in Edom. They were the grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁸ These were the tribal leaders among the descendants of Esau's wife Oholibamah: Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These were the tribal leaders descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, Anah's daughter.

¹⁹ These were the descendants of Esau (that is, Edom), who were tribal leaders.

²⁰ These were the sons of Seir the Horite, the people living in that land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,

²¹ Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These Horite tribal leaders were the sons of Seir in Edom.

²² The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. Lotan's sister was Timna.

²³ These were the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

²⁴ These were the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. (Anah found the hot springs in the desert while he was taking care of the donkeys that belonged to his father Zibeon.)

²⁵ These were the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, daughter of Anah.

²⁶ These were the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.

²⁷ These were the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

²⁸ These were the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

²⁹ These were the Horite tribal leaders: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,

³⁰ Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the Horite tribal leaders in the land of Seir.

³¹ These were the kings who ruled Edom before any king ruled the people of Israel:

³² Bela, son of Beor, ruled Edom. The name of his capital city was Dinhabah.

³³ After Bela died, Jobab, son of Zerah from Bozrah, succeeded him as king.

³⁴ After Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king.

³⁵ After Husham died, Hadad, son of Bedad succeeded him as king. Hadad defeated the Midianites in the country of Moab. The name of his capital city was Avith.

³⁶ After Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah succeeded him as king.

³⁷ After Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the river succeeded him as king.

³⁸ After Shaul died, Baal Hanan, son of Achbor, succeeded him as king.

³⁹ After Baal Hanan, son of Achbor, died, Hadar succeeded him as king, and the name of his capital city was Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Mezahab.

⁴⁰ These were the names of the tribal leaders descended from Esau, by family, place, and name: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth,

⁴¹ Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,

⁴² Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,

⁴³ Magdiel, and Iram. These were the tribal leaders of Edom listed by the places where they lived and the property they owned. Esau was the father of the people of Edom.

37 ¹ Jacob continued to live in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived.

² This is the account of Jacob and his descendants. Joseph was a seventeen-year-old young man. He took care of the flocks with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah,

his father's wives. Joseph told his father about the bad things his brothers were doing.

³ Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons because Joseph had been born in Israel's old age. So he made Joseph a special robe with long sleeves.

⁴ Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them. They hated Joseph and couldn't speak to him on friendly terms.

⁵ Joseph had a dream and when he told his brothers, they hated him even more.

⁶ He said to them, "Please listen to the dream I had.

⁷ We were tying grain into bundles out in the field, and suddenly mine stood up. It remained standing while your bundles gathered around my bundle and bowed down to it."

⁸ Then his brothers asked him, "Are you going to be our king or rule us?" They

hated him even more for his dreams and his words.

⁹ Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream: I saw the sun, the moon, and 11 stars bowing down to me."

¹⁰ When he told his father and his brothers, his father criticized him by asking, "What's this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers come and bow down in front of you?"

¹¹ So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept thinking about these things.

¹² His brothers had gone to take care of their father's flocks at Shechem.

¹³ Israel then said to Joseph, "Your brothers are taking care of the flocks at Shechem. I'm going to send you to them." Joseph responded, "I'll go."

¹⁴ So Israel said, "See how your brothers and the flocks are doing, and bring some news back to me." Then he sent Joseph away from the Hebron Valley. When Joseph came to Shechem,

¹⁵ a man found him wandering around in the open country. "What are you looking for?" the man asked.

¹⁶ Joseph replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Please tell me where they're taking care of their flocks."

¹⁷ The man said, "They moved on from here. I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

¹⁸ They saw him from a distance. Before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

¹⁹ They said to each other, "Look, here comes that master dreamer!

²⁰ Let's kill him, throw him into one of the cisterns, and say that a wild animal

has eaten him. Then we'll see what happens to his dreams."

²¹ When Reuben heard this, he tried to save Joseph from their plot. "Let's not kill him," he said.

²² "Let's not have any bloodshed. Put him into that cistern that's out in the desert, but don't hurt him." Reuben wanted to rescue Joseph from them and bring him back to his father.

²³ So when Joseph reached his brothers, they stripped him of his special robe with long sleeves.

²⁴ Then they took him and put him into an empty cistern. It had no water in it.

²⁵ As they sat down to eat, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were carrying the materials for cosmetics, medicine, and embalming. They were on their way to take them to Egypt.

²⁶ Judah asked his brothers, "What will we gain by killing our brother and covering up his death?"

²⁷ Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites. Let's not hurt him, because he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

²⁸ As the Midianite merchants were passing by, the brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern. They sold him to the Ishmaelites for eight ounces of silver. The Ishmaelites took him to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben came back to the cistern and saw that Joseph was no longer there, he tore his clothes in grief.

³⁰ He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! What am I going to do?"

³¹ So they took Joseph's robe, killed a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood.

³² Then they brought the special robe with long sleeves to their father and

said, "We found this. You better examine it to see whether it's your son's robe or not."

³³ He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! A wild animal has eaten him! Joseph must have been torn to pieces!"

³⁴ Then, to show his grief, Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth around his waist, and mourned for his son a long time.

³⁵ All his other sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. He said, "No, I will mourn for my son until I die." This is how Joseph's father cried over him.

³⁶ Meanwhile, in Egypt the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials and captain of the guard.

38 ¹ About that time Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man from Adullam whose name was Hirah.

² There Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite man whose name was Shua. He married her and slept with her.

³ She became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Er.

⁴ She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son, whom she named Onan.

⁵ Then she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son, whom she named Shelah. He was born at Kezib.

⁶ Judah chose a wife for his firstborn son Er. Her name was Tamar.

⁷ Er angered the LORD. So the LORD took away his life.

⁸ Then Judah said to Onan, "Go sleep with your brother's widow. Do your duty for her as a brother-in-law, and produce a descendant for your brother."

⁹ But Onan knew that the descendant wouldn't belong to him, so whenever he slept with his brother's widow, he

wasted his semen on the ground to avoid giving his brother a descendant.

¹⁰ What Onan did angered the LORD so much that the LORD took away Onan's life too.

¹¹ Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Return to your father's home. Live as a widow until my son Shelah grows up." He thought that this son, too, might die like his brothers. So Tamar went to live in her father's home.

¹² After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. When Judah had finished mourning, he and his friend Hirah from Adullam went to Timnah where the men were shearing Judah's sheep.

¹³ As soon as Tamar was told that her father-in-law was on his way to Timnah to shear his sheep,

¹⁴ she took off her widow's clothes, covered her face with a veil, and

disguised herself. Then she sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. (She did this because she realized that Shelah was grown up now, and she hadn't been given to him in marriage.)

¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face.

¹⁶ Since he didn't know she was his daughter-in-law, he approached her by the roadside and said, "Come on, let's sleep together!" She asked, "What will you pay to sleep with me?"

¹⁷ "I'll send you a young goat from the flock," he answered. She said, "First give me something as a deposit until you send it."

¹⁸ "What should I give you as a deposit?" he asked. "Your signet ring, its cord, and the shepherd's staff that's in your hand," she answered. So he gave

them to her. Then he slept with her, and she became pregnant.

¹⁹ After she got up and left, she took off her veil and put her widow's clothes back on.

²⁰ Judah sent his friend Hirah to deliver the young goat so that he could get back his deposit from the woman, but his friend couldn't find her.

²¹ He asked the men of that area, "Where's that prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim?" "There's no prostitute here," they answered.

²² So he went back to Judah and said, "I couldn't find her. Even the men of that area said, 'There's no prostitute here.'"

²³ Then Judah said, "Let her keep what I gave her, or we'll become a laughingstock. After all, I did send her this young goat, but you couldn't find her."

²⁴ About three months later Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has been acting like a prostitute. What's more, because of it she's pregnant." Judah ordered, "Bring her out to be burned."

²⁵ As she was brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law, "I'm pregnant by the man who owns these things. See if you recognize whose signet ring, cord, and shepherd's staff these are."

²⁶ Judah recognized them and said, "She's not guilty. I am! She did this because I haven't given her my son Shelah." Judah never made love to her again.

²⁷ The time came for Tamar to give birth, and she had twin boys.

²⁸ When she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand. The midwife took

a piece of red yarn, tied it on his wrist, and said, "This one came out first."

²⁹ As he pulled back his hand, his brother was born. So she said, "Is this how you burst into the world!" He was named Perez [Bursting Into].

³⁰ After that his brother was born with the red yarn on his hand. He was named Zerah [Sunrise].

39 ¹ Joseph had been taken to Egypt. Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's Egyptian officials and captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

² The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. He worked in the house of his Egyptian master.

³ Joseph's master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made everything he did successful.

⁴ Potiphar liked Joseph so much that he made him his trusted servant. He

put him in charge of his household and everything he owned.

⁵ From that time on the LORD blessed the Egyptian's household because of Joseph. Therefore, the LORD'S blessing was on everything Potiphar owned in his house and in his fields.

⁶ So he left all that he owned in Joseph's care. He wasn't concerned about anything except the food he ate. Joseph was well-built and handsome.

⁷ After a while his master's wife began to desire Joseph, so she said, "Come to bed with me."

⁸ But Joseph refused and said to her, "My master doesn't concern himself with anything in the house. He trusts me with everything he owns.

⁹ No one in this house is greater than I. He's kept nothing back from me except you, because you're his wife. How could

I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

¹⁰ Although she kept asking Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or be with her.

¹¹ One day he went into the house to do his work, and none of the household servants were there.

¹² She grabbed him by his clothes and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he ran outside and left his clothes in her hand.

¹³ When she realized that he had gone but had left his clothes behind,

¹⁴ she called her household servants and said to them, "Look! My husband brought this Hebrew here to fool around with us. He came in and tried to go to bed with me, but I screamed as loud as I could.

¹⁵ As soon as he heard me scream, he ran outside and left his clothes with me."

¹⁶ She kept Joseph's clothes with her until his master came home.

¹⁷ Then she told him the same story: "The Hebrew slave you brought here came in and tried to fool around with me.

¹⁸ But when I screamed, he ran outside and left his clothes with me."

¹⁹ When Potiphar heard his wife's story, especially when she said, "This is what your slave did to me," he became very angry.

²⁰ So Joseph's master arrested him and put him in the same prison where the king's prisoners were kept. While Joseph was in prison,

²¹ the LORD was with him. The LORD reached out to him with his unchanging love and gave him protection. The LORD also put Joseph on good terms with the warden.

²² So the warden placed Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in that prison. Joseph became responsible for everything that they were doing.

²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care because the LORD was with Joseph and made whatever he did successful.

40 ¹ Later the king's cupbearer and his baker offended their master, the king of Egypt.

² Pharaoh was angry with his chief cupbearer and his chief baker.

³ He put them in the prison of the captain of the guard, the same place where Joseph was a prisoner.

⁴ The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he took care of them. After they had been confined for some time,

⁵ both prisoners—the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt—had

dreams one night. Each man had a dream with its own special meaning.

⁶ When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were upset.

⁷ So he asked these officials of Pharaoh who were with him in his master's prison, "Why do you look so unhappy today?"

⁸ "We both had dreams," they answered him, "but there's no one to tell us what they mean." "Isn't God the only one who can tell what they mean?" Joseph asked them. "Why don't you tell me all about them."

⁹ So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said "In my dream a grapevine with three branches appeared in front of me.

¹⁰ Soon after it sprouted it blossomed. Then its clusters ripened into grapes.

¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, so I took the grapes and squeezed them into it. I put the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

¹² "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days.

¹³ In the next three days Pharaoh will release you and restore you to your position. You will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand as you used to do when you were his cupbearer.

¹⁴ Remember me when things go well for you, and please do me a favor. Mention me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this prison.

¹⁵ I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I've done nothing to deserve being put in this prison."

¹⁶ The chief baker saw that the meaning Joseph had given to the cupbearer's dream was good. So he said to Joseph,

"I had a dream too. In my dream three baskets of white baked goods were on my head.

¹⁷ The top basket contained all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

¹⁸ "This is what it means," Joseph replied. "The three baskets are three days.

¹⁹ In the next three days Pharaoh will cut off your head and hang your dead body on a pole. The birds will eat the flesh from your bones."

²⁰ Two days later, on his birthday, Pharaoh had a special dinner prepared for all his servants. Of all his servants he gave special attention to the chief cupbearer and the chief baker.

²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position. So the cupbearer put the cup in Pharaoh's hand.

²² But he hung the chief baker just as Joseph had said in his interpretation.

²³ Nevertheless, the chief cupbearer didn't remember Joseph. He forgot all about him.

41 ¹ After two full years Pharaoh had a dream. He dreamed he was standing by the Nile River.

² Suddenly, seven nice-looking, well-fed cows came up from the river and began to graze among the reeds.

³ Seven other cows came up from the river behind them. These cows were sickly and skinny. They stood behind the first seven cows on the riverbank.

⁴ The cows that were sickly and skinny ate the seven nice-looking, well-fed cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵ He fell asleep again and had a second dream. Seven good, healthy heads of grain were growing on a single stalk.

⁶ Seven other heads of grain, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted behind them.

⁷ The thin heads of grain swallowed the seven full, healthy heads. Then Pharaoh woke up. It was only a dream.

⁸ In the morning he was so upset that he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could tell him what they meant.

⁹ Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, "I remember a promise I failed to keep.

¹⁰ Some time ago when Pharaoh was angry with his servants, he confined me and the chief baker to the captain of the guard's prison.

¹¹ We both had dreams the same night. Each dream had its own meaning.

¹² A young Hebrew, a slave of the captain of the guard, was with us. We

told him our dreams, and he told each of us what they meant.

¹³ What he told us happened: Pharaoh restored me to my position, but he hung the baker on a pole."

¹⁴ Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and immediately he was brought from the prison. After he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came in front of Pharaoh.

¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can tell me what it means. I heard that when you are told a dream, you can say what it means."

¹⁶ Joseph answered Pharaoh, "I can't, but God can give Pharaoh the answer that he needs."

¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile.

¹⁸ Suddenly, seven nice-looking, well-fed cows came up from the river and began to graze among the reeds.

¹⁹ Seven other cows came up behind them. These cows were scrawny, very sick, and thin. I've never seen such sickly cows in all of Egypt!

²⁰ The thin, sickly cows ate up the seven well-fed ones.

²¹ Even though they had eaten them, no one could tell they had eaten them. They looked just as sick as before. Then I woke up.

²² "In my second dream I saw seven good, full heads of grain growing on a single stalk.

²³ Seven other heads of grain, withered, thin, and scorched by the east wind, sprouted behind them.

²⁴ The thin heads of grain swallowed the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but no one could tell me what it meant."

²⁵ Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh had the same dream twice.

God has told Pharaoh what he's going to do.

²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years. It's all the same dream.

²⁷ The seven thin, sickly cows that came up behind them are seven years. The seven empty heads of grain scorched by the east wind are also seven years. Seven years of famine are coming.

²⁸ "It's just as I said to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what he's going to do.

²⁹ Seven years are coming when there will be plenty of food in Egypt.

³⁰ After them will come seven years of famine. People will forget that there was plenty of food in Egypt, and the famine will ruin the land.

³¹ People won't remember that there once was plenty of food in the land, because the coming famine will be so severe.

³² The reason Pharaoh has had a recurring dream is because the matter has been definitely decided by God, and he will do it very soon.

³³ "Pharaoh should look for a wise and intelligent man and put him in charge of Egypt.

³⁴ Make arrangements to appoint supervisors over the land to take a fifth of Egypt's harvest during the seven good years.

³⁵ Have them collect all the food during these good years and store up grain under Pharaoh's control, to be kept for food in the cities.

³⁶ This food will be a reserve supply for our country during the seven years of famine that will happen in Egypt. Then the land will not be ruined by the famine."

³⁷ Pharaoh and all his servants liked the idea.

³⁸ So Pharaoh asked his servants, "Can we find anyone like this—a man who has God's Spirit in him?"

³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Because God has let you know all this, there is no one as wise and intelligent as you.

⁴⁰ You will be in charge of my palace, and all my people will do what you say. I will be more important than you, only because I'm Pharaoh."

⁴¹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I now put you in charge of Egypt."

⁴² Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring and put it on Joseph's finger. He had Joseph dressed in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.

⁴³ He had him ride in the chariot of the second-in-command. Men ran ahead of him and shouted, "Make way!" Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of Egypt.

⁴⁴ He also said to Joseph, "Even though I am Pharaoh, no one anywhere in Egypt will do anything without your permission."

⁴⁵ Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenathpaneah and gave him Asenath as his wife. She was the daughter of Potiphera, priest from the city of On. Joseph traveled around Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh (the king of Egypt). He left Pharaoh and traveled all around Egypt.

⁴⁷ During the seven good years the land produced large harvests.

⁴⁸ Joseph collected all the food grown in Egypt during those seven years and put this food in the cities. In each city he put the food from the fields around it.

⁴⁹ Joseph stored up grain in huge quantities like the sand on the seashore. He had so much that he finally gave up

keeping any records because he couldn't measure it all.

⁵⁰ Before the years of famine came, Joseph had two sons by Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest from the city of On.

⁵¹ Joseph named his firstborn son Manasseh [He Helps Me Forget], because God helped him forget all his troubles and all about his father's family.

⁵² He named the second son Ephraim [Blessed Twice With Children], because God gave him children in the land where he had suffered.

⁵³ The seven years when there was plenty of food in Egypt came to an end.

⁵⁴ Then the seven years of famine began as Joseph had said they would. All the other countries were experiencing famine. Yet, there was food in Egypt.

⁵⁵ When everyone in Egypt began to feel the effects of the famine, the people

cried to Pharaoh for food. But Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph! Do what he tells you!"

⁵⁶ When the famine had spread all over the country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians. He did this because the famine was severe in Egypt.

⁵⁷ The whole world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, since the famine was so severe all over the world.

42 ¹ When Jacob found out that grain was for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you keep looking at each other?"

² I've heard there's grain for sale in Egypt. Go there and buy some for us so that we won't starve to death."

³ Ten of Joseph's brothers went to buy grain in Egypt.

⁴ Jacob wouldn't send Joseph's brother Benjamin with the other brothers,

because he was afraid that something would happen to him.

⁵ Israel's sons left with the others who were going to buy grain, because there was also famine in Canaan.

⁶ As governor of the country, Joseph was selling grain to everyone. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed in front of him with their faces touching the ground.

⁷ As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them. But he acted as if he didn't know them and spoke harshly to them. "Where did you come from?" he asked them. "From Canaan, to buy food," they answered.

⁸ Even though Joseph recognized his brothers, they didn't recognize him.

⁹ Then he remembered the dreams he once had about them. "You're spies!" he said to them, "And you've come to find out where our country is unprotected."

¹⁰ "No, sir!" they answered him. "We've come to buy food.

¹¹ We're all sons of one man. We're honest men, not spies."

¹² He said to them, "No! You've come to find out where our country is unprotected."

¹³ They answered him, "We were 12 brothers, sons of one man in Canaan. The youngest brother stayed with our father, and the other one is no longer with us."

¹⁴ "It's just as I told you," Joseph said to them. "You're spies!

¹⁵ This is how you'll be tested: I solemnly swear, as surely as Pharaoh lives, that you won't leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

¹⁶ One of you must be sent to get your brother while the rest of you stay in prison. We'll see if you're telling the

truth. If not, I solemnly swear, as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!"

¹⁷ Then he put them in jail for three days.

¹⁸ On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this, and you will live. I, too, fear God.

¹⁹ If you are honest men, you will let one of your brothers stay here in prison. The rest of you will go and take grain back to your starving families.

²⁰ But you must bring me your youngest brother. This will show that you've been telling the truth. Then you won't die." So they agreed.

²¹ They said to each other, "We're surely being punished for what we did to our brother. We saw how troubled he was when he pleaded with us for mercy, but we wouldn't listen. That's why we're in trouble now."

²² Reuben said to them, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen. Now we must pay for this bloodshed."

²³ They didn't know that Joseph could understand them, because he was speaking through an interpreter.

²⁴ He stepped away from them to cry. When he could speak to them again, he came back. Then he picked Simeon and had him arrested right in front of their eyes.

²⁵ Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain. He put each man's money back into his sack and gave them supplies for their trip. After their bags were filled,

²⁶ they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.

²⁷ At the place where they stopped for the night, one of them opened his sack to feed his donkey. His money was right inside his sack.

²⁸ He said to his brothers, "My money has been put back! It's right here in my sack!" They wanted to die. They trembled and turned to each other and asked, "What has God done to us?"

²⁹ When they came to their father Jacob in Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them. They said,

³⁰ "The governor of that land spoke harshly to us and treated us like spies.

³¹ But we said to him, 'We're honest men, not spies.

³² We were 12 brothers, sons of the same father. One is no longer with us. The youngest brother stayed with our father in Canaan.'

³³ "Then the governor of that land said to us, 'This is how I'll know that you're honest men: Leave one of your brothers with me. Take food for your starving families and go.

³⁴ But bring me your youngest brother. Then I'll know that you're not spies but honest men. I'll give your brother back to you, and you'll be able to move about freely in this country."

³⁵ As they were emptying their sacks, each man found his bag of money in his sack. When they and their father saw the bags of money, they were frightened.

³⁶ Their father Jacob said to them, "You're going to make me lose all my children! Joseph is no longer with us, Simeon is no longer with us, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything's against me!"

³⁷ So Reuben said to his father, "You may put my two sons to death if I don't bring him back to you. Let me take care of him, and I'll bring him back to you."

³⁸ Jacob replied, "My son will not go with you. His brother is dead, and he's the only one left. If any harm comes to

him on the trip you're taking, the grief would drive this gray-haired old man to his grave!"

43 ¹The famine was severe in the land.

²When they finished eating the grain they had brought from Egypt, Israel said to his sons, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

³Judah said to him, "The man gave us a severe warning: 'You won't be allowed to see me again unless your brother is with you.'

⁴If you let our brother go with us, we'll go and buy food for you.

⁵If you won't let him go, we won't go. The man said to us, 'You won't be allowed to see me again unless your brother is with you.'"

⁶Israel asked, "Why have you made trouble for me by telling the man you had another brother?"

⁷ They answered, "The man kept asking about us and our family: 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' We simply answered his questions. How could we possibly know he would say, 'Bring your brother here'?"

⁸ Then Judah said to his father Israel, "Send the boy along with me. Let's get going so that we won't starve to death.

⁹ I guarantee that he will come back. You can hold me responsible for him. If I don't bring him back to you and place him here in front of you, you can blame me the rest of my life.

¹⁰ If we hadn't waited so long, we could have made this trip twice by now."

¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, "If that's the way it has to be, then take the man a gift. Put some of the best products of the land in your bags. Take a little balm, a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds.

¹² Take twice as much money with you. You must return the money that was put back in your sacks. Maybe it was a mistake.

¹³ Take your brother, and go back to the man.

¹⁴ May God Almighty make him merciful to you so that he will send your other brother and Benjamin home with you. If I lose my children, I lose my children."

¹⁵ The men took the gifts, twice as much money, and Benjamin. They went to Egypt, where they presented themselves to Joseph.

¹⁶ When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the man in charge of his house, "Take these men to my house. Butcher an animal, and prepare a meal, because they are going to eat with me at noon."

¹⁷ So the man did as Joseph said and took them to Joseph's house.

¹⁸ The men were frightened, because they had been brought to Joseph's house. They thought, "We've been brought here because of the money that was put back into our sacks the first time. They're going to attack us, overpower us, take our donkeys, and make us slaves."

¹⁹ So they came to the man in charge of Joseph's house and spoke to him at the door.

²⁰ "Please, sir," they said, "we came here to buy food once before.

²¹ When we stopped for the night, we opened our sacks, and each man found all of his money inside. So we brought it back with us.

²² We also brought more money to buy food. We have no idea who put our money back in our sacks."

²³ "It's alright," he said. "Don't be afraid! Your God, the God of your father,

must have given you treasure in your sacks. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

²⁴ The man took the brothers into Joseph's house. He gave them water to wash their feet and feed for their donkeys.

²⁵ They got their gifts ready for Joseph's return at noon, because they had heard they were going to eat there.

²⁶ When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts they had brought to the house. Then they bowed to him with their faces touching the ground.

²⁷ He asked them how they were. Then he said, "You told me about your elderly father. How is he? Is he still alive?"

²⁸ They answered, "Yes, sir. Our father is alive and well." Then they knelt, bowing down.

²⁹ As Joseph looked around, he saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son.

"Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" he asked. "God be gracious to you, my son," he said.

³⁰ Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, he hurried away, looking for a place to cry. He went into his private room and cried there.

³¹ Then he washed his face and came out. He was in control of his emotions when he said, "Serve the food."

³² He was served separately from his brothers. The Egyptians who were there with him were also served separately, because they found it offensive to eat with Hebrews.

³³ The brothers were seated facing him according to their ages—from the oldest to the youngest. They looked at each other in amazement.

³⁴ Joseph had portions of food brought to them from his table, but Benjamin's portion was five times more than any of

the others. So they ate and drank with Joseph until they were drunk.

44 ¹ Joseph commanded the man in charge of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can carry. Put each man's money in his sack.

² Then put my silver cup in the youngest brother's sack along with the money for his grain." He did what Joseph told him.

³ At dawn the men were sent on their way with their donkeys.

⁴ They had not gone far from the city when Joseph said to the man in charge of his house, "Go after those men at once, and when you catch up with them, say to them, 'Why have you paid me back with evil when I was good to you?

⁵ Isn't this the cup that my master drinks from and that he uses for telling the future? What you have done is evil!'"

⁶ When he caught up with them, he repeated these words to them.

⁷ They answered him, "Sir, how can you say such things? We would never think of doing anything like that!

⁸ We brought the money we found in our sacks back from Canaan. So why would we steal any silver or gold from your master's house?

⁹ If one of us has it, he will die, and the rest of us will become your slaves."

¹⁰ "I agree," he said. "We'll do what you've said. The man who has the cup will be my slave, and the rest of you can go free."

¹¹ Each one quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it.

¹² Then the man made a thorough search. He began with the oldest and ended with the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

¹³ When they saw this, they tore their clothes in grief. Then each one loaded his donkey and went back into the city.

¹⁴ Judah and his brothers arrived at Joseph's house while Joseph was still there. Immediately, they bowed with their faces touching the ground.

¹⁵ Joseph asked them, "What have you done? Don't you know that a man like me can find things out because he knows the future?"

¹⁶ "Sir, what can we say to you?" Judah asked. "How else can we explain it? How can we prove we're innocent? God has uncovered our guilt. Now all of us are your slaves, including the one who had the cup."

¹⁷ But Joseph said, "I would never think of doing that! Only the man who had the cup will be my slave. The rest of you can go back to your father in peace."

¹⁸ Then Judah went up to Joseph and said, "Please, sir, let me speak openly with you. Don't be angry with me, although you are equal to Pharaoh.

¹⁹ Sir, you asked us, 'Do you have a father or a brother?'

²⁰ We answered, 'We have a father who is old and a younger brother born to him when he was already old. The boy's brother is dead, so he's the only one of his mother's sons left, and his father loves him.'

²¹ "Then you said to us, 'Bring him here to me so that I can see him myself.'

²² We replied, 'The boy can't leave his father. If the boy leaves him, his father will die.'

²³ Then you told us, 'If your youngest brother doesn't come here with you, you will never be allowed to see me again.'

²⁴ When we went back to our father, we told him what you had said.

²⁵ "Then our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little more food.'

²⁶ We answered, 'We can't go back. We can only go back if our youngest brother is with us. The man won't see us unless our youngest brother is with us.'

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

²⁸ One is gone, and I said, "He must have been torn to pieces!" I haven't seen him since.

²⁹ If you take this one away from me too and anything happens to him, you'll drive this gray-haired old man to his grave.'

³⁰ "Our father's life is wrapped up with the boy's life. If I come home without the boy

³¹ and he sees that the boy isn't with me, he'll die. The grief would drive our gray-haired old father to his grave.

³² "I guaranteed my father that the boy would come back. I said, 'If I don't bring him back to you, then you can blame me the rest of my life, Father.'

³³ Sir, please let me stay and be your slave in the boy's place, and let the boy go back with his brothers.

³⁴ How could I go back to my father if the boy isn't with me? I couldn't bear to see my father's misery!"

45 ¹ Joseph could no longer control his emotions in front of everyone who was standing around him, so he cried out, "Have everyone leave me!" No one else was there when Joseph told his brothers who he was.

² He cried so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" His

brothers could not answer him because they were afraid of him.

⁴ "Please come closer to me," Joseph said to his brothers. When they did so, he said, "I am Joseph, the brother you sold into slavery in Egypt!

⁵ Now, don't be sad or angry with yourselves that you sold me. God sent me ahead of you to save lives.

⁶ The famine has been in the land for two years. There will be five more years without plowing or harvesting.

⁷ God sent me ahead of you to make sure that you would have descendants on the earth and to save your lives in an amazing way.

⁸ It wasn't you who sent me here, but God. He has made me like a father to Pharaoh, lord over his entire household, and ruler of Egypt.

⁹ "Hurry back to my father, and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph

Says, "god has made me lord of Egypt. Come here to me right away!

¹⁰ Live in the land of Goshen, where you will be near me. Live there with your children and your grandchildren, as well as your flocks, your herds, and everything you have.

¹¹ I will provide for you in Egypt, since there will be five more years of famine. Then you, your family, and all who belong to you won't lose everything."

¹² "You and my brother Benjamin can see for yourselves that I am the one who is speaking to you.

¹³ Tell my father how greatly honored I am in Egypt and about everything you have seen. Hurry and bring my father here!"

¹⁴ He threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and cried with Benjamin, who was crying on his shoulder.

¹⁵ He kissed all his brothers and cried with them. After that his brothers talked with him.

¹⁶ When Pharaoh's household heard the news that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and his officials were pleased.

¹⁷ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Load up your animals, and go back to Canaan.

¹⁸ Take your father and your families, and come to me. I will give you the best land in Egypt. Then you can enjoy the best food in the land.'

¹⁹ "Give them this order: 'Take wagons with you from Egypt for your children and your wives. Bring your father, and come back.

²⁰ Don't worry about your belongings because the best of everything in Egypt is yours.'"

²¹ Israel's sons did as they were told. Joseph gave them wagons and supplies for their trip as Pharaoh had ordered.

²² He gave each of them a change of clothes, but he gave Benjamin three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothes.

²³ He sent his father ten male donkeys carrying Egypt's best products and ten female donkeys carrying grain, bread, and food for his father's trip.

²⁴ So Joseph sent his brothers on their way. As they were leaving, he said to them, "Don't quarrel on your way back!"

²⁵ So they left Egypt and came to their father Jacob in Canaan.

²⁶ They told him, "Joseph is still alive! Yes, he is ruler of Egypt." Jacob was stunned and didn't believe them.

²⁷ Yet, when they told their father everything Joseph had said to them and

he saw the wagons Joseph had sent to bring him back, his spirits were lifted.

²⁸ "You have convinced me!" Israel said. "My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

46 ¹ Israel moved with all he had. When he came to Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

² God spoke to Israel in a vision that night and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" "Here I am," he answered.

³ "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Don't be afraid to go to Egypt, because I will make you a great nation there.

⁴ I will go with you to Egypt, and I will make sure you come back again. Joseph will close your eyes when you die."

⁵ So Jacob left Beersheba. Israel's sons put their father Jacob, their children,

and their wives in the wagons Pharaoh had sent to bring him back.

⁶ They also took their livestock and the possessions they had accumulated in Canaan. Jacob and all his family arrived in Egypt.

⁷ He had brought his sons, his grandsons, his daughters, and his granddaughters—his entire family.

⁸ These are the names of Israel's descendants (Jacob and his descendants) who arrived in Egypt. Reuben was Jacob's firstborn.

⁹ The sons of Reuben were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

¹⁰ The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.

¹¹ The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹² The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (Er and Onan

had died in Canaan.) The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³ The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puvah, Iob, and Shimron.

¹⁴ The sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵ These were the descendants of the sons Leah gave to Jacob in Paddan Aram, in addition to his daughter Dinah. The total number of these sons and daughters was 33.

¹⁶ The sons of Gad were Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

¹⁷ The sons of Asher were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Their sister was Serah. The sons of Beriah were Heber and Malchiel.

¹⁸ These were the descendants of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah. She gave birth to these children for Jacob. The total was 16.

¹⁹ The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁰ In Egypt, Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph by Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest from the city of On.

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

²² These were the descendants of Rachel who were born to Jacob. The total was 14.

²³ The son of Dan was Hushim.

²⁴ The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵ These were the descendants of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel. She gave birth to these sons for Jacob. The total was 7.

²⁶ The total number of Jacob's direct descendants who went with him to

Egypt was 66. This didn't include the wives of Jacob's sons.

²⁷ Joseph had two sons who were born in Egypt. The grand total of people in Jacob's household who went to Egypt was 70.

²⁸ Israel sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When Israel's family arrived in the region of Goshen,

²⁹ Joseph prepared his chariot and went to meet his father Israel. As soon as he saw his father, he threw his arms around him and cried on his shoulder a long time.

³⁰ Israel said to Joseph, "Now that I've seen for myself that you're still alive, I'm ready to die."

³¹ Then Joseph said to his brothers and his father's family, "I'm going to Pharaoh to tell him, 'My brothers and my father's

family, who were in Canaan, have come to me.

³² The men are shepherds. They take care of livestock. They've brought their flocks and herds and everything they own.'

³³ Now, when Pharaoh calls for you and asks, 'What kind of work do you do?'

³⁴ you must answer, 'We have taken care of herds all our lives, as our ancestors have done.' You must say this so that you may live in the region of Goshen, because all shepherds are disgusting to Egyptians."

47 ¹ Joseph went and told Pharaoh, "My father and my brothers have arrived from Canaan with their flocks, herds, and everything they have. Now they are in Goshen."

² Since he had taken five of his brothers with him, he presented them to Pharaoh.

³ Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What kind of work do you do?" They answered Pharaoh, "We are shepherds, as were our ancestors.

⁴ We have come to live in this land for a while. The famine is so severe in Canaan that there's no pasture for our flocks. So please let us live in Goshen."

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

⁶ All of Egypt is available to you. Have your father and your brothers live in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. If they are qualified, put them in charge of my livestock."

⁷ Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and had him stand in front of Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

⁸ Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?"

⁹ Jacob answered Pharaoh, "The length of my stay on earth has been 130 years. The years of my life have been few and difficult, fewer than my ancestors' years."

¹⁰ Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and left.

¹¹ As Pharaoh had ordered, Joseph had his father and his brothers live in the best part of Egypt, the region of Rameses. He gave them property there.

¹² Joseph also provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's family with food based on the number of children they had.

¹³ The famine was so severe that there was no food anywhere. Neither Egypt nor Canaan were producing crops because of the famine.

¹⁴ Joseph collected all the money that could be found in Egypt and in Canaan as payment for the grain people bought. Then he took it to Pharaoh's palace.

¹⁵ When the money in Egypt and Canaan was gone, all the Egyptians came to Joseph. "Give us food," they said. "Do you want us to die right in front of you? We don't have any more money!"

¹⁶ Joseph replied, "If you don't have any more money, give me your livestock, and I'll give you food in exchange."

¹⁷ So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. During that year he supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock.

¹⁸ When that year was over, they came to him the next year. "Sir," they said to him, "you know that our money is gone, and you have all our livestock. There's nothing left to bring you except our bodies and our land."

¹⁹ Do you want us to die right in front of you? Do you want the land to be ruined?

Take us and our land in exchange for food. Then we will be Pharaoh's slaves and our land will be his property. But give us seed so that we won't starve to death and the ground won't become a desert."

²⁰ Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. Every Egyptian sold his fields because the famine was so severe. The land became Pharaoh's.

²¹ All over Egypt Joseph moved the people to the cities.

²² But he didn't buy the priests' land because the priests received an income from Pharaoh, and they lived on that income. That's why they didn't sell their land.

²³ Joseph said to the people, "Now that I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh, here is seed for you. Plant crops in the land.

²⁴ Every time you harvest, give one–fifth of the produce to Pharaoh. Four–fifths will be yours to use as seed for your fields and as food for your households."

²⁵ "You have saved our lives," they said. "Please, sir, we are willing to be Pharaoh's slaves."

²⁶ Joseph made a law concerning the land in Egypt which is still in force today: One–fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. Only the land of the priests didn't belong to Pharaoh.

²⁷ So the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and had many children.

²⁸ Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years, so he lived a total of 147 years.

²⁹ Israel was about to die. He called for his son Joseph and said to him, "I want you to swear that you love me and are faithful to me. Please don't bury me here.

³⁰ I want to rest with my ancestors. Take me out of Egypt, and bury me in their tomb." "I will do as you say," Joseph answered.

³¹ "Swear to me," he said. So Joseph swore to him. Then Israel bowed down in prayer with his face at the head of his bed.

48 ¹ Later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim to see Jacob.

² When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph is here to see you," Israel gathered his strength and sat up in bed.

³ Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in Canaan and blessed me.

⁴ He said to me, 'I will make you fertile and increase the number of your descendants so that you will become a community of people. I will give this land

to your descendants as a permanent possession.'

⁵ "So your two sons, who were born in Egypt before I came here, are my sons. Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine just as Reuben and Simeon are.

⁶ Any other children you have after them will be yours. They will inherit the land listed under their brothers' names.

⁷ As I was coming back from Paddan, Rachel died in Canaan when we were still some distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there on the way to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

⁸ When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he asked, "Who are they?"

⁹ "They are my sons, whom God has given me here in Egypt," Joseph answered his father. Then Israel said, "Please bring them to me so that I may bless them."

¹⁰ Israel's eyesight was failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to his father, and Israel hugged them and kissed them.

¹¹ Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see you again, and now God has even let me see your sons."

¹² Joseph took them off his father's lap and bowed with his face touching the ground.

¹³ Then Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right, facing Israel's left, and Manasseh on his left, facing Israel's right, and brought them close to him.

¹⁴ But Israel crossed his hands and reached out. He put his right hand on Ephraim's head, although Ephraim was the younger son. He put his left hand on Manasseh's head, although Manasseh was older.

¹⁵ Then Jacob blessed Joseph, "May God, in whose presence my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac walked, may God, who has been my shepherd all my life to this very day,

¹⁶ may the Messenger, who has rescued me from all evil, bless these boys. May they be called by my name and by the names of my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac. May they have many children on the earth."

¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father had put his right hand on Ephraim's head, he didn't like it. So he took his father's hand in order to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's.

¹⁸ Then he said to his father, "That's not right, Father! This is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head."

¹⁹ His father refused and said, "I know, Son, I know! Manasseh, too, will become a nation, and he, too, will be important.

Nevertheless, his younger brother will be more important than he, and his descendants will become many nations."

²⁰ That day he blessed them. He said, "Because of you, Israel will speak this blessing, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" In this way Israel put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now I'm about to die, but God will be with you. He will bring you back to the land of your fathers.

²² I'm giving you one more mountain ridge than your brothers. I took it from the Amorites with my own sword and bow."

49 ¹ Jacob called for his sons and said, "Come here, and let me tell you what will happen to you in the days to come.

² "Gather around and listen, sons of Jacob. Listen to your father Israel.

³ "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my strength, the very first son I had, first in majesty and first in power.

⁴ You will no longer be first because you were out of control like a flood and you climbed into your father's bed. Then you dishonored it. He climbed up on my couch.

⁵ "Simeon and Levi are brothers. Their swords are weapons of violence.

⁶ Do not let me attend their secret meetings. Do not let me join their assembly. In their anger they murdered men. At their whim they crippled cattle.

⁷ May their anger be cursed because it's so fierce. May their fury be cursed because it's so cruel. I will divide them among the sons of Jacob and scatter them among the tribes of Israel.

⁸ "Judah, your brothers will praise you. Your hand will be on the neck of your

enemies. Your father's sons will bow down to you.

⁹ Judah, you are a lion cub. You have come back from the kill, my son. He lies down and rests like a lion. He is like a lioness. Who dares to disturb him?

¹⁰ A scepter will never depart from Judah nor a ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes and the people obey him.

¹¹ He will tie his donkey to a grapevine, his colt to the best vine. He will wash his clothes in wine, his garments in the blood of grapes.

¹² His eyes are darker than wine. His teeth are whiter than milk.

¹³ "Zebulun will live by the coast. He will have ships by the coast. His border will go as far as Sidon.

¹⁴ "Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the saddlebags.

¹⁵ When he sees that his resting place is good and that the land is pleasant, he will bend his back to the burden and will become a slave laborer.

¹⁶ "Dan will hand down decisions for his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

¹⁷ Dan will be a snake on a road, a viper on a path, that bites a horse's heels so that its rider falls off backwards.

¹⁸ "I wait with hope for you to rescue me, O LORD.

¹⁹ "Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will strike back at their heels.

²⁰ "Asher's food will be rich. He will provide delicacies fit for a king.

²¹ "Naphtali is a doe set free that has beautiful fawns.

²² "Joseph is a fruitful tree, a fruitful tree by a spring, with branches climbing over a wall.

²³ Archers provoked him, shot at him, and attacked him.

²⁴ But his bow stayed steady, and his arms remained limber because of the help of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,

²⁵ because of the God of your father who helps you, because of the Almighty who gives you blessings from the heavens above, blessings from the deep springs below the ground, blessings from breasts and womb.

²⁶ The blessings of your father are greater than the blessings of the oldest mountains and the riches of the ancient hills. May these blessings rest on the head of Joseph, on the crown of the prince among his brothers.

²⁷ "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf. In the morning he devours his prey. In the evening he divides the plunder."

²⁸ These are the 12 tribes of Israel and what their father said to them when he gave each of them his special blessing.

²⁹ Then he gave them these instructions, "I am about to join my ancestors in death. Bury me with my ancestors in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite.

³⁰ Abraham bought the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre in Canaan, from Ephron the Hittite to use as a tomb.

³¹ Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried there. Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried there. I also buried Leah there.

³² The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites."

³³ When Jacob finished giving these instructions to his sons, he pulled his feet into his bed. He took his last breath and joined his ancestors in death.

50 ¹ Joseph threw himself on his father, cried over him, and kissed him.

² Then Joseph ordered the doctors in his service to embalm his father. So the doctors embalmed Israel.

³ The embalming was completed in the usual time—40 days. The Egyptians mourned for him 70 days.

⁴ When the time of mourning for Jacob was over, Joseph spoke to the Pharaoh's palace staff. He said, "Please speak directly to Pharaoh. Tell him,

⁵ 'My father made me swear an oath. He said, "I'm about to die. Bury me in the tomb I bought for myself in Canaan." Please let me go there and bury my father; then I'll come back.'"

⁶ Pharaoh replied, "Go and bury your father, as you have promised him."

⁷ So Joseph left to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials, the leaders in his

palace staff, and all the leaders of Egypt went with him.

⁸ Joseph's household, his brothers, and his father's household also went with him. (Only their children, their flocks, and their cattle were left in Goshen.)

⁹ Chariots and horsemen went with him. It was a very large group.

¹⁰ When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is on the east side of the Jordan River, they began a great and solemn ceremony to mourn Jacob's death. Joseph took seven days to mourn his father's death.

¹¹ When the Canaanites living there saw the funeral ceremonies at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "These funeral ceremonies are taken very seriously by the Egyptians." That's why that place on the east side of the Jordan was named Abel Mizraim [Egyptian Funeral Ceremonies].

¹² Jacob's sons did for him what he had told them to do.

¹³ They carried him back to Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre. Abraham had bought this tomb from Ephron the Hittite.

¹⁴ After Joseph had buried his father, he went back to Egypt along with his brothers and everyone who had gone there with him to bury his father.

¹⁵ Joseph's brothers realized what their father's death could mean. So they thought, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us? What if he decides to pay us back for all the evil we did to him?"

¹⁶ They sent a messenger to Joseph to say, "Before your father died, he commanded us,

¹⁷ 'This is what you should say to Joseph, "I'm begging you to forgive the crime and the sin your brothers

committed against you. What they did to you was very evil." So now, please forgive our crime, because we are servants of your father's God." Joseph cried when he got their message.

¹⁸ Then his brothers also came and immediately bowed down in front of him. "We are your slaves!" they said.

¹⁹ Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid! I can't take God's place.

²⁰ Even though you planned evil against me, God planned good to come out of it. This was to keep many people alive, as he is doing now.

²¹ Don't be afraid! I will provide for you and your children." In this way he reassured them, setting their minds at ease.

²² Joseph and his father's family stayed in Egypt. Joseph lived to be 110 years old.

²³ He saw his grandchildren, Ephraim's children. Even the children of Machir, son of Manasseh, were adopted by Joseph at birth.

²⁴ At last Joseph said to his brothers, "I'm about to die. God will definitely take care of you and take you out of this land to the land he swore with an oath to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

²⁵ Joseph made Israel's sons swear an oath. He said, "God will definitely take care of you. So be sure to carry my bones back with you."

²⁶ Joseph died when he was 110 years old. His body was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Exodus

1 ¹ These are the names of the sons of Israel (that is, Jacob) who came with him to Egypt with their families:

² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah;

³ Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin;

⁴ Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher.

⁵ Joseph was already in Egypt. The total number of Jacob's descendants was 70.

⁶ Eventually, Joseph, all his brothers, and that entire generation died.

⁷ But the descendants of Israel had many children. They became so numerous and strong that the land was filled with them.

⁸ Then a new king, who knew nothing about Joseph, began to rule in Egypt.

⁹ He said to his people, "There are too many Israelites, and they are stronger than we are.

¹⁰ We have to outsmart them, or they'll increase in number. Then, if war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country."

¹¹ So the Egyptians put slave drivers in charge of them in order to oppress them through forced labor. They built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for Pharaoh.

¹² But the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they increased in number and spread out. The Egyptians couldn't stand them any longer.

¹³ So they forced the Israelites to work hard as slaves.

¹⁴ They made their lives bitter with back-breaking work in mortar and bricks and every kind of work in the fields. All

the jobs the Egyptians gave them were brutally hard.

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt told the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah,

¹⁶ "When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth, look at the child when you deliver it. If it's a boy, kill it, but if it's a girl, let it live."

¹⁷ However, the midwives feared God and didn't obey the king of Egypt's orders. They let the boys live.

¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called for the midwives. He asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"

¹⁹ The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women. They are so healthy that they have their babies before a midwife arrives."

²⁰ God was good to the midwives. So the people increased in number and became very strong.

²¹ Because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

²² Then Pharaoh commanded all his people to throw into the Nile every Hebrew boy that was born, but to let every girl live.

2 ¹ A man from Levi's family married a Levite woman.

² The woman became pregnant and had a son. She saw how beautiful he was and hid him for three months.

³ When she couldn't hide him any longer, she took a basket made of papyrus plants and coated it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in it and set it among the papyrus plants near the bank of the Nile River.

⁴ The baby's sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

⁵ While Pharaoh's daughter came to the Nile to take a bath, her servants walked along the bank of the river. She saw the basket among the papyrus plants and sent her slave girl to get it.

⁶ Pharaoh's daughter opened the basket, looked at the baby, and saw it was a boy. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. She said, "This is one of the Hebrew children."

⁷ Then the baby's sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Should I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

⁸ She answered, "Yes!" So the girl brought the baby's mother.

⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to the woman, "Take this child, nurse him for me, and I will pay you." She took the child and nursed him.

¹⁰ When the child was old enough, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and

he became her son. Pharaoh's daughter named him Moses [Pulled Out] and said, "I pulled him out of the water."

¹¹ In the course of time Moses grew up. Then he went to see his own people and watched them suffering under forced labor. He saw a Hebrew, one of his own people, being beaten by an Egyptian.

¹² He looked all around, and when he didn't see anyone, he beat the Egyptian to death and hid the body in the sand.

¹³ When Moses went there the next day, he saw two Hebrew men fighting. He asked the one who started the fight, "Why are you beating another Hebrew?"

¹⁴ The man asked, "Who made you our ruler and judge? Are you going to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought that everyone knew what he had done.

¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard what Moses had done, he tried to have him killed.

But Moses fled from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian. One day, while Moses was sitting by a well,

¹⁶ seven daughters of the priest of Midian came. They drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's sheep.

¹⁷ But some shepherds came and chased them away. So Moses got up, came to their defense, and then watered their sheep.

¹⁸ When they came back to their father Reuel, he asked them, "Why have you come home so early today?"

¹⁹ They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from some shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the sheep."

²⁰ Reuel asked his daughters, "Where is he? Why did you leave the man there? Go, invite him to supper."

²¹ Moses decided to stay with the man. So Reuel gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses as his wife.

²² She gave birth to a son. Moses named him Gershom [Foreigner], because he said, "I was a foreigner living in another country."

²³ After a long time passed, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites still groaned because they were slaves. So they cried out, and their cries for help went up to God.

²⁴ God heard their groaning, and he remembered his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

²⁵ God saw the Israelites being oppressed and was concerned about them.

3¹ Moses was taking care of the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. As he led the sheep to

the far side of the desert, he came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

² The Messenger of the LORD appeared to him there as flames of fire coming out of a bush. Moses looked, and although the bush was on fire, it was not burning up.

³ So he thought, "Why isn't this bush burning up? I must go over there and see this strange sight."

⁴ When the LORD saw that Moses had come over to see it, God called to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses!" Moses answered, "Here I am!"

⁵ God said, "Don't come any closer! Take off your sandals because this place where you are standing is holy ground.

⁶ I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ The LORD said, "I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt, and I have heard them crying out because of the slave drivers. I know how much they're suffering.

⁸ I have come to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good land with plenty of room for everyone. It is a land flowing with milk and honey where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites live.

⁹ I have heard the cry of the people of Israel. I have seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them.

¹⁰ Now, go! I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you can bring my people Israel out of Egypt."

¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the people of Israel out of Egypt?"

¹² God answered, "I will be with you. And this will be the proof that I sent you: When you bring the people out of Egypt, all of you will worship God on this mountain."

¹³ Then Moses replied to God, "Suppose I go to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' What should I tell them?"

¹⁴ God answered Moses, "I Am Who I Am. This is what you must say to the people of Israel: 'I Am has sent me to you.'"

¹⁵ Again God said to Moses, "This is what you must say to the people of Israel: The LORD God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever. This is my title throughout every generation.

¹⁶ "Go, assemble the leaders of Israel. Say to them, 'The LORD God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, appeared to me. He Said,"i have paid close attention to you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt.

¹⁷ I promise I will take you away from your misery in Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey."

¹⁸ "The leaders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the leaders must go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us travel three days into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.'

¹⁹ I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, even if he is forced to.

²⁰ So I will use my power to strike Egypt. After all the miracles that I will do there, he will let you go.

²¹ I will make the Egyptians kind to the people of Israel so that, when you leave, you will not leave empty-handed.

²² "Every Hebrew woman should ask her Egyptian neighbor and any woman living in her home for silver and gold jewelry and for clothes. Put them on your sons and daughters. This way you will strip Egypt of its wealth."

4 ¹ "They will never believe me or listen to me!" Moses protested. "They will say, 'The LORD didn't appear to you.'"

² Then the LORD asked him, "What's that in your hand?" He answered, "A shepherd's staff."

³ The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground." When Moses threw it on the

ground, it became a snake, and he ran away from it.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out and grab the snake by its tail." He reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a staff as he held it.

⁵ The LORD explained, "This is to convince the people that the LORD God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, appeared to you."

⁶ The LORD said to him, "Put your hand inside your shirt." So Moses did this, and when he took his hand out, it had a skin disease. It looked as flaky as snow.

⁷ "Now put your hand back inside your shirt," the LORD said. Moses put it back, and when he took it out this time, it was healthy again like the rest of his body.

⁸ Then the LORD said, "If they won't believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second."

⁹ But if they won't believe these two miraculous signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile River and pour it on the ground. The water you take from the Nile will turn into blood on the ground."

¹⁰ Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I'm not a good speaker. I've never been a good speaker, and I'm not now, even though you've spoken to me. I speak slowly, and I become tongue-tied easily."

¹¹ The LORD asked him, "Who gave humans their mouths? Who makes humans unable to talk or hear? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? It is I, the LORD!

¹² Now go, and I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

¹³ But Moses said, "Please, Lord, send someone else."

¹⁴ Then the LORD became angry with Moses and asked, "What about your brother Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He's already on his way to meet you, and he will be very glad to see you.

¹⁵ You will speak to him and tell him what to say. I will help both of you speak, and I will teach you both what to do.

¹⁶ Aaron will speak to the people for you. He will be your spokesman, and you will be like God.

¹⁷ Take that shepherd's staff with you, and use it to do the miraculous signs."

¹⁸ Then Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro. Moses said to him, "Please let me go back to my own people in Egypt. I would like to see if they're still alive." Jethro said to Moses, "You may go."

¹⁹ Now, the LORD had said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, because

all the men who wanted to kill you are dead."

²⁰ So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey, and started out for Egypt. He also brought with him the staff God had told him to take.

²¹ The LORD said to Moses, "When you get back to Egypt, see that you show Pharaoh all the amazing things that I have given you the power to do. But I will make him stubborn so that he will not let the people go.

²² Then tell Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son.

²³ I told you to let my son go so that he may worship me. But you refused to let him go. So now I'm going to kill your firstborn son.'

²⁴ Along the way they stopped for the night. The LORD met Moses and tried to kill him.

²⁵ Then Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' feet with it. She said, "You are a bridegroom of blood to me!"

²⁶ So the LORD let him alone. It was because of the circumcision that she said at that time, "You are a bridegroom of blood!"

²⁷ Meanwhile, the LORD had told Aaron to meet Moses in the desert. When Aaron met Moses at the mountain of God, he kissed him.

²⁸ Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say and all the miraculous signs the LORD had commanded him to do.

²⁹ Then Moses and Aaron went to Egypt and assembled all the leaders of the people of Israel.

³⁰ Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also did the miraculous signs for the people,

³¹ and the people believed them. When they heard that the LORD was concerned about the people of Israel and that he had seen their misery, they knelt, bowing with their faces touching the ground.

5 ¹ Later Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Let my people go into the desert to celebrate a festival in my honor."

² Pharaoh asked, "Who is the LORD? Why should I obey him and let Israel go? I don't know the LORD, and I won't let Israel go."

³ They replied, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us travel three days into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God. If we don't go, he may kill us with a plague or a war."

⁴ The king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their work? Get back to work!"

⁵ Then Pharaoh added, "Look how many people there are in the land! Do you want them to quit working?"

⁶ That same day Pharaoh gave these orders to the slave drivers and foremen:

⁷ "Don't give the people any more straw to make bricks as you have been doing. Let them gather their own straw,

⁸ but insist that they make the same number of bricks they were making before. Making fewer bricks will not be acceptable. They're lazy! That's why they're crying, 'Let us go offer sacrifices to our God.'

⁹ Make the work harder for these people so that they will be too busy to listen to lies."

¹⁰ The slave drivers and foreman went out and said to them, "This is what Pharaoh says: I'm no longer giving you straw.

¹¹ Get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work load will not be reduced one bit."

¹² So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble for straw.

¹³ The slave drivers kept hurrying them. They said, "Finish the same amount of work each day, just as when you had straw."

¹⁴ Pharaoh's slave drivers had placed Israelite foremen in charge of the people. The slave drivers beat the foremen and said, "You didn't finish all the bricks you were ordered to make yesterday or today. Why didn't you make as many as you used to?"

¹⁵ Then the Israelite foremen complained to Pharaoh. They asked, "Why are you treating us this way?"

¹⁶ We're given no straw, and yet we're told to make bricks. We're being beaten, but your men are at fault."

¹⁷ "You're lazy! Just plain lazy!" Pharaoh answered. "That's why you keep saying, 'Let us go offer sacrifices to the LORD.'

¹⁸ Now get back to work! You won't be given any straw, but you must still make the same number of bricks."

¹⁹ The Israelite foremen realized they were in trouble when they were told, "Don't make fewer bricks each day than you're supposed to."

²⁰ As they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting for them.

²¹ So they said, "May the LORD see what you have done and judge you! You have made Pharaoh and his officials hate

us. You have given them an excuse to kill us."

²² Moses went back to the LORD and asked, "Why have you brought this trouble on your people? Why did you send me?"

²³ Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak for you, he has treated your people cruelly, and you have done nothing at all to rescue your people."

6 ¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. I will show him my power, and he will let my people go. I will show him my power, and he will throw them out of his country."

² God spoke to Moses, "I am the LORD.

³ I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but I didn't make myself known to them by my name, the LORD.

⁴ I even made a promise to give them Canaan, the land where they lived as foreigners.

⁵ Now I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians hold in slavery, and I have remembered my promise.

⁶ "Tell the Israelites, 'I am the LORD. I will bring you out from under the oppression of the Egyptians, and I will free you from slavery. I will rescue you with my powerful arm and with mighty acts of judgment.

⁷ Then I will make you my people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the forced labor of the Egyptians.

⁸ I will bring you to the land I solemnly swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your own possession. I am the LORD.'" "

⁹ Moses reported this to the Israelites. But they would not listen to him because they were so discouraged by their back-breaking work.

¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke to Moses,

¹¹ "Go tell Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) to let the Israelites leave his country."

¹² But Moses protested to the LORD, "The Israelites wouldn't listen to me. Why would Pharaoh listen to me? I'm such a poor speaker."

¹³ The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron about the Israelites and Pharaoh (the king of Egypt). He commanded them to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

¹⁴ These were the heads of the families: The sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These were the families descended from Reuben.

¹⁵ The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul,

the son of a Canaanite woman. These were the families descended from Simeon.

¹⁶ These are the names of the sons of Levi listed in birth order: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Levi lived 137 years.

¹⁷ The sons of Gershon listed by their families were Libni and Shimei.

¹⁸ The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Kohath lived 133 years.

¹⁹ The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. These were the families descended from Levi listed in birth order.

²⁰ Amram married his father's sister Jochebed. She gave birth to Aaron and Moses. Amram lived 137 years.

²¹ The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri.

²² The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

²³ Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon. She gave birth to Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

²⁴ The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These were the families descended from Korah.

²⁵ Eleazar, son of Aaron, married one of the daughters of Putiel. She gave birth to Phinehas. These were the heads of Levite households listed by their families.

²⁶ This was the same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring the Israelites out of Egypt in organized family groups."

²⁷ They—this same Moses and Aaron—told Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) to let the Israelites leave Egypt.

²⁸ At that time the LORD spoke to Moses in Egypt.

²⁹ He said to Moses, "I am the LORD. Tell Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) everything I tell you."

³⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, "Why would Pharaoh listen to me?"

7¹ The LORD answered Moses, "I have made you a god to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron is your prophet.

² Tell your brother Aaron everything I command you, and he must tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave the country.

³ But I will make Pharaoh stubborn. Even though I will do many miraculous signs and amazing things in Egypt,

⁴ Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will use my power to punish Egypt severely, and I will bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt in organized family groups.

⁵ The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I use my power against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of there."

⁶ Moses and Aaron did as the LORD had commanded them.

⁷ Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83 when they talked to Pharaoh.

⁸ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

⁹ "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Give me a sign to prove that God has sent you,' tell Aaron, 'Take your shepherd's staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh,' and it will become a large snake."

¹⁰ Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did as the LORD had commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a large snake.

¹¹ Then Pharaoh sent for his wise men and sorcerers. These Egyptian magicians did the same thing using their magic spells.

¹² Each of them threw his staff down, and they all became large snakes. But Aaron's staff swallowed theirs.

¹³ Yet, Pharaoh continued to be stubborn and would not listen to them, as the LORD had predicted.

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh is being stubborn. He refuses to let my people go.

¹⁵ In the morning meet Pharaoh when he's on his way to the Nile. Wait for him on the bank of the river. Take along the staff that turned into a snake.

¹⁶ Say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews sent me to tell you, "Let my people go to worship me in the desert." So far you have not listened.

¹⁷ Here is what the LORD says: This is the way you will recognize that I am the LORD: With this staff in my hand, I'm going to strike the Nile, and the water will turn into blood.

¹⁸ The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink. The Egyptians will not be able to drink any water from the Nile.'"

¹⁹ The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—its rivers, canals, ponds, and all its reservoirs—so that they turn into blood. There will be blood everywhere in Egypt, even in the wooden and stone containers.'"

²⁰ Moses and Aaron did as the LORD had commanded. In front of Pharaoh and his officials, Aaron raised his staff and struck the Nile. All the water in the river turned into blood.

²¹ The fish in the Nile died, and it smelled so bad that the Egyptians couldn't drink any water from the river. There was blood everywhere in Egypt.

²² But the Egyptian magicians did the same thing using their magic spells. So Pharaoh continued to be stubborn and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, as the LORD had predicted.

²³ Pharaoh turned and went back to his palace. He dismissed the entire matter from his mind.

²⁴ All the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink because they couldn't drink any of the water from the river.

²⁵ Seven days passed after the LORD struck the Nile.

8 ¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go to worship me.

² If you refuse to let them go, I will bring a plague of frogs on your whole country.

³ The Nile River will swarm with frogs. They will come into your palace, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your officials, on your people, into your ovens and into your mixing bowls.

⁴ The frogs will jump on you, on your people, and on all your officials.'" "

⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Hold your staff over the rivers, canals, and ponds. This will bring frogs onto the land.'"

⁶ So Aaron held his staff over the waters of Egypt. The frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

⁷ But the magicians did the same thing using their magic spells and brought frogs onto the land.

⁸ Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray that the LORD will take the frogs away from me and my people. Then I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

⁹ Moses answered Pharaoh, "You may have the honor of choosing when I should pray for you, your officials, and your people. Then the frogs will leave you and your homes. The only ones left will be those in the Nile."

¹⁰ "Pray for me tomorrow," Pharaoh said. Moses replied, "It will be as you say so that you will know that there is no one like the LORD our God.

¹¹ The frogs will leave you, your homes, your officials, and your people. The only frogs left will be those in the Nile."

¹² After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses prayed to the LORD about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh.

¹³ The LORD did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the yards, and in the fields.

¹⁴ They were piled into countless heaps, and the land began to stink because of them.

¹⁵ When Pharaoh saw that the plague was over, he became stubborn and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, as the LORD had predicted.

¹⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Hold out your staff and strike the

dust on the ground. All over Egypt the dust will turn into gnats."

¹⁷ When Moses told him, Aaron held out the staff in his hand and struck the dust on the ground. It turned into gnats that bit people and animals. All the dust on the ground everywhere in Egypt turned into gnats.

¹⁸ The magicians also tried to produce gnats using their magic spells, but they couldn't do it. The gnats bit people and animals.

¹⁹ So the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the hand of God!" Yet, Pharaoh continued to be stubborn and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, as the LORD had predicted.

²⁰ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Early in the morning, stand in Pharaoh's way when he's going to the Nile. Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go to worship me."

²¹ If you will not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you, your officials, your people, and your houses. The homes of the Egyptians will be filled with flies, and even the ground outside will be covered with them.

²² But on that day I will treat the region of Goshen differently. That is where my people live. There won't be any flies there. This way you will know that I, the LORD, am here in this land.

²³ I will distinguish between my people and yours. This miraculous sign will happen tomorrow.'"

²⁴ The LORD did what he said. Dense swarms of flies came into Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his officials. All over Egypt the flies were ruining everything.

²⁵ Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God here in this country."

²⁶ Moses replied, "It wouldn't be right to do that. The sacrifices we offer to the LORD our God are disgusting to Egyptians. If they see us offer sacrifices that they consider disgusting, won't they stone us to death?"

²⁷ We need to travel three days into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, as he told us to do."

²⁸ Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, but don't go very far. You may offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert and pray for me."

²⁹ Moses answered, "As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the LORD. Tomorrow the swarms of flies will go away from you, your officials, and your people. But you must stop tricking us by not letting the people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

³⁰ Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD.

³¹ The LORD did what Moses asked. The swarms of flies left Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. Not one fly was left.

³² Yet, this time, too, Pharaoh was stubborn and did not let the people go.

9¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, and tell him, 'This is what the LORD God of the Hebrews says: Let my people go to worship me.

² If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them in slavery,

³ the LORD will bring a terrible plague on your livestock, including your horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats.

⁴ But the LORD will distinguish between Israel's livestock and the livestock of the Egyptians. No animals belonging to the Israelites will die.'"

⁵ The LORD set a definite time. He said, "Tomorrow I will do this."

⁶ The next day the LORD did as he said. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but none of the Israelites' animals died.

⁷ Pharaoh found out that not one of the Israelites' animals had died. Yet, Pharaoh continued to be stubborn and would not let the people go.

⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take a handful of ashes from a kiln, and have Moses throw them up in the air as Pharaoh watches.

⁹ They will become a fine dust throughout Egypt. The dust will cause boils to break into open sores on people and animals throughout Egypt."

¹⁰ They took ashes from a kiln and stood in front of Pharaoh. Moses threw the ashes up in the air, and they caused boils to break into open sores on people and animals.

¹¹ The magicians couldn't compete with Moses because they had boils like all the other Egyptians.

¹² But the LORD made Pharaoh stubborn, so he wouldn't listen to Moses and Aaron, as the LORD had predicted to Moses.

¹³ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Early in the morning, go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD God of the Hebrews says: Let my people go to worship me.

¹⁴ Now I will send plagues that will affect you personally as well as your officials and people. This is how you will know that there is no one like me anywhere on earth.

¹⁵ By now I could have used my power to kill you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth.

¹⁶ But I have spared you for this reason. I want to show you my power and make my name famous throughout the earth.

¹⁷ You are still blocking my people from leaving.

¹⁸ So, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever happened in Egypt since the beginning of its history.

¹⁹ Now, send servants to bring your livestock and everything else you have indoors. All people and animals still outside and not brought in will die when the hail falls on them.'"

²⁰ Those members of Pharaoh's court who listened to the LORD'S warning brought their servants and cattle indoors quickly.

²¹ But those who didn't take the LORD'S warning seriously left their servants and animals out in the open.

²² Then the LORD said to Moses, "Lift your hand toward the sky, and hail will fall on people, animals, and every plant in the fields of Egypt."

²³ When Moses lifted his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning struck the earth. So the LORD made it hail on Egypt.

²⁴ It hailed, and lightning flashed while it hailed. This was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation.

²⁵ All over Egypt the hail knocked down everything that was out in the open. It struck down people, animals, and every plant in the fields and destroyed every tree in the fields.

²⁶ The only place it didn't hail was the region of Goshen, where the Israelites lived.

²⁷ Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he told

them. "The LORD is right, and my people and I are wrong.

²⁸ Pray to the LORD. We've had enough of God's thunder and hail. I'll let you go; you don't have to stay here any longer."

²⁹ Moses replied, "As soon as I'm out of the city, I'll spread out my hands to the LORD in prayer. The thunder will stop, and there will be no more hail. This is how you will know that the earth belongs to the LORD.

³⁰ But I know that you and your officials still don't fear the LORD God."

³¹ (The flax and the barley were ruined, because the barley had formed heads and the flax was in bloom.

³² Neither the wheat nor the wild grain was damaged, because they ripen later.)

³³ As soon as he left Pharaoh and went out of the city, Moses spread out his hands to the LORD in prayer. The thunder

and the hail stopped, and no more rain came pouring down on the ground.

³⁴ When Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had stopped, he sinned again. He and his officials continued to be stubborn.

³⁵ Pharaoh was stubborn and would not let the Israelites go, as the LORD had predicted through Moses.

10 ¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh. I have made him and his officials stubborn so that I can do these miraculous signs among them.

² You will be able to tell your children and grandchildren exactly how I treated the Egyptians and what miraculous signs I did among them. This is how you will all know that I am the LORD."

³ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, "This is what the LORD God of the Hebrews says: How long will you refuse to humble yourself in my

presence? Let my people go to worship me.

⁴ If you refuse to let my people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country.

⁵ They will cover the land so that the ground can't be seen. They will eat everything left by the hail, including every tree still standing in the fields.

⁶ They will fill your houses and the houses of all your officials and those of all the Egyptians. Your parents and ancestors never saw anything like this from the time they first came here until now." Moses turned and left Pharaoh.

⁷ Then Pharaoh's officials asked him, "How long will this man hold us in his grip? Let the Israelite men go to worship the LORD their God. When will you realize that Egypt is ruined?"

⁸ So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "Go, worship the LORD

your God," he said to them. "But exactly who will be going?"

⁹ Moses answered, "Everyone! We'll be taking our young and old, our sons and daughters, our flocks and herds with us. For us it's a pilgrimage festival in the LORD'S honor."

¹⁰ Pharaoh said to them, "The LORD would have to be with you if I would ever let you take your women and children along. I know you're up to no good!

¹¹ No! Only the men may go to worship the LORD, since that's what you've been asking for." Then Moses and Aaron were thrown out of Pharaoh's palace.

¹² The LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over Egypt to bring locusts. They will invade Egypt and eat up every plant in the land—everything left by the hail."

¹³ Moses held his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD made a wind from

the east blow over the land all that day and all that night. By morning the east wind had brought the locusts.

¹⁴ They invaded all of Egypt and landed all over the country in great swarms. Never before had there been so many locusts like this, nor would there ever be that many again.

¹⁵ They covered all the ground until it was black with them. They ate all the plants and all the fruit on the trees that the hail had left. Nothing green was left on any tree or plant anywhere in Egypt.

¹⁶ Then Pharaoh quickly called for Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you.

¹⁷ Please forgive my sin one more time. Pray to the LORD your God to take this deadly plague away from me."

¹⁸ Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD.

¹⁹ Then the LORD changed the wind to a very strong west wind. It picked up the locusts and blew them into the Red Sea. Not one locust was left anywhere in Egypt.

²⁰ But the LORD made Pharaoh stubborn, so he did not let the Israelites go.

²¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Lift your hand toward the sky, and a darkness so thick that it can be felt will come over Egypt."

²² Moses lifted his hand toward the sky, and throughout Egypt there was total darkness for three days.

²³ People couldn't see each other, and no one went anywhere for three days. But all the Israelites had light where they were living.

²⁴ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and said, "Go, worship the LORD! Even your women and children may go with you,

but your flocks and herds must stay behind."

²⁵ But Moses said, "You must allow us to take our animals for the sacrifices and burnt offerings we have to make to the LORD our God.

²⁶ All our livestock must go with us. Not one animal must be left behind. We'll have to use some of them for worshipping the LORD our God, and we won't know what we'll need until we get there."

²⁷ But the LORD made Pharaoh stubborn, so he refused to let them go.

²⁸ Pharaoh said to Moses, "Get out of my sight! Don't ever let me see your face again. The day I do, you will die."

²⁹ "You're right!" Moses answered. "You'll never see my face again."

11 ¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and Egypt. After that he will let

you go. When he does, he will be certain to force all of you out of here.

² Now announce to the people of Israel that each man and woman must ask the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry."

³ The LORD made the Egyptians kind to the people. And Moses was highly respected by Pharaoh's officials and all the Egyptians.

⁴ Moses said, "This is what the LORD says: About midnight I will go out among the Egyptians.

⁵ Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who rules the land, to the firstborn children of female slaves who use their handmills, including every firstborn domestic animal.

⁶ There will be loud crying throughout Egypt, such as there has never been or ever will be again.

⁷ But where the Israelites are, not even a dog will be startled by any person or animal. This is how you will see that the LORD shows the distinction between Egypt and Israel.

⁸ Then all these officials of yours will come, bow down to me, and say, 'You and all the people who follow you, get out!' After that I will leave." Burning with anger, Moses left Pharaoh.

⁹ The LORD had said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you. This is why I will do more amazing things in Egypt."

¹⁰ Moses and Aaron showed Pharaoh all these amazing things. Yet, the LORD made Pharaoh stubborn, so he wouldn't let the Israelites leave his country.

12 ¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt,

² "This month will be the very first month of the year for you.

³ Tell the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month each man must take a lamb or a young goat for his family—one animal per household.

⁴ A household may be too small to eat a whole animal. That household and the one next door can share one animal. Choose your animal based on the number of people and what each person can eat.

⁵ Your animal must be a one-year-old male that has no defects. You may choose a lamb or a young goat.

⁶ Take care of it until the fourteenth day of this month. "Then at dusk, all the assembled people from the community of Israel must slaughter their animals.

⁷ They must take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they will eat the animals.

⁸ The meat must be eaten that same night. It must be roasted over a fire and eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

⁹ Don't eat any of it raw or boiled but roast the whole animal over a fire.

¹⁰ Don't leave any of it until morning. Anything left over in the morning must be burned up.

¹¹ This is how you should be dressed when you eat it: with your belt on, your sandals on your feet, and your shepherd's staff in your hand. You must eat it in a hurry. It is the LORD'S Passover.

¹² "On that same night I will go throughout Egypt and kill every firstborn male, both human and animal. I will severely punish all the gods of Egypt, because I am the LORD.

¹³ But the blood on your houses will be a sign for your protection. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. Nothing

will touch or destroy you when I strike Egypt.

¹⁴ "This day will be one for you to remember. This is a permanent law for generations to come: You will celebrate this day as a pilgrimage festival in the LORD'S honor.

¹⁵ For seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the very first day you must remove any yeast that you have in your houses. Whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh day must be excluded from Israel.

¹⁶ You must have a holy assembly on the first day and another one on the seventh. You must not work on these days except to prepare your own meals. That's all you may do.

¹⁷ You must celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread because it was on this very day that I brought you out of

Egypt in organized family groups. This is a permanent law for future generations: You must celebrate this day.

¹⁸ From the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month until the evening of the twenty–first day you must eat unleavened bread.

¹⁹ There should be no yeast in your houses for seven days. Whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be excluded from the community of Israel, whether he is an Israelite or not.

²⁰ Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat only unleavened bread."

²¹ Then Moses called for all the leaders of Israel. He said to them, "Pick out a lamb or a young goat for your families, and kill the Passover animal.

²² Take the branch of a hyssop plant, dip it in the blood which is in a bowl, and put some of the blood on the top and sides

of the doorframes of your houses. No one may leave the house until morning.

²³ The LORD will go throughout Egypt to kill the Egyptians. When he sees the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe, he will pass over that doorway, and he will not let the destroyer come into your home to kill you.

²⁴ "You must follow these instructions. They are a permanent law for you and your children.

²⁵ When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony.

²⁶ When your children ask you what this ceremony means to you,

²⁷ you must answer, 'It's the Passover sacrifice in the LORD'S honor. The LORD passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he killed the Egyptians.'" Then the people

knelt, bowing with their faces touching the ground.

²⁸ The Israelites did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

²⁹ At midnight the LORD killed every firstborn male in Egypt from the firstborn son of Pharaoh who ruled the land to the firstborn son of the prisoner in jail, and also every firstborn animal.

³⁰ Pharaoh, all his officials, and all the other Egyptians got up during the night. There was loud crying throughout Egypt because in every house someone had died.

³¹ Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron during the night. He said, "You and the Israelites must leave my people at once. Go, worship the LORD as you asked.

³² Take your flocks and herds, too, as you asked. Just go! And bless me, too!"

³³ The Egyptians begged the people to leave the country quickly. They said, "Soon we'll all be dead!"

³⁴ So the people picked up their bread dough before it had risen and carried it on their shoulders in bowls, wrapped up in their clothes.

³⁵ The Israelites did what Moses had told them and asked the Egyptians for gold and silver jewelry and for clothes.

³⁶ The LORD made the Egyptians generous to the people, and they gave them what they asked for. So the Israelites stripped Egypt of its wealth.

³⁷ The Israelites left Rameses to go to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, plus all the women and children.

³⁸ Many other people also went with them, along with large numbers of sheep, goats, and cattle.

³⁹ With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked round, flat bread. The dough hadn't risen because they'd been thrown out of Egypt and had no time to prepare food for the trip.

⁴⁰ The Israelites had been living in Egypt for 430 years.

⁴¹ After exactly 430 years all the LORD'S people left Egypt in organized family groups.

⁴² That night the LORD kept watch to take them out of Egypt. (All Israelites in future generations must keep watch on this night, since it is dedicated to the LORD.)

⁴³ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "These are the rules for the Passover:" No foreigner may eat the Passover meal.

⁴⁴ "Any male slave you have bought may eat it after you have circumcised him.

⁴⁵ "No foreigner visiting you may eat it.
"No hired worker may eat it.

⁴⁶ "The meal must be eaten inside one house. Never take any of the meat outside the house." Never break any of the bones.

⁴⁷ "The whole community of Israel must celebrate the Passover.

⁴⁸ "Foreigners may want to celebrate the LORD'S Passover. First, every male in the household must be circumcised. Then they may celebrate the Passover like native-born Israelites. But no uncircumcised males may ever eat the Passover meal.

⁴⁹ The same instructions apply to native-born Israelites as well as foreigners."

⁵⁰ All the Israelites did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

⁵¹ That very day the LORD brought all the Israelites out of Egypt in organized family groups.

13 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Set apart every firstborn male for me. Every firstborn male offspring among the Israelites is mine, whether human or animal."

³ Then Moses said to the people, "Remember this day—the day when you left Egypt, the land of slavery. The LORD used his mighty hand to bring you out of there. Don't eat anything made with yeast.

⁴ Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving Egypt.

⁵ The LORD swore to your ancestors that he would give you the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites. When he brings you into that land flowing with milk and honey,

you must observe this ceremony in this month.

⁶ "For seven days you must eat unleavened bread. The seventh day will be a pilgrimage festival in the LORD'S honor.

⁷ Only unleavened bread should be eaten during these seven days. No sourdough or yeast should be seen anywhere in your territory.

⁸ On that day tell your children, 'We do this because of what the LORD did for us when we left Egypt.'

⁹ This festival will be like a mark on your hand or a reminder on your forehead that the teachings of the LORD are always to be a part of your conversation. Because the LORD used his mighty hand to bring you out of Egypt,

¹⁰ you must follow these rules every year at this time.

¹¹ "When the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanites and gives it to you, as he swore to you and your ancestors,

¹² sacrifice every firstborn male offspring to the LORD. The firstborn male offspring of each of your animals belongs to the LORD.

¹³ It will cost you a sheep or a goat to buy any firstborn donkey back from the LORD. If you don't buy it back, then you must break the donkey's neck. You must also buy every firstborn son back from the LORD.

¹⁴ "In the future when your children ask you what this means, tell them, 'The LORD used his mighty hand to bring us out of slavery in Egypt.'

¹⁵ When Pharaoh was too stubborn to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn male in Egypt—human and animal. This is why we sacrifice every firstborn male

to the LORD and buy every firstborn son back from the LORD.'

¹⁶ So this festival will be like a mark on your hand and like a band on your forehead, because the LORD used his mighty hand to bring us out of Egypt."

¹⁷ When Pharaoh let the people go, God didn't lead them on the road through Philistine territory, although that was the shortest route. God said, "If they see that they have to fight a war, they may change their minds and go back to Egypt."

¹⁸ So God led the people around the other way, on the road through the desert toward the Red Sea. The Israelites were ready for battle when they left Egypt.

¹⁹ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, because Joseph had made the Israelites solemnly swear to do this. Joseph had said, "God will definitely

come to help you. When he does, take my bones with you."

²⁰ They moved from Succoth and camped at Etham, on the edge of the desert.

²¹ By day the LORD went ahead of them in a column of smoke to lead them on their way. By night he went ahead of them in a column of fire to give them light so that they could travel by day or by night.

²² The column of smoke was always in front of the people during the day. The column of fire was always there at night.

14 ¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell the Israelites to go back and set up their camp facing Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. Set up your camp facing north—by the sea.

³ Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are just wandering around. The desert is blocking their escape.'

⁴ I will make Pharaoh so stubborn that he will pursue them. Then, because of what I do to Pharaoh and his entire army, I will receive honor, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So that is what the Israelites did.

⁵ When Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) was told that the people had fled, he and his officials changed their minds about them. They said, "What have we done? We've lost our slaves because we've let Israel go."

⁶ So Pharaoh prepared his chariot and took his army with him.

⁷ He took 600 of his best chariots as well as all the other chariots in Egypt, placing an officer in each of them.

⁸ The LORD made Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) so stubborn that he pursued the Israelites, who were boldly leaving Egypt.

⁹ The Egyptians pursued the Israelites. Pharaoh's army, including all his horse-drawn chariots and cavalry, caught up with them as they were setting up their camp by the sea at Pi Hahiroth facing north.

¹⁰ As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and saw that the Egyptians were coming after them. Terrified, the Israelites cried out to the LORD.

¹¹ They said to Moses, "Did you bring us out into the desert to die because there were no graves in Egypt? Look what you've done by bringing us out of Egypt!

¹² Didn't we tell you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone! Let us go on serving the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

¹³ Moses answered the people, "Don't be afraid! Stand still, and see what the

LORD will do to save you today. You will never see these Egyptians again.

¹⁴ The LORD is fighting for you! So be still!"

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to start moving.

¹⁶ Raise your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide the water. Then the Israelites will go through the sea on dry ground.

¹⁷ I am making the Egyptians so stubborn that they will follow the Israelites. I will receive honor because of what I will do to Pharaoh, his entire army, his chariots, and cavalry.

¹⁸ The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I am honored for what I did to Pharaoh, his chariots, and his cavalry."

¹⁹ The Messenger of God, who had been in front of the Israelites, moved behind them. So the column of smoke

moved from in front of the Israelites and stood behind them

²⁰ between the Egyptian camp and the Israelite camp. The column of smoke was there when darkness came, and it lit up the night. Neither side came near the other all night long.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. All that night the LORD pushed back the sea with a strong east wind and turned the sea into dry ground. The water divided,

²² and the Israelites went through the middle of the sea on dry ground. The water stood like a wall on their right and on their left.

²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and cavalry followed them into the sea.

²⁴ Just before dawn, the LORD looked down from the column of fire and smoke

and threw the Egyptian camp into a panic.

²⁵ He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they could hardly move. Then the Egyptians shouted, "Let's get out of here! The LORD is fighting for Israel! He's against us!"

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the water will flow back over the Egyptians, their chariots, and their cavalry."

²⁷ Moses stretched his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the water returned to its usual place. The Egyptians tried to escape, but the LORD swept them into the sea.

²⁸ The water flowed back and covered Pharaoh's entire army, as well as the chariots and the cavalry that had followed Israel into the sea. Not one of them survived.

²⁹ Meanwhile, the Israelites had gone through the sea on dry ground while the water stood like a wall on their right and on their left.

³⁰ That day the LORD saved Israel from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore.

³¹ When the Israelites saw the great power the LORD had used against the Egyptians, they feared the LORD and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

15 ¹ Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD. He has won a glorious victory. He has thrown horses and their riders into the sea.

² The LORD is my strength and my song. He is my Savior. This is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will honor him.

³ The LORD is a warrior! The LORD is his name.

⁴ He has thrown Pharaoh's chariots and army into the sea. Pharaoh's best officers were drowned in the Red Sea.

⁵ The deep water covered them. They sank to the bottom like a rock.

⁶ Your right hand, O LORD, wins glory because it is strong. Your right hand, O LORD, smashes your enemies.

⁷ With your unlimited majesty, you destroyed those who attacked you. You sent out your burning anger. It burned them up like straw.

⁸ With a blast from your nostrils, the water piled up. The waves stood up like a dam. The deep water thickened in the middle of the sea.

⁹ "The enemy said, 'I'll pursue them! I'll catch up with them! I'll divide the loot! I'll take all I want! I'll use my sword! I'll take all they have!'

¹⁰ Your breath blew the sea over them. They sank like lead in the raging water.

¹¹ "Who is like you among the gods, O LORD? Who is like you? You are glorious because of your holiness and awe-inspiring because of your splendor. You perform miracles.

¹² You stretched out your right hand. The earth swallowed them.

¹³ "Lovingly, you will lead the people you have saved. Powerfully, you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

¹⁴ People will hear of it and tremble. The people of Philistia will be in anguish.

¹⁵ The tribal leaders of Edom will be terrified. The powerful men of Moab will tremble. The people of Canaan will be deathly afraid.

¹⁶ Terror and dread will fall on them. Because of the power of your arm, they will be petrified until your people pass by, O LORD, until the people you purchased pass by.

¹⁷ You will bring them and plant them on your own mountain, the place where you live, O LORD, the holy place that you built with your own hands, O Lord.

¹⁸ The LORD will rule as king forever and ever."

¹⁹ When Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and cavalry went into the sea, the LORD made the water of the sea flow back over them. However, the Israelites had gone through the sea on dry ground.

²⁰ Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand. All the women, dancing with tambourines, followed her.

²¹ Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the LORD. He has won a glorious victory. He has thrown horses and their riders into the sea."

²² Moses led Israel away from the Red Sea into the desert of Shur. For three

days they traveled in the desert without finding water.

²³ When they came to Marah, they couldn't drink the water because it tasted bitter. That's why the place was called Marah [Bitter Place].

²⁴ The people complained about Moses by asking, "What are we supposed to drink?"

²⁵ Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the LORD set down laws and rules for them to live by, and there he tested them.

²⁶ He said, "If you will listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what he considers right, if you pay attention to his commands and obey all his laws, I will never make you suffer any of the diseases I made the Egyptians suffer, because I am the LORD, who heals you."

²⁷ Next, they went to Elim, where there were 12 springs and 70 palm trees. They camped there by the water.

16 ¹ The whole community of Israelites moved from Elim and came to the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai. This was on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had left Egypt.

² In the desert the whole community complained about Moses and Aaron.

³ The Israelites said to them, "If only the LORD had let us die in Egypt! There we sat by our pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted! You brought us out into this desert to let us all starve to death!"

⁴ The LORD said to Moses, "I'm going to send you food from heaven like rain. Each day the people should go out and gather only what they need for that day. In this way I will test them to see

whether or not they will follow my instructions.

⁵ But on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring home, it should be twice as much as they gather on other days."

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt.

⁷ In the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard you complaining about him. Why are you complaining about us?"

⁸ Moses also said, "The LORD will give you meat to eat in the evening and all the food you want in the morning. The LORD has heard you complaining about him. Who are we? You're not complaining about us but about the LORD."

⁹ Moses said to Aaron, "Tell the whole community of Israelites, 'Come into the LORD'S presence. He has heard you complaining.'"

¹⁰ While Aaron was speaking to the whole community of Israelites, they looked toward the desert. Suddenly, they saw the glory of the LORD in the column of smoke.

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses,

¹² "I've heard the Israelites complaining. Tell them, 'At dusk you will eat meat, and in the morning you will eat all the food you want. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.'"

¹³ That evening quails came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.

¹⁴ When the dew was gone, the ground was covered with a thin layer of flakes like frost on the ground.

¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they asked each other, "What is this?" because they didn't know what it was. Moses said to them, "It's the food the LORD has given you to eat.

¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: Each of you should gather as much as you can eat. Take two quarts for each person in your tent."

¹⁷ So that is what the Israelites did. Some gathered more, some less.

¹⁸ They measured it into two-quart containers. Those who had gathered more didn't have too much. Those who had gathered less didn't have too little. They gathered as much as they could eat.

¹⁹ Then Moses said to them, "No one may keep any of it until morning."

²⁰ But some of them didn't listen to Moses. They kept part of it until morning, and it was full of worms and

smelled bad. So Moses was angry with them.

²¹ Each morning they gathered as much food as they could eat. When the sun was hot, it melted away.

²² But on the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, four quarts per person. All the leaders of the community came to Moses and told him about it.

²³ He said to them, "This is what the LORD said: Tomorrow is a day of worship, a holy day of worship dedicated to the LORD. Bake what you want to bake, and boil what you want to boil. Save all that's left over, and keep it until tomorrow morning."

²⁴ So they saved it until the next morning as Moses had commanded, but it didn't smell or have worms in it.

²⁵ "Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a day of worship dedicated to

the LORD. You won't find anything on the ground today.

²⁶ You can gather food on six days, but on the seventh day, the day of worship, you won't find any."

²⁷ On the seventh day some people went out to gather food, but they didn't find any.

²⁸ The LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to do what I have commanded and instructed you to do?"

²⁹ Remember: The LORD has given you this day of worship. That's why he gives you enough food on the sixth day for two days. On the seventh day you may not leave. Everyone, stay where you are."

³⁰ So the people never worked on the seventh day of the week.

³¹ The Israelites called the food manna. It was like coriander seeds. It was white and tasted like wafers made with honey.

³² Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded: Take two quarts of manna to be kept for your descendants. This way they will see the food that I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you out of Egypt."

³³ Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar, put two quarts of manna in it, and put it in the LORD'S presence to be kept for your descendants."

³⁴ Aaron put the jar of manna in front of the words of God's promise to be kept there, as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁵ The Israelites ate manna for 40 years until they came to a place to settle. They ate manna until they came to the border of Canaan.

³⁶ (Now, the standard dry measure at that time held 20 quarts.)

17 ¹ The whole community of Israelites left the desert of Sin and traveled from place to place as the

LORD commanded them. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink.

² So they complained to Moses by saying, "Give us water to drink!" Moses said to them, "Why are you complaining to me? Why are you testing the LORD?"

³ But the people were thirsty for water there. They complained to Moses and asked, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Was it to make us, our children, and our livestock die of thirst?"

⁴ So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What should I do with these people? They're almost ready to stone me!"

⁵ The LORD answered Moses, "Bring some of the leaders of Israel with you, and go to where the people can see you. Take the staff you used to strike the Nile River.

⁶ I'll be standing in front of you there by a rock at Mount Horeb. Strike the rock,

and water will come out of it for the people to drink." Moses did this while the leaders of Israel watched him.

⁷ He named that place Massah [Testing] and Meribah [Complaining] because the Israelites complained and because they tested the LORD, asking, "Is the LORD with us or not?"

⁸ The Amalekites fought Israel at Rephidim.

⁹ Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men. Then fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill. I will hold in my hand the staff God told me to take along."

¹⁰ Joshua did as Moses told him and fought the Amalekites, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of the hill.

¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, Israel would win, but as soon as he put

his hands down, the Amalekites would start to win.

¹² Eventually, Moses' hands felt heavy. So Aaron and Hur took a rock, put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron held up one hand, and Hur held up the other. His hands remained steady until sunset.

¹³ So Joshua defeated the Amalekite army in battle.

¹⁴ The LORD said to Moses, "Write this reminder on a scroll, and make sure that Joshua hears it, too: I will completely erase any memory of the Amalekites from the earth."

¹⁵ Moses built an altar and called it The LORD Is My Banner.

¹⁶ He said, "Because a hand was lifted against the LORD'S throne, he will be at war against the Amalekites from one generation to the next."

18 ¹ Moses' father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about

everything God had done for Moses and his people Israel and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

² When Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro had taken her in,

³ along with her two sons. The one son was named Gershom [Foreigner], because Moses said, "I was a foreigner living in another country."

⁴ The name of the other was Eliezer [My God Is a Helper], because he said, "My father's God was my helper. He saved me from Pharaoh's death sentence."

⁵ Moses' father-in-law Jethro brought Moses' sons and wife to Moses in the desert where he was camped near the mountain of God.

⁶ Jethro had sent word to Moses, "I'm coming to visit you, and I'm bringing your wife and her two sons."

⁷ So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. Moses bowed with his face touching the ground and kissed Jethro. After they asked each other how they were, they went into the tent.

⁸ Moses told his father-in-law everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel, all the hardships they had had on the way, and how the LORD had saved them.

⁹ Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the Egyptians.

¹⁰ He said, "Thank the LORD! He rescued you from the Egyptians and their Pharaoh and rescued these people from the control of the Egyptians,

¹¹ who treated Israel with contempt. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods."

¹² Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God. Aaron and all the leaders of Israel came to eat the meal with Moses' father-in-law in God's presence.

¹³ The next day Moses was settling disagreements among the people. The people stood around Moses from morning until evening.

¹⁴ When Moses' father-in-law saw everything Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "Why are you doing this for the people? Why do you sit here alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?"

¹⁵ Moses answered his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to find out God's will.

¹⁶ Whenever they have a disagreement and bring it to me, I decide which person

is right, and I tell them God's laws and instructions."

¹⁷ Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you're doing is not good.

¹⁸ You and your people will wear yourselves out. This is too much work for you. You can't do it alone!

¹⁹ Now listen to me, and I'll give you some advice. May God be with you! You must be the people's representative to God and bring their disagreements to him.

²⁰ You must instruct them in the laws and the teachings, show them how to live, and tell them what to do.

²¹ "But choose capable men from all the people, men who fear God, men you can trust, men who hate corruption. Put them in charge of groups of 1,000, or 100, or 50, or 10 people.

²² Let them be the ones who usually settle disagreements among the people.

They should bring all important cases to you, but they should settle all minor cases themselves. Make it easier for yourself by letting them help you.

²³ If God commands you, and you do this, you will be able to continue your work, and all these people will have their disagreements settled so that they can go home."

²⁴ Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.

²⁵ Moses chose capable men from all the Israelites and put them in charge of groups of 1,000, or 100, or 50, or 10 people.

²⁶ These men were the ones who usually settled disagreements among the people. They would bring difficult cases to Moses, but they settled all minor ones themselves.

²⁷ Moses sent his father-in-law on his way. So Jethro went back to his own country.

19 ¹ Two months after the Israelites left Egypt, they came to the desert of Sinai.

² Israel had moved from Rephidim and had come into the desert of Sinai. They had set up camp there in front of the mountain.

³ Then Moses went up the mountain to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, "This is what you must say to the descendants of Jacob. Tell the Israelites,

⁴ 'You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to my mountain.

⁵ If you carefully obey me and are faithful to the terms of my promise, then out of all the nations you will be my

own special possession, even though the whole world is mine.

⁶ You will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.' These are the words you must speak to the Israelites."

⁷ So Moses went down and called for the leaders of the people. He repeated to them all the words that the LORD had commanded him.

⁸ All the people answered together, "We will do everything the LORD has said." So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.

⁹ The LORD said to Moses, "I am coming to you in a storm cloud so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always believe you." Moses told the LORD what the people had said.

¹⁰ So the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people, and tell them they have two days to get ready. They must set

themselves apart as holy. Have them wash their clothes

¹¹ and be ready by the day after tomorrow. On that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai as all the people watch.

¹² Mark off a boundary around the mountain for the people, and tell them not to go up the mountain or even touch it. Those who touch the mountain must be put to death.

¹³ No one should touch them. They must be stoned or shot with arrows. No matter whether it's an animal or a person, it must not live. The people may go up the mountain only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast."

¹⁴ After Moses went down the mountain to the people, he had them get ready, and they washed their clothes.

¹⁵ Then Moses said to the people, "Be ready two days from now. Don't

disqualify yourselves by having sexual intercourse."

¹⁶ On the morning of the second day, there was thunder and lightning with a heavy cloud over the mountain, and a very loud blast from a ram's horn was heard. All the people in the camp shook with fear.

¹⁷ Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

¹⁸ All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD had come down on it in fire. Smoke rose from the mountain like the smoke from a kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently.

¹⁹ As the sound of the horn grew louder and louder, Moses was speaking, and the voice of God answered him.

²⁰ The LORD came down on top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up.

²¹ The LORD said to him, "Go down and warn the people not to force their way through the boundary to see the LORD, or many of them will die.

²² Even the priests who are allowed to come near the LORD must set themselves apart as holy, or the LORD will violently kill them."

²³ Moses said to the LORD, "The people can't come up Mount Sinai, because you warned us yourself to mark off a boundary around the mountain and consider it holy."

²⁴ The LORD said to him, "Go down, and bring Aaron back with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through the boundary to come up to the LORD, or he will violently kill them."

²⁵ So Moses went down to the people and told them.

20 ¹ Then God spoke all these words:
² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of slavery in Egypt.

³ "Never have any other god.

⁴ Never make your own carved idols or statues that represent any creature in the sky, on the earth, or in the water.

⁵ Never worship them or serve them, because I, the LORD your God, am a God who does not tolerate rivals. I punish children for their parents' sins to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

⁶ But I show mercy to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my commandments.

⁷ "Never use the name of the LORD your God carelessly. The LORD will make sure that anyone who carelessly uses his name will be punished.

⁸ "Remember the day of worship by observing it as a holy day.

⁹ You have six days to do all your work.

¹⁰ The seventh day is the day of worship dedicated to the LORD your God. You, your sons, your daughters, your male and female slaves, your cattle, and the foreigners living in your city must never do any work on that day.

¹¹ In six days the LORD made heaven, earth, and the sea, along with everything in them. He didn't work on the seventh day. That's why the LORD blessed the day he stopped his work and set this day apart as holy.

¹² "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live for a long time in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³ "Never murder.

¹⁴ "Never commit adultery.

¹⁵ "Never steal.

¹⁶ "Never lie when you testify about your neighbor.

¹⁷ "Never desire to take your neighbor's household away from him. "Never desire to take your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to him."

¹⁸ All the people heard the thunder and saw the lightning. They heard the blast of the ram's horn and saw the mountain covered with smoke. So they shook with fear and stood at a distance.

¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we'll listen. But don't let God speak to us, or we'll die!"

²⁰ Moses answered the people, "Don't be afraid! God has come only to test you, so that you will be in awe of him and won't sin."

²¹ The people kept their distance while Moses went closer to the dark cloud where God was.

²² The LORD said to Moses, "This is what you must say to the Israelites:

You've seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven.

²³ Never make any gods of silver or gold for yourselves. Never worship them.

²⁴ "You must build an altar for me made out of dirt. Sacrifice your burnt offerings and your fellowship offerings, your sheep, goats, and cattle on it. Wherever I choose to have my name remembered, I will come to you and bless you.

²⁵ If you build an altar for me made out of stones, never make it with cut stone blocks. If you use a chisel on it, you will make it unacceptable to me.

²⁶ Never use stairs to go up to my altar. Otherwise, people will be able to see under your clothes."

21 ¹ The LORD continued, "Here are the legal decisions to be used by the Israelites:

² "Whenever you buy a Hebrew slave, he will be your slave for six years. In the

seventh year he may leave as a free man, without paying for his freedom.

³ If he comes to you by himself, he must leave by himself. If he comes as a married man, his wife may leave with him.

⁴ If his master gives him a wife and she gives birth to sons or daughters, the wife and her children belong to the master, and the slave must leave by himself.

⁵ But if he makes this statement: 'I hereby declare my love for my master, my wife, and my children. I don't want to leave as a free man,'

⁶ then his master must bring him to God. The master must bring him to the door or the doorframe and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his slave for life.

⁷ "Whenever a man sells his daughter into slavery, she will not go free the way male slaves do.

⁸ If she doesn't please the master who has chosen her as a wife, he must let her be bought back by one of her close relatives. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, since he has treated her unfairly.

⁹ But if he has chosen her for his son, he must treat her like a daughter.

¹⁰ If that son marries another woman, he must not deprive the first wife of food, clothes, or sex.

¹¹ If he doesn't give her these three things, she can go free, without paying any money for her freedom.

¹² "Whoever strikes someone and kills him must be put to death.

¹³ If it wasn't done intentionally, but God let it happen, the killer should flee to a place I will set aside for you.

¹⁴ But whenever someone becomes so angry that he plans to kill his neighbor,

you must take him away from my altar and put him to death.

¹⁵ "Whoever hits his father or mother must be put to death.

¹⁶ "Whoever kidnaps another person must be put to death, whether he has sold the kidnapped person or still has him.

¹⁷ "Whoever curses his father or mother must be put to death.

¹⁸ "This is what you must do whenever men quarrel and one hits the other with a rock or with his fist and injures him so that he has to stay in bed.

¹⁹ If the injured man can get up again and walk around outside with a cane, the one who hit him must not be punished. He must pay the injured man for the loss of his time and for all his medical expenses.

²⁰ "Whenever an owner hits his male or female slave with a stick so that the

slave dies from the beating, the owner must be punished.

²¹ But if the slave gets up in a day or two, the owner must not be punished. The slave is his property.

²² "This is what you must do whenever men fight and injure a pregnant woman so that she gives birth prematurely. If there are no other injuries, the offender must pay whatever fine the court allows the woman's husband to demand.

²³ If anyone is injured, the offender must pay a life for a life,

²⁴ an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot,

²⁵ a burn for a burn, a bruise for a bruise, a wound for a wound.

²⁶ "Whenever an owner hits his male or female slave in the eye and the slave is blinded, he must let the slave go free to make up for the loss of the eye.

²⁷ If the owner knocks out the tooth of his male or female slave, he must let the slave go free to make up for the loss of the tooth.

²⁸ "Whenever a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull must be stoned to death, and its meat may not be eaten. The bull's owner is free from any liability.

²⁹ But if the bull has had the habit of goring, and the owner has been warned but has not kept it confined, and it kills a man or a woman, then the bull must be stoned and its owner must be put to death, too.

³⁰ However, if only a cash settlement is demanded from the owner, the bull's owner may save his life by paying whatever price is demanded of him.

³¹ If the bull gores someone's son or daughter, this same ruling applies.

³² If the bull gores a male or female slave, its owner must pay 12 ounces of silver to the slave's master, and the bull must be stoned.

³³ "Whenever someone opens up a cistern or digs a new one and doesn't cover it and a bull or a donkey falls into it,

³⁴ the owner of the cistern must make up for the loss. He must pay money to the animal's owner, and then the dead animal will be his.

³⁵ "Whenever one person's bull kills another person's bull, they must sell the live bull and divide the money between them. They must divide the dead bull, too.

³⁶ However, if it was known that the bull had the habit of goring, and its owner didn't keep it confined, the owner must make up for the loss—bull for bull—and then the dead bull will be his."

22 ¹The LORD continued,
"Whenever someone steals
a bull or a sheep and butchers it or sells
it, he must make up for the loss with five
head of cattle to replace the bull or four
sheep to replace the sheep.

² "If anyone catches a thief breaking in
and hits him so that he dies, he is not
guilty of murder.

³ But if it happens after sunrise, he is
guilty of murder. "A thief must make up
for what he has stolen. If he is unable to
do so, he must be sold as a slave to pay
for what he stole.

⁴ But if the stolen animal is found alive
in his possession, whether it's a bull,
donkey, or a sheep, he must make up for
the loss with double the amount.

⁵ "Whenever someone lets his livestock
graze in a field or a vineyard, and they
stray and graze in another person's field,
he must make up for what the damaged

field was expected to produce. But if he lets them ruin the whole field with their grazing, he must make up from his own field for the loss with the best from his field and vineyard.

⁶ "Whenever a fire starts and spreads into the underbrush so that it burns up stacked or standing grain or ruins a field, the person who started the fire must make up for the loss.

⁷ "This is what you must do whenever someone gives his neighbor silver or other valuables to keep for him, and they are stolen from that person's house: If the thief is caught, he must make up for the loss with double the amount.

⁸ If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house must be brought to God to find out whether or not he took his neighbor's valuables.

⁹ If there is a dispute over the ownership of a bull, a donkey, a sheep, an article

of clothing, or any other lost property which two people claim as their own, both people must bring their case to God. The one whom God declares guilty must make up for his neighbor's loss with double the amount.

¹⁰ "This is what you must do whenever someone gives his neighbor a donkey, a bull, a sheep, or any other kind of animal to keep for him, and it dies, is injured, or is captured in war, and there are no witnesses.

¹¹ The case between them must be settled by swearing an oath to the LORD that the neighbor did not take the other person's animal. The owner must accept the oath. The neighbor doesn't have to make up for the loss.

¹² But if the animal was stolen from the neighbor, he must make up for the owner's loss.

¹³ If it was killed by a wild animal, he must bring in the dead body as evidence. He doesn't have to make up for an animal that has been killed.

¹⁴ "Whenever someone borrows an animal from his neighbor, and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, the borrower must make up for the loss.

¹⁵ If the owner is with the animal, the borrower doesn't have to make up for the loss. If it is rented, the rental fee covers the loss.

¹⁶ "Whenever a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to anyone and has sexual intercourse with her, he must pay the bride-price and marry her.

¹⁷ If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must pay an amount of money equal to the bride-price for virgins.

¹⁸ "Never let a witch live.

¹⁹ "Whoever has sexual intercourse with an animal must be put to death.

²⁰ "Whoever sacrifices to any god except the LORD must be condemned and destroyed.

²¹ "Never mistreat or oppress foreigners, because you were foreigners living in Egypt.

²² "Never take advantage of any widow or orphan.

²³ If you do and they cry out to me, you can be sure that I will hear their cry.

²⁴ I will become angry and have you killed in combat. Then your wives and children will become widows and orphans.

²⁵ "If you lend money to my people—to any poor person among you—never act like a moneylender. Charge no interest.

²⁶ If you take any of your neighbor's clothes as collateral, give it back to him by sunset.

²⁷ It may be the only clothes he has to cover his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, I will listen because I am compassionate.

²⁸ "Never show disrespect for God or curse a leader of your people.

²⁹ "Never withhold your best wine from me." You must give me your firstborn son.

³⁰ You must do the same with your cattle and your sheep. They will stay with their mothers seven days, but on the eighth day you must give them to me.

³¹ "You must be my holy people. Never eat the meat of an animal that has been killed by wild animals out in the countryside. Throw it to the dogs."

23 ¹ The LORD continued, "Never spread false rumors. Don't join forces with wicked people by giving false testimony.

² Never follow a crowd in doing wrong. When you testify in court, don't side with the majority to pervert justice.

³ Never give special favors to poor people in court.

⁴ "Whenever you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering loose, be sure to take it back to him.

⁵ Whenever you see that the donkey of someone who hates you has collapsed under its load, don't leave it there. Be sure to help him with his animal.

⁶ "Never deny justice to poor people in court.

⁷ Avoid telling lies. Don't kill innocent or honest people, because I will never declare guilty people innocent.

⁸ Never take a bribe, because bribes blind those who can see and deny justice to those who are in the right.

⁹ "Never oppress foreigners. You know what it's like to be foreigners because you were foreigners living in Egypt.

¹⁰ "For six years you may plant crops in your fields and harvest them,

¹¹ but in the seventh year you must leave the land unplowed and unused. In that way the poor among your people will have food to eat, and wild animals may eat what the poor people leave. You must do the same with your vineyards and olive groves.

¹² "For six days you will do your work, but on the seventh day you must not work. Then your ox and donkey can rest. The slaves born in your household and foreigners will also be refreshed.

¹³ "Be careful to do everything I told you." Never mention the names of other gods or let them be heard on your lips.

¹⁴ "Three times a year you must celebrate a pilgrimage festival in my honor.

¹⁵ "Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread: For seven days you must eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Abib, because that was when you left Egypt. No one may come into my presence without an offering.

¹⁶ "Celebrate the Festival of the Harvest with the first produce harvested from whatever you plant in your fields." Celebrate the Festival of the Final Harvest at the end of the year when you harvest your crops from the fields.

¹⁷ "These are the three times each year that all your men must come into the presence of the Master, the LORD.

¹⁸ "Never offer the blood of a sacrifice to me at the same time you offer anything containing yeast. The fat

sacrificed at my festivals should never be left over in the morning.

¹⁹ "You must bring the best of the first produce harvested from your soil to the house of the LORD your God." Never cook a young goat in its mother's milk.

²⁰ "I'm going to send a Messenger in front of you to protect you on your trip and bring you to the place I have prepared.

²¹ Pay attention to him, and listen to him. Don't defy him, because he will not forgive your disobedience. He is acting on my authority.

²² But if you will listen to him and do everything I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an opponent to your opponents.

²³ "My Messenger will go ahead of you and will bring you to the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites,

Hivites, and Jebusites. I will wipe them out.

²⁴ Never worship or serve their gods or follow their practices. Instead, you must destroy their gods and crush their sacred stones.

²⁵ You must serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your food and water. I will take away all sickness from among you.

²⁶ No woman in your land will miscarry or be unable to have children. I will let you live a normal life span.

²⁷ "I will send my terror ahead of you and throw any nation you meet into a panic. I will make all your enemies flee from you.

²⁸ I will spread panic ahead of you to force the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites out of your way.

²⁹ I will not force them out of your way in one year. Otherwise, the land would

be deserted, and wild animals would take over.

³⁰ Little by little I will force them out of your way until you have increased enough in number to take possession of the land.

³¹ "I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and from the Sinai Desert to the Euphrates River. I will put the people living in the land under your control, and you will force them out of your way.

³² Never make a treaty with them and their gods.

³³ Never let them live in your land, or they will make you sin against me and trap you into serving their gods."

24 ¹ The LORD said to Moses, "You and Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and 70 of Israel's leaders come up the mountain to me and worship at a distance.

² Moses may come near the LORD, but the others may not. The people must not come along with Moses."

³ Moses went and told the people all the LORD'S words and legal decisions. Then all the people answered with one voice, "We will do everything the LORD has told us to do."

⁴ So Moses wrote down all the LORD'S words. Early the next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up 12 sacred stones for the 12 tribes of Israel.

⁵ Then he sent young Israelite men, and they sacrificed bulls as burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD.

⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put it into bowls, and he threw the other half against the altar.

⁷ Then he took the Book of the LORD'S Promise and read it while the people

listened. They said, "We will obey and do everything the LORD has said."

⁸ Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, "Here is the blood which seals the promise that the LORD has made to you based on everything you have just heard."

⁹ Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and 70 of Israel's leaders.

¹⁰ They saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made out of sapphire as clear and blue as the sky itself.

¹¹ God didn't harm these leaders of the Israelites. So they saw God, and then they ate and drank.

¹² The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain. Stay there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the teachings and the commandments I have written for the people's instruction."

¹³ Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up on the mountain of God.

¹⁴ He said to the leaders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are here with you. Take all your disagreements to them."

¹⁵ So Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered it.

¹⁶ The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered it, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from inside the cloud.

¹⁷ To the Israelites, the glory of the LORD looked like a raging fire on top of the mountain.

¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain. He stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights.

25 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²"Tell the Israelites to choose something to give me as a special contribution. You must accept whatever contribution each person freely gives.

³This is the kind of contribution you will accept from them: gold, silver, and bronze,

⁴violet, purple, and bright red yarn, fine linen, goats' hair,

⁵rams' skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood,

⁶olive oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet-smelling incense,

⁷onyx stones, and other precious stones to be set in the chief priest's ephod and his breastplate.

⁸"Then have them make a holy place for me, and I will live among them.

⁹Make the tent and all its furnishings exactly like the plans I am showing you.

¹⁰ "Make an ark of acacia wood 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

¹¹ Cover it with pure gold inside and out, and put a gold molding around it.

¹² Cast four gold rings for it, and fasten them to its four feet, two rings on each side.

¹³ Make poles of acacia wood, and cover them with gold.

¹⁴ Put the poles through the rings on the sides of the ark in order to carry it.

¹⁵ The poles must stay in the rings of the ark. Never remove them.

¹⁶ Then you will put into the ark the words of my promise which I will give you.

¹⁷ "Make a throne of mercy to cover the ark out of pure gold 45 inches long and 27 inches wide.

¹⁸ Make two angels out of hammered gold for the two ends of the throne of mercy,

¹⁹ one on each end. Form the angels and the throne of mercy out of one piece of gold.

²⁰ The angels should have their wings spread above the throne of mercy, overshadowing it. They should face each other, looking at the throne of mercy.

²¹ After you put into the ark the words of my promise which I will give you, place the throne of mercy on top.

²² I will be above the throne of mercy between the angels whenever I meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.

²³ "Make a table of acacia wood 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

²⁴ Cover it with pure gold, and put a gold molding around it.

²⁵ Make a rim three inches wide around it, and put a gold molding around the rim.

²⁶ Make four gold rings for it, and fasten them to the four corners, where the four legs are.

²⁷ The rings are to be close to the rim. They are to hold the poles for carrying the table.

²⁸ Make the poles out of acacia wood, cover them with gold, and use them to carry the table.

²⁹ Make plates and dishes for the table out of pure gold, as well as pitchers and bowls to be used for pouring wine offerings.

³⁰ Put the bread of the presence on this table so that it will be in front of me all the time.

³¹ "Make a lamp stand out of pure gold. The lamp stand, its base, and its shaft, as well as the flower cups, buds, and petals

must be hammered out of one piece of gold.

³² Six branches are to come out of the sides, three branches on one side and three on the other.

³³ Each of the six branches coming out of the lamp stand is to have three flower cups shaped like almond blossoms, with buds and petals.

³⁴ The lamp stand itself is to have four flower cups shaped like almond blossoms, with buds and petals.

³⁵ There should be a bud under each of the three pairs of branches coming out of the lamp stand.

³⁶ The buds and branches should also be hammered out of the same piece of pure gold as the lamp stand.

³⁷ "Make seven lamps, and set them on the lamp stand so that they light up the area in front of it.

³⁸ The tongs and incense burners must be made of pure gold.

³⁹ Use 75 pounds of pure gold to make the lamp stand and all the utensils.

⁴⁰ Be sure to make them according to the plans you were shown on the mountain."

26 ¹ The LORD continued, "Make the inner tent with ten sheets made from fine linen yarn. Take violet, purple, and bright red yarn, and creatively work an angel design into the fabric.

² Each sheet will be 42 feet long and 6 feet wide—all the same size.

³ Five of the sheets must be sewn together, and the other five must also be sewn together.

⁴ Make 50 violet loops along the edge of the end sheet in each set,

⁵ placing the loops opposite each other.

⁶ Make 50 gold fasteners. Use them to link the two sets of sheets together so that the tent is a single unit.

⁷ "Make 11 sheets of goats' hair to form an outer tent over the inner tent.

⁸ Each of the 11 sheets will be 45 feet long and 6 feet wide.

⁹ Sew five of the sheets together into one set and the remaining six into another set. Fold the sixth sheet in half to hang in front of the tent.

¹⁰ Make 50 loops along the edge of the end sheet in each set.

¹¹ Make 50 bronze fasteners, and put them through the loops to link the inner tent together as a single unit.

¹² The remaining half-sheet should hang over the back of the inner tent.

¹³ There will be 18 inches left over on each side because of the length of the outer tent's sheets. That part should

hang over each side in order to cover the inner tent.

¹⁴ Make a cover of rams' skins that have been dyed red for the outer tent. Over that put a cover made of fine leather.

¹⁵ "Make a framework out of acacia wood for the inner tent.

¹⁶ Each frame is to be 15 feet long and 27 inches wide,

¹⁷ with two identical pegs. Make all the frames for the inner tent the same way.

¹⁸ Make 20 frames for the south side of the inner tent.

¹⁹ Then make 40 silver sockets at the bottom of the 20 frames, two sockets at the bottom of each frame for the two pegs.

²⁰ For the north side of the inner tent make 20 frames

²¹ and 40 silver sockets, two at the bottom of each frame.

²² Make six frames for the far end, the west side.

²³ Make two frames for each of the corners at the far end of the inner tent.

²⁴ These will be held together at the bottom and held tightly at the top by a single ring. Both corner frames will be made this way.

²⁵ There will be eight frames with 16 silver sockets, two at the bottom of each frame.

²⁶ "Make crossbars out of acacia wood: five for the frames on one side of the inner tent,

²⁷ five for those on the other side, and five for the frames on the far end of the inner tent, the west side.

²⁸ The middle crossbar will run from one end to the other, halfway up the frames.

²⁹ Cover the frames with gold, make gold rings to hold the crossbars, and cover the crossbars with gold.

³⁰ "Set up the inner tent according to the plans you were shown on the mountain.

³¹ "Make a canopy of violet, purple, and bright red yarn. Creatively work an angel design into fine linen yarn.

³² Use gold hooks to hang it on four posts of acacia wood covered with gold, standing in four silver sockets.

³³ Hang the canopy from the fasteners in the ceiling, and put the ark containing the words of my promise under it. The canopy will mark off the most holy place from the holy place.

³⁴ Put the throne of mercy that is on the ark in the most holy place.

³⁵ "Place the table outside the canopy on the north side of the inner tent, and

put the lamp stand opposite the table on the south side.

³⁶ "For the entrance of the outer tent, make a screen out of fine linen yarn, embroidered with violet, purple, and bright red yarn.

³⁷ Make five posts of acacia wood for the screen and cover them with gold. Make gold hooks for this screen. Cast five bronze bases for the posts."

27 ¹ The LORD continued, "Make an altar out of acacia wood. It should be 7½ feet square, and 4½ feet high.

² Make a horn at each of its four corners. The four horns and the altar must be made out of one piece of wood covered with bronze.

³ "Make all the utensils for it out of bronze: pots for taking away the altar's ashes, also shovels, bowls, forks, and incense burners.

⁴ "Make a grate for it out of bronze mesh, and make a bronze ring for each of the four corners of the grate.

⁵ Put the grate under the ledge of the altar so that it comes halfway up the altar.

⁶ "Make poles out of acacia wood for the altar, and cover them with bronze.

⁷ The poles should be put through the rings on both sides of the altar to carry it.

⁸ "Make the altar out of boards so that it's hollow inside. It must be made just as you were shown on the mountain.

⁹ "Make a courtyard for the tent. The south side of the courtyard should be 150 feet long and have curtains made out of fine linen yarn,

¹⁰ hung on 20 posts set in 20 bronze bases. The hooks and bands on the posts should be made of silver.

¹¹ The north side should be the same: 150 feet long, with curtains on 20 posts set in 20 bronze bases. The hooks and bands on the posts should be made of silver.

¹² "The courtyard on the west end should be 75 feet wide and have curtains hung on ten posts set in ten bases.

¹³ On the east end, facing the rising sun, the courtyard should also be 75 feet wide.

¹⁴ Each side of the entrance will be 22½ feet wide with curtains hung on three posts set in three bases.

¹⁵ (SEE 27:14)

¹⁶ "The entrance to the courtyard must have a 30-foot screen made from fine linen yarn, embroidered with violet, purple, and bright red yarn, hung on four posts set in four bases.

¹⁷ All the posts around the courtyard should have silver bands, silver hooks, and bronze bases.

¹⁸ The courtyard should be 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 7½ feet high, with curtains made of fine linen yarn and with bronze bases.

¹⁹ "All the things for the tent, no matter how they're used, including all the pegs for the tent and the courtyard, must be made of bronze.

²⁰ "For the lighting, you must command the Israelites to bring you pure, virgin olive oil so that the lamps won't go out.

²¹ In the tent of meeting outside the canopy where the words of my promise are, Aaron and his descendants must keep the lamps lit in the LORD'S presence from evening until morning. This is a permanent law among the Israelites for generations to come."

28 ¹ The LORD continued, "Out of all the Israelites, bring your brother Aaron and his sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar to you. They will serve me as priests.

² Make holy clothes for your brother Aaron to give him dignity and honor.

³ "Tell all those who have the skill—those to whom I have given this ability—to make Aaron's clothes. These clothes will set him apart as holy when he serves me as priest.

⁴ These are the clothes they will make: a breastplate, an ephod and the robe that is worn with it, another specially woven linen robe, the chief priest's turban, and a cloth belt. They will make these holy clothes for your brother Aaron and his sons so that they can serve me as priests.

⁵ They must use gold, violet, purple, and bright red yarn, and fine linen.

⁶ "Make the ephod out of fine linen yarn. Creatively work gold, violet, purple, and bright red yarn into the fabric.

⁷ It will have two shoulder straps attached at the top corners so that it can be fastened.

⁸ Make the belt that is attached to the ephod out of the same fabric.

⁹ Take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel

¹⁰ in birth order—six of their names on one stone and the remaining six on the other.

¹¹ Engrave the names of the sons of Israel on the two stones the same way a jeweler engraves a signet ring. Mount them in gold settings,

¹² and fasten them on the shoulder straps of the ephod as reminders of who the Israelites are. In this way Aaron will carry their names on his shoulders as a reminder in the LORD'S presence.

¹³ Make gold settings

¹⁴ and two chains of pure gold, twisted like ropes, and fasten these chains to the settings.

¹⁵ "Make the breastplate for decision-making as creatively as you make the ephod. Make it out of gold, violet, purple, and bright red yarn and out of fine linen yarn.

¹⁶ Fold it in half so that it's 9 inches square.

¹⁷ Fasten four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row put red quartz, topaz, and emerald.

¹⁸ In the second row put turquoise, sapphire, and crystal.

¹⁹ In the third row put jacinth, agate, and amethyst.

²⁰ In the fourth row put beryl, onyx, and gray quartz. Mount them in gold settings.

²¹ The stones correspond to the 12 sons of Israel, by name, each stone engraved (like a signet ring) with the name of one of the 12 tribes.

²² "For the breastplate make chains out of pure gold, twisted like ropes.

²³ Make two gold rings for the breastplate. Attach them to the two top corners of the breastplate.

²⁴ Then fasten the two gold ropes to the rings at the top corners of the breastplate.

²⁵ Fasten the other ends of the ropes to the two settings on the shoulder straps of the ephod so that the breastplate hangs in front of it.

²⁶ Make two gold rings, and fasten them to the other two corners of the breastplate on the inside edge next to the ephod.

²⁷ Make two more gold rings, and fasten them to the bottom of the shoulder

straps on the front of the ephod. This will be close to the seam just above the belt of the ephod.

²⁸ Then the breastplate should be fastened by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a violet cord. This will attach it just above the belt of the ephod and will hold the breastplate in place.

²⁹ "Whenever Aaron goes into the holy place, he will be carrying the names of the sons of Israel over his heart as a constant reminder in the LORD'S presence. He must do this by wearing the breastplate for decision-making.

³⁰ Put the Urim and Thummim into the breastplate for decision-making. They, too, will be over Aaron's heart when he comes into the LORD'S presence. In this way whenever he's in the LORD'S presence, Aaron will always be carrying over his heart the means for determining the LORD'S decisions for the Israelites.

³¹ "Make the robe that is worn with the ephod entirely of violet material.

³² Make an opening for the head in the center with a reinforced edge (like a leather collar) all around it to keep it from tearing.

³³ All around the hem of the robe make pomegranates of violet, purple, and bright red yarn with gold bells in between—

³⁴ a gold bell alternating with a pomegranate all around the hem of the robe.

³⁵ Aaron must wear it when he serves as priest. The sound of the bells must be heard when he comes into and goes out of the LORD'S presence in the holy place so that he won't die.

³⁶ "Make a flower-shaped medallion out of pure gold, and engrave on it (as on a signet ring): Holy to the LORD.

³⁷ Fasten a violet cord to it, and tie it so that it's on the front of the turban.

³⁸ It will be on Aaron's forehead. He's the one to be blamed for anything done wrong when the Israelites bring their holy offerings—whatever their gifts may be. The medallion must always be on Aaron's forehead so that the LORD will accept their offerings.

³⁹ "Make the specially woven inner robe of fine linen. Make the turban of fine linen, but the belt should be embroidered with colored yarn.

⁴⁰ "Also make linen robes, belts, and turbans for Aaron's sons. These clothes will give them dignity and honor.

⁴¹ Put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint them, ordain them, and set them apart to serve me as priests.

⁴² "Make linen undergarments to cover them down to their thighs.

⁴³ Aaron and his sons must wear them when they go into the tent of meeting or when they come near the altar to serve as priests in the holy place. Then they will be blameless and won't die. "This is a permanent law for him and his descendants."

29 ¹ The LORD continued, "Now, this is what you must do in order to set Aaron and his sons apart to serve me as priests:" Take a young bull that has no defects and two rams that have no defects.

² Use the finest wheat flour, but no yeast, and bake some loaves of bread, some rings of bread made with olive oil, and some wafers brushed with olive oil.

³ Put the bread in a basket, and bring the basket along with the young bull and the two rams.

⁴ "Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and wash them.

⁵ Take the clothes, and put them on Aaron—the linen robe, the ephod and the robe that is worn with it, and the breastplate. Use the belt to tie it on him tightly.

⁶ Put his turban on him, and fasten the holy crown to it.

⁷ Take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him.

⁸ "Have his sons come forward. Dress them in their linen robes,

⁹ and put turbans on them. Tie belts around the waists of Aaron and his sons. They alone are to be priests; this is a permanent law. In this way you will ordain Aaron and his sons.

¹⁰ "Then bring the young bull to the front of the tent of meeting. Aaron and

his sons will place their hands on its head.

¹¹ Slaughter the bull in the LORD'S presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

¹² Take some of the bull's blood, and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger. Pour the rest of it out at the bottom of the altar.

¹³ "Then take all the fat that covers the internal organs, the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat on them, and burn them on the altar.

¹⁴ But burn the bull's meat, skin, and excrement outside the camp. It is an offering for sin.

¹⁵ "Take one of the rams. Then Aaron and his sons will place their hands on its head.

¹⁶ Slaughter it, take the blood, and throw it against the altar on all sides.

¹⁷ Cut the ram into pieces, wash the internal organs and legs, and put them with the other pieces and the head.

¹⁸ Then burn the whole ram on the altar. It's a burnt offering, a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

¹⁹ "Take the other ram. Then Aaron and his sons will place their hands on its head.

²⁰ Slaughter it, take some of the blood, and put it on the right ear lobes of Aaron and his sons, on their right thumbs, and on the big toes of their right feet. Throw the rest of the blood against the altar on all sides.

²¹ Take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his clothes and on his sons and their clothes. In this way Aaron, his sons, and their clothes will be holy.

²² "From this same ram take the fat, the fat from the tail, the fat that covers the internal organs, the lobe of the liver, the two kidneys with the fat on them, and the right thigh. (This is the ram for the ordination.)

²³ From the basket of unleavened bread which is in the LORD'S presence, take a round loaf of bread, a ring of bread made with olive oil, and a wafer.

²⁴ Put all of these in the hands of Aaron and his sons, who will offer them to the LORD.

²⁵ Then take them from their hands, and burn them on the altar on top of the burnt offering. It's a soothing aroma in the LORD'S presence, an offering by fire to the LORD.

²⁶ "Take the breast from the ram used for Aaron's ordination, and present it to the LORD. This will be your share.

²⁷ Set apart as holy the breast that is offered to the LORD and the thigh that is the contribution. Both will come from the ram used for the ordination. They both belong to Aaron and his sons.

²⁸ It is a permanent law that the Israelites give this portion to Aaron and his sons as a contribution. This will also be their contribution to the LORD from the fellowship offerings.

²⁹ "Aaron's holy clothes will belong to his descendants so that they can be anointed and ordained in them.

³⁰ The son who succeeds him as priest—the one who goes into the tent of meeting to serve in the holy place—will wear them for seven days.

³¹ "Take the ram used for the ordination, and boil its meat in a holy place.

³² At the entrance to the tent of meeting, Aaron and his sons will eat the

meat of the ram and the bread left in the basket.

³³ They will eat those offerings through which they made peace with the LORD at their ordination and installation. No one else may eat them because the offerings are holy.

³⁴ If any meat or bread from the ordination is left over until morning, burn it up. It must not be eaten because it is holy.

³⁵ "Do this with Aaron and his sons exactly as I have commanded you. Take seven days to ordain them.

³⁶ Each day sacrifice a young bull as an offering to make peace with the LORD. Sacrifice this offering for sin on the altar in order to pay for its sins. Then anoint it with olive oil in order to dedicate it.

³⁷ For seven days at the altar make peace with the LORD and set the altar apart for its holy purpose. Then the altar

will be most holy. Anything that touches the altar will become holy.

³⁸ "This is what you are to offer on the altar regularly every day: two one-year-old lambs.

³⁹ Offer one in the morning and the other at dusk.

⁴⁰ With the first lamb make an offering of eight cups of flour mixed with one quart of virgin olive oil. Make a wine offering of one quart of wine.

⁴¹ Offer the other lamb at dusk, and with it make the same grain offering and wine offering as in the morning. This is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

⁴² "For generations to come this will be the daily burnt offering made in the LORD'S presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting. There I will meet with you to speak to you.

⁴³ I will also meet with the Israelites there, and my glory will make this place holy.

⁴⁴ I will dedicate the tent of meeting and the altar for their holy purposes. I will set Aaron and his sons apart for their holy duties of serving me as priests.

⁴⁵ "Then I will live among the Israelites and be their God.

⁴⁶ They will know that I am the LORD their God. I brought them out of Egypt so that I might live among them. I am the LORD their God."

30 ¹ The LORD continued, "Build an altar out of acacia wood for burning incense.

² Make it 18 inches square and 36 inches high. The horns and altar must be made out of one piece of wood.

³ Cover all of it with pure gold—the top, the sides, and the horns. Put a gold molding around it.

⁴ Make two gold rings, and put them below the molding on opposite sides to hold the poles for carrying it.

⁵ Make the poles out of acacia wood, and cover them with gold.

⁶ Put the altar in front of the canopy which hangs over the ark containing the words of my promise. I will meet with you there in front of the throne of mercy that is on the ark.

⁷ "Aaron must burn sweet-smelling incense on this altar every morning when he takes care of the lamps.

⁸ Also, when Aaron lights the lamps at dusk, he must burn incense. For generations to come an incense offering must burn constantly in the LORD'S presence.

⁹ "Never burn any unauthorized incense on this altar or any burnt offerings or grain offerings. Never pour a wine offering on it.

¹⁰ Once a year Aaron must make peace with the LORD by putting blood on its horns. Once a year—for generations to come—blood from the offering must be placed on the altar to make peace with the LORD. It is most holy to the LORD."

¹¹ Then the LORD said to Moses,

¹² "When you take a census of the Israelites, each person must pay the LORD a ransom for his life when he is counted. Then no plague will happen to them when they are counted.

¹³ As each person is counted, he must give one-fifth of an ounce of silver using the standard weight of the holy place. This one-fifth of an ounce of silver is a contribution to the LORD.

¹⁴ Everyone counted who is at least 20 years old must give this contribution to the LORD.

¹⁵ The rich must not give more than one-fifth of an ounce of silver, and the

poor must not give less. This contribution is given to make peace with the LORD and make your lives acceptable to the LORD.

¹⁶ Take the money the Israelites give to make peace with the LORD, and use it to pay the expenses of the tent of meeting. It will be a reminder for the Israelites in the LORD'S presence that the sins in their lives are removed."

¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁸ "Make a bronze basin with a bronze stand for washing. Put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and fill it with water.

¹⁹ Aaron and his sons will use it for washing their hands and feet.

²⁰ Before they go into the tent of meeting, they must wash so that they will not die. Before they come near the altar to serve as priests and burn an offering by fire to the LORD,

²¹ they will wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This will be a permanent law for him and his descendants for generations to come."

²² The LORD said to Moses,

²³ "Take the finest spices: 12½ pounds of powdered myrrh; half as much, that is, 6¼ pounds of fragrant cinnamon; 6¼ pounds of fragrant cane;

²⁴ 12½ pounds of cassia—all weighed using the standard weight of the holy place—and 4 quarts of olive oil.

²⁵ Have a perfumer make these into a holy oil, a fragrant mixture, used only for anointing. This will be the holy oil used for anointing.

²⁶ "Use it to anoint the tent of meeting, the ark containing the words of my promise,

²⁷ the table and all the dishes, the lamp stand and all the utensils, the altar for incense,

²⁸ the altar for burnt offerings and all its accessories, and the basin with its stand.

²⁹ In this way you will dedicate them for their holy purpose. Then they will be most holy, and anything that touches them will become holy.

³⁰ Anoint Aaron and his sons as well. In this way you will set them apart for their holy duties of serving me as priests.

³¹ "Say to the Israelites, 'For generations to come, this will be my holy oil used only for anointing.

³² It must never be poured on the bodies of other people. Never make any perfumed oil using this formula. It is holy, and you must treat it as holy.

³³ Whoever prepares a perfume like this or puts it on anyone who is not a priest must be excluded from the people.'"

³⁴ The LORD said to Moses, "Take one part fragrant spices (two kinds of gum resin and aromatic mollusk

shells), and mix them with one part pure frankincense.

³⁵ Have a perfumer make it into fragrant incense, seasoned with salt, pure and holy.

³⁶ Grind some of it into a fine powder, and put it in front of the ark containing the words of my promise in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. You must treat it as most holy.

³⁷ Never make any incense for yourselves using this formula. Treat it as holy to the LORD.

³⁸ Whoever prepares anything like it for his own enjoyment must be excluded from his people."

31 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri and grandson of Hur, from the tribe of Judah.

³ I have filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God, making him highly skilled,

resourceful, and knowledgeable in all trades.

⁴ He's a master artist familiar with gold, silver, and bronze.

⁵ He knows how to cut and set stones and how to work with wood. He's an expert in all trades.

⁶ Also, I have appointed Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, from the tribe of Dan, to help him. I have given every craftsman the skill necessary to make everything I have commanded you:

⁷ the tent of meeting, the ark containing the words of my promise with the throne of mercy on it, and all the other furnishings for the tent,

⁸ the table and the dishes, the pure gold lamp stand and all its utensils, the altar for incense,

⁹ the altar for burnt offerings and all its accessories, the basin with its stand,

¹⁰ the special clothes—the holy clothes for the priest Aaron and the clothes for his sons when they serve as priests,

¹¹ the anointing oil, and the sweet-smelling incense for the holy place.

They will make all these things as I commanded you."

¹² The LORD said to Moses,

¹³ "Say to the Israelites, 'Be sure to observe my days of worship. This will be a sign between me and you for generations to come so that you will know that I am the LORD who makes you holy.

¹⁴ "'Observe the day of worship because it is holy to you. Whoever treats it like any other day must be put to death. Whoever works on that day must be excluded from the people.

¹⁵ You may work for six days, but the seventh day is a day of worship, a day when you don't work. It is holy to the

LORD. Whoever works on that day must be put to death.

¹⁶ The Israelites must observe this day of worship, celebrating it for generations to come as a permanent reminder of my promise.

¹⁷ It will be a permanent sign between me and the Israelites, because the LORD made heaven and earth in six days, and on the seventh day he stopped working and was refreshed.'"

¹⁸ The LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. Then he gave him the two tablets with his words on them, stone tablets inscribed by God himself.

32 ¹ When the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron. They said to him, "We don't know what has happened to this Moses, who led us out of Egypt. Make gods who will lead us."

² Aaron said to them, "Have your wives, sons, and daughters take off the gold earrings they are wearing, and bring them to me."

³ So all the people took off their gold earrings and handed them to Aaron.

⁴ After he had worked on the gold with a tool, he made it into a statue of a calf. Then they said, "Israel, here are your gods who brought you out of Egypt."

⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of it and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival in the LORD'S honor."

⁶ Early the next day the people sacrificed burnt offerings and brought fellowship offerings. Afterward, they sat down to a feast, which turned into an orgy.

⁷ The LORD said to Moses, "Go back down there. Your people whom you

brought out of Egypt have ruined everything.

⁸ They've already turned from the way I commanded them to live. They've made a statue of a calf for themselves. They've bowed down to it and offered sacrifices to it. They've said, 'Israel, here are your gods who brought you out of Egypt.'

⁹ The LORD added, "I've seen these people, and they are impossible to deal with.

¹⁰ Now leave me alone. I'm so angry with them I am going to destroy them. Then I'll make you into a great nation."

¹¹ But Moses pleaded with the LORD his God. "LORD," he said, "why are you so angry with your people whom you brought out of Egypt using your great power and mighty hand?"

¹² Don't let the Egyptians say, 'He was planning all along to kill them in the mountains and wipe them off the face

of the earth. That's why he brought them out of our land.' Don't be so angry. Reconsider your decision to bring this disaster on your people.

¹³ Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. You took an oath, swearing on yourself. You told them, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. I will give to your descendants all the land I spoke of. It will be their permanent possession.'"

¹⁴ So the LORD reconsidered his threat to destroy his people.

¹⁵ Moses turned and went down the mountain carrying the two tablets with God's words. They were written on both sides, front and back.

¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was God's writing inscribed on the tablets.

¹⁷ Then Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting. He said to Moses, "It's the sound of war in the camp!"

¹⁸ Moses replied, "It's not the sound of winners shouting. It's not the sound of losers crying. It's the sound of a wild celebration that I hear."

¹⁹ When he came near the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing. In a burst of anger Moses threw down the tablets and smashed them at the foot of the mountain.

²⁰ Then he took the calf they had made, burned it, ground it into powder, scattered it on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.

²¹ Moses asked Aaron, "What did these people do to you that you encouraged them to commit such a serious sin?"

²² "Don't be angry, sir," Aaron answered. "You know that these people are evil."

²³ They said to me, 'We don't know what's happened to this Moses who brought us out of Egypt. Make gods for us. They will lead us.'

²⁴ So I told them to take off any gold they were wearing. They gave it to me. I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"

²⁵ Aaron had let the people get out of control, and they became an object of ridicule to their enemies. When Moses saw this,

²⁶ he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "If you're on the LORD'S side, come over here to me!" Then all the Levites gathered around him.

²⁷ He said to them, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Each of you put on your sword. Go back and forth from one end of the camp to the other, and kill your relatives, friends, and neighbors."

²⁸ The Levites did what Moses told them, and that day about 3,000 people died.

²⁹ Moses said, "Today you are ordained as the LORD'S priests. God gave you a blessing today because each of you fought with your own sons and brothers."

³⁰ The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a serious sin. Now I will go up the mountain to the LORD. Maybe I will be able to make a payment for your sin and make peace with the LORD for your sin."

³¹ So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "These people have committed such a serious sin! They made gods out of gold for themselves.

³² But will you forgive their sin? If not, please wipe me out of the book you have written."

³³ The LORD answered Moses, "I will wipe out of my book whoever sins against me.

³⁴ Now, go! Lead the people to the place I told you about. My Messenger will go ahead of you. But when I punish, I will punish them for their sin."

³⁵ So the LORD killed people because they had Aaron make the calf.

33 ¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "You and the people you brought out of Egypt must leave this place. Go to the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with an oath, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.'

² I will send a Messenger ahead of you, and I will force out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

³ Go to that land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not be with you,

because you are impossible to deal with, and I would destroy you on the way."

⁴ When the people heard this bad news, they acted as if someone had died. No one wore any jewelry.

⁵ The LORD had said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites, 'You are impossible to deal with. If I were with you, I might destroy you at any time. Now take off your jewelry, and I'll decide what to do with you.'"

⁶ After they left Mount Horeb, the Israelites no longer wore their jewelry.

⁷ Now, Moses used to take a tent and set it up far outside the camp. He called it the tent of meeting. Anyone who was seeking the LORD'S will used to go outside the camp to the tent of meeting.

⁸ Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand at the entrances to their tents and watch Moses until he went in.

⁹ As soon as Moses went into the tent, the column of smoke would come down and stay at the entrance to the tent while the LORD spoke with Moses.

¹⁰ When all the people saw the column of smoke standing at the entrance to the tent, they would all bow with their faces touching the ground at the entrance to their own tents.

¹¹ The LORD would speak to Moses personally, as a man speaks to his friend. Then Moses would come back to the camp, but his assistant, Joshua, son of Nun, stayed inside the tent.

¹² Moses said to the LORD, "You've been telling me to lead these people, but you haven't let me know whom you're sending with me. You've also said, 'I know you by name, and I'm pleased with you.'

¹³ If you really are pleased with me, show me your ways so that I can know

you and so that you will continue to be pleased with me. Remember: This nation is your people."

¹⁴ The LORD answered, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you peace."

¹⁵ Then Moses said to him, "If your presence is not going with us, don't make us leave this place."

¹⁶ How will anyone ever know you're pleased with your people and me unless you go with us? Then we will be different from all other people on the face of the earth."

¹⁷ The LORD answered Moses, "I will do what you have asked, because I am pleased with you, and I know you by name."

¹⁸ Then Moses said, "Please let me see your glory."

¹⁹ The LORD said, "I will let all my goodness pass in front of you, and there

I will call out my name ‘the LORD.’ I will be kind to anyone I want to. I will be merciful to anyone I want to.

²⁰ But you can’t see my face, because no one may see me and live."

²¹ Then the LORD said, "Look, there’s a place near me. Stand by this rocky cliff.

²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a crevice in the cliff and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

²³ Then I will take my hand away, and you’ll see my back, but my face must not be seen."

34 ¹ The LORD said to Moses, "Cut two more stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets which you smashed.

² Be ready in the morning. Then come up on Mount Sinai, and stand in my presence on the top of the mountain.

³ No one may come with you or even be seen anywhere on the mountain. Even the flocks and herds may not graze in front of this mountain."

⁴ So Moses cut two more stone tablets like the first ones. Early the next morning he went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, carrying the two stone tablets.

⁵ The LORD came down in a cloud and stood there with him and called out his name "the LORD."

⁶ Then he passed in front of Moses, calling out, "The LORD, the LORD, a compassionate and merciful God, patient, always faithful and ready to forgive.

⁷ He continues to show his love to thousands of generations, forgiving wrongdoing, disobedience, and sin. He never lets the guilty go unpunished, punishing children and grandchildren for

their parents' sins to the third and fourth generation."

⁸ Immediately, Moses knelt, bowing with his face touching the ground.

⁹ Then he said, "Lord, please go with us! Even though we are impossible to deal with, forgive our sin and the wrong we have done, and accept us as your own people."

¹⁰ The LORD said, "I'm making my promise again. In front of all your people I will perform miracles that have never been done in any other nation in all the world. All the people around you will see how awesome these miracles are that I will perform for you.

¹¹ Do everything that I command today. Then I will force the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites out of your way.

¹² Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you're going. This will prove to be a trap to you.

¹³ But tear down their altars, crush their sacred stones, and cut down their poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah.

¹⁴ (Never worship any other god, because the LORD is a God who does not tolerate rivals. In fact, he is known for not tolerating rivals.)

¹⁵ Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in that land. When they chase after their gods as though they were prostitutes and sacrifice to them, they may invite you to eat the meat from their sacrifices with them.

¹⁶ Then your sons will end up marrying their daughters. When their daughters chase after their gods as though they were prostitutes, they'll lead your sons to do the same thing.

¹⁷ "Never make an idol.

¹⁸ "You must celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you must eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, because in that month you came out of Egypt.

¹⁹ "Every first male offspring is mine, even the firstborn males of all your livestock, whether cattle, sheep, or goats.

²⁰ It will cost you a sheep or a goat to buy back the firstborn donkey. If you don't buy it back, then you must break the donkey's neck. You must buy back every firstborn of your sons. "No one may come into my presence without an offering.

²¹ "You may work six days, but on the seventh day you must not work. Even during the time of plowing or harvesting you must not work on this day.

²² "You must celebrate the Festival of Weeks with the first grain from your wheat harvest, and the Festival of the Final Harvest at the end of the season.

²³ "Three times a year all your men must come into the presence of the Master, the LORD God of Israel.

²⁴ I will force nations out of your way and will expand your country's borders. No one will want to take away your land while you're gone three times a year to the LORD'S festivals.

²⁵ "Never offer the blood of a sacrifice to me at the same time you offer anything containing yeast. No part of the sacrifice at the Passover festival should be left over in the morning.

²⁶ "You must bring the first and best of the produce harvested from your soil to the house of the LORD your God. "Never cook a young goat in its mother's milk."

²⁷ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, because on the basis of these words I'm making a promise to Israel and to you."

²⁸ Moses was there with the LORD 40 days and 40 nights without food or water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the promise, the ten commandments.

²⁹ Moses came down from Mount Sinai, carrying the two tablets with God's words on them. His face was shining from speaking with the LORD, but he didn't know it.

³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites looked at Moses and saw his face shining, they were afraid to come near him.

³¹ Moses called to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him. Then Moses spoke to them.

³² After that, all the other Israelites came near him, and he commanded

them to do everything the LORD told him on Mount Sinai.

³³ When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face.

³⁴ But whenever Moses went into the LORD'S presence to speak with him, he took off the veil until he came out. Whenever he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded,

³⁵ they would see that Moses' face was shining. Then Moses would put the veil back on until he went in again to speak with the LORD.

35 ¹ Moses assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them, "These are the things the LORD has commanded you to do:

² You may work for six days, but the seventh day is a holy day of worship, a day when you don't work. It is dedicated to the LORD. Whoever does any work on this day should be put to death.

³ Never light a fire in any of your homes on this day of worship."

⁴ Then Moses said to the whole Israelite community, "This is what the LORD has commanded:

⁵ Choose something of your own to give as a special contribution to the LORD. Let everyone who is willing bring this kind of contribution to the LORD: gold, silver, and bronze,

⁶ violet, purple, and bright red yarn, fine linen, goats' hair,

⁷ rams' skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood,

⁸ olive oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet-smelling incense,

⁹ onyx stones, and other precious stones to be set in the chief priest's ephod and breastplate.

¹⁰ "Have all the skilled craftsmen among you come and make everything the LORD has commanded:

¹¹ the inner tent, the outer tent, and cover, along with the fasteners, frames, crossbars, posts, and sockets,

¹² the ark with its poles, the throne of mercy and the canopy over it,

¹³ the table with its poles, all the dishes, the bread of the presence,

¹⁴ the lamp stand used for the light with its utensils, its lamps and the olive oil for the lamps,

¹⁵ the altar for incense with its poles, the anointing oil, the sweet-smelling incense, the screen for the entrance to the tent,

¹⁶ the altar for burnt offerings with its bronze grate, its poles, and all its accessories, the basin with its stand,

¹⁷ the curtains for the courtyard, the posts, bases, and the screen for the entrance to the courtyard,

¹⁸ the pegs for the tent and the courtyard with their ropes,

¹⁹ the special clothes worn for official duties in the holy place—both the holy clothes for Aaron the priest and the clothes for his sons when they serve as priests."

²⁰ Then the whole Israelite community left Moses.

²¹ Those who were willing and whose hearts moved them came and brought their contributions to the LORD. The gifts were used to construct the tent of meeting, to pay other expenses, and to make the holy clothes.

²² All who were willing—men and women alike—came and brought all kinds of gold jewelry: pins, earrings, signet rings, and pendants. They took

these gifts of gold and offered them to the LORD.

²³ Those who had violet, purple, or bright red yarn, fine linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, or fine leather brought them.

²⁴ Those who could give silver or bronze brought it as their contribution to the LORD. Those who had acacia wood that could be used in the construction brought it.

²⁵ All the women who were skilled in spinning yarn brought violet, purple, and bright red yarn, and fine linen, which they had made by hand.

²⁶ All the women who were willing and had the skill spun the goats' hair.

²⁷ The leaders brought onyx stones and other precious stones to be set in the chief priest's ephod and breastplate.

²⁸ They also brought the spices and the olive oil for the lamps, the anointing oil, and the sweet-smelling incense.

²⁹ Every Israelite man and woman who was willing brought all these items to the LORD as a freewill offering. They brought these items to be used to make everything the LORD had commanded through Moses.

³⁰ Then Moses said to the Israelites, "The LORD has chosen Bezalel, son of Uri and grandson of Hur, from the tribe of Judah.

³¹ The LORD has filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God, making him highly skilled, resourceful, and knowledgeable in all trades.

³² He's a master artist familiar with gold, silver, and bronze.

³³ He knows how to cut and set stones and how to work with wood. He's an expert in all trades.

³⁴ Also, the LORD has given Bezalel and Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, from the tribe of Dan the ability to teach others.

³⁵ The LORD has made these men highly skilled in all trades. They can do the work of jewelers, carpenters, and designers. They know how to embroider violet, purple and bright red yarn on fine linen. They know how to weave yarn on a loom. They can do all kinds of trades. They are master artists."

36 ¹ Moses continued, "So Bezalel and Oholiab will do the work as the LORD has commanded. They will do this with the help of every other craftsman to whom the LORD has given the necessary skills and talents. They will know how to do all the work for constructing the holy place."

² Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every other craftsman to whom the

LORD had given these skills and who was willing to come and do the work.

³ Moses turned over to them all the contributions the Israelites had brought for the work of constructing the holy place. But the people still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning.

⁴ Finally, all the skilled craftsmen who were working on the holy place stopped what they were doing. They all came to Moses.

⁵ They said, "The people are bringing much more than we need for doing the work the LORD commanded us to do."

⁶ So Moses gave instructions to have the following message announced all over camp: "No man or woman needs to make anything more to give as their special contribution to the holy place." Then the people stopped bringing gifts.

⁷ The material they had was more than enough to do the job.

⁸ All the skilled craftsmen among the workers made the inner tent with ten sheets made from fine linen yarn and violet, purple, and bright red yarn. An angel design was creatively worked into the fabric.

⁹ Each sheet was 42 feet long and 6 feet wide—all the same size.

¹⁰ Five of the sheets were sewn together, and the other five were also sewn together.

¹¹ Then they made 50 violet loops along the edge of the end sheet in each set,

¹² placing the loops opposite each other.

¹³ They also made 50 gold fasteners. They used them to link the two sets of sheets together so that the inner tent was a single unit.

¹⁴ They made 11 sheets of goats' hair to form an outer tent over the inner tent.

¹⁵ Each of the 11 sheets was 45 feet long and 6 feet wide.

¹⁶ Five of the sheets were sewn together into one set, and the remaining six into another set.

¹⁷ Then they made 50 loops along the edge of the end sheet in each set.

¹⁸ They also made 50 bronze fasteners to link the inner tent together as a single unit.

¹⁹ They made a cover out of rams' skins that had been dyed red for the outer tent, and over that they put a cover made of fine leather.

²⁰ They made a framework out of acacia wood for the inner tent.

²¹ Each frame was 15 feet long and 27 inches wide,

²² with two identical pegs. They made all the frames for the inner tent this same way.

²³ They made 20 frames for the south side of the inner tent.

²⁴ Then they made 40 silver sockets at the bottom of the 20 frames, two sockets at the bottom of each frame for the two pegs.

²⁵ For the north side of the inner tent they made 20 frames

²⁶ and 40 silver sockets, two at the bottom of each frame.

²⁷ They made six frames for the far end, the west side.

²⁸ They made two frames for each of the corners at the far end of the inner tent.

²⁹ They were held together at the bottom and held tightly at the top by a single ring. Both corner frames were made this way.

³⁰ There were eight frames with 16 silver sockets, two at the bottom of each frame.

³¹ They also made crossbars out of acacia wood. Five were for the frames on one side of the inner tent,

³² five were for those on the other side, and five were for the frames on the far side of the inner tent, the west side.

³³ They made the middle crossbar so that it ran from one end to the other, halfway up the frames.

³⁴ They covered the frames with gold and made gold rings to hold the crossbars. They also covered the crossbars with gold.

³⁵ They made the canopy out of violet, purple, and bright red yarn and fine linen yarn. An angel design was creatively worked into the fabric.

³⁶ They made four posts of acacia wood for it and covered them with gold. They made gold hooks for the posts, and they cast four silver bases for them.

³⁷ They made a screen out of fine linen yarn for the entrance to the outer tent. It was embroidered with violet, purple, and bright red yarn.

³⁸ They also made five posts with hooks for hanging the screen. They covered the tops of the posts and the bands with gold, but the five bases for the posts were made of bronze.

37 ¹ Bezalel made the ark out of acacia wood 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

² He covered it with pure gold inside and out and put a gold molding around it.

³ He cast four gold rings for its four feet, two rings on each side.

⁴ Then he made poles out of acacia wood and covered them with gold.

⁵ He put them through the rings on the sides of the ark in order to carry it.

⁶ He made the throne of mercy out of pure gold 45 inches long and 27 inches wide.

⁷ Then he made two angels out of hammered gold for the two ends of the throne of mercy,

⁸ one on each end. He formed the angels and the throne of mercy out of one piece of gold.

⁹ The angels had their wings spread above the throne of mercy, overshadowing it. They faced each other, looking at the throne of mercy.

¹⁰ He made the table out of acacia wood 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

¹¹ He covered it with pure gold and put a gold molding around it.

¹² He made a rim 3 inches wide around it and put a gold molding around the rim.

¹³ He cast four gold rings for it and fastened the rings to the four corners, where the four legs were.

¹⁴ The rings were put close to the rim to hold the poles for carrying the table.

¹⁵ These poles were made out of acacia wood and were covered with gold.

¹⁶ For the table he made plates, dishes, bowls, and pitchers to be used for pouring wine offerings. All of them were made out of pure gold.

¹⁷ He made the lamp stand out of pure gold. The lamp stand, its base, and its shaft, as well as the flower cups, buds, and petals were hammered out of one piece of gold.

¹⁸ Six branches came out of its sides, three branches on one side and three on the other.

¹⁹ Each of the six branches coming out of the lamp stand had three flower cups

shaped like almond blossoms, with buds and petals.

²⁰ The lamp stand itself had four flower cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a bud and petals.

²¹ There was a bud under each of the three pairs of branches coming out of the lamp stand.

²² The buds and branches were hammered out of the same piece of pure gold as the lamp stand.

²³ He made the seven lamps, the tongs, and the incense burners out of pure gold.

²⁴ The lamp stand and all the utensils were made out of 75 pounds of pure gold.

²⁵ He made an altar out of acacia wood for burning incense. It was 18 inches square and 36 inches high. The horns and altar were made out of one piece of wood.

²⁶ He covered all of it with pure gold—the top, the sides, and the horns—and he put a gold molding around it.

²⁷ He made two gold rings and put them below the molding on opposite sides to hold the poles for carrying it.

²⁸ He made the poles out of acacia wood and covered them with gold.

²⁹ He also had a perfumer make the holy oil to be used for anointing and for the pure, sweet-smelling incense.

38 ¹ He made the altar for burnt offerings out of acacia wood 7½ feet square and 4½ feet high.

² He made a horn at each of its four corners. He made the four horns and the altar out of one piece of wood covered with bronze.

³ He made all the utensils out of bronze: pots, shovels, bowls, forks, and incense burners.

⁴ He made a grate for the altar out of bronze mesh, and put it under the ledge, halfway up the altar.

⁵ He cast four rings to hold the poles (one for each of the four corners of the bronze grate).

⁶ He made the poles out of acacia wood and covered them with bronze.

⁷ He put the poles through the rings on the sides of the altar to carry it. He made the altar out of boards so that it was hollow inside.

⁸ He made the basin and stand out of the bronze mirrors given by the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁹ He also made the courtyard. The south side of the courtyard was 150 feet long and had curtains made out of fine linen yarn,

¹⁰ hung on 20 posts set in 20 bronze bases. The hooks and bands on the posts were made of silver.

¹¹ The north side was also 150 feet long with 20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The hooks and bands on the posts were made of silver.

¹² The west side was 75 feet long and had curtains hung on 10 posts set in 10 bases. The hooks and bands on the posts were made of silver.

¹³ The east side, facing the rising sun, was 75 feet wide.

¹⁴ Each side of the entrance to the courtyard was 22½ feet wide with curtains hung on three posts set in three bases.

¹⁵ (SEE 38:14)

¹⁶ All the curtains around the courtyard were made out of fine linen yarn.

¹⁷ The bases for the posts were made of bronze. The hooks and bands on the

posts were made of silver. The tops of the posts were covered with silver. And the bands on all the posts of the courtyard were made of silver.

¹⁸ The screen for the entrance to the courtyard was made of violet, purple, and bright red yarn embroidered on fabric made from fine linen yarn. It was 30 feet long and 7½ feet high, just like the curtains of the courtyard.

¹⁹ It was hung on four posts set in four bronze bases. The hooks and bands on the posts were made of silver. The tops of the posts were covered with silver.

²⁰ All the pegs for the tent and the surrounding courtyard were made of bronze.

²¹ This is the amount of material that was used for the tent (the tent of the words of God's promise). An inventory was ordered by Moses and carried out

by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar, son of the priest Aaron.

²² Now Bezalel, son of Uri and grandson of Hur, from the tribe of Judah, made everything the LORD had commanded Moses.

²³ He was a jeweler, carpenter, designer, and he knew how to embroider violet, purple, and bright red yarn on fine linen. His assistant was Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, from the tribe of Dan.

²⁴ The total amount of gold from the offerings presented to the LORD used in building the holy place weighed over 2,193 pounds using the standard weight of the holy place.

²⁵ The silver collected when the census of the community was taken weighed 7,544 pounds using the standard weight of the holy place.

²⁶ This came to one-fifth of an ounce per person, for everyone counted who

was at least 20 years old: 603,550 people.

²⁷ He used 7,500 pounds of silver to cast the 100 bases for the holy place and the canopy. This was 75 pounds per base.

²⁸ He used 44 pounds of silver to make the hooks and bands for the posts and the coverings for the tops of the posts.

²⁹ The bronze from the offerings presented to the LORD weighed 5,310 pounds.

³⁰ With this he made the bases for the entrance to the tent of meeting, the bronze altar with its bronze grate and all its accessories,

³¹ the bases all around the courtyard, the bases for the entrance to the courtyard, all the pegs for the tent, and all the pegs for the surrounding courtyard.

39 ¹ From the violet, purple, and bright red yarn they made special clothes worn for official duties in the holy place. They also made the holy clothes for Aaron. They followed the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

² They made the ephod out of fine linen yarn and gold, violet, purple, and bright red yarn.

³ They hammered the gold into thin sheets and cut them up. They twisted the gold into threads, which they creatively worked into each strand of the violet, purple, and bright red yarn, and throughout the fine linen.

⁴ They made two shoulder straps attached at the top corners so that the ephod could be fastened.

⁵ They made the belt that is attached to the ephod out of the same fabric. They followed the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

⁶ They mounted the onyx stones in gold settings, and engraved on them the names of the sons of Israel.

⁷ Then they fastened them on the shoulder straps of the ephod as a reminder of who the Israelites are. They followed the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

⁸ They made the breastplate as creatively as they made the ephod. It was made out of gold, violet, purple, and bright red yarn, and of fine linen yarn.

⁹ It was folded in half and was 9 inches square.

¹⁰ They fastened four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row they put red quartz, topaz, and emerald.

¹¹ In the second row they put turquoise, sapphire, and crystal.

¹² In the third row they put jacinth, agate, and amethyst.

¹³ In the fourth row they put beryl, onyx, and gray quartz. The stones were mounted in gold settings.

¹⁴ They corresponded to the 12 sons of Israel, by name, each stone engraved (like a signet ring) with the name of one of the 12 tribes.

¹⁵ For the breastplate they made chains out of pure gold, twisted like ropes.

¹⁶ They made two gold settings and two gold rings and attached the two rings to the top two corners of the breastplate.

¹⁷ They fastened the two gold ropes to the rings at the top corners of the breastplate.

¹⁸ They fastened the other ends of the ropes to the two settings on the shoulder straps of the ephod so that the breastplate hung in front of it.

¹⁹ They made two gold rings and fastened them to the other two corners

of the breastplate on the inside edge next to the ephod.

²⁰ They made two more gold rings and fastened them to the bottom of the shoulder straps on the front of the ephod. This was close to the seam just above the belt of the ephod.

²¹ Then they fastened the breastplate by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a violet cord. So the breastplate was attached just above the belt of the ephod and was held in place. They followed the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

²² They made the robe that is worn with the ephod, woven entirely of violet yarn.

²³ The opening in the center of the robe had a finished edge (like a leather collar) all around it to keep it from tearing.

²⁴ On the hem of the robe they made pomegranates of violet, purple, and bright red yarn, and fine yarn.

²⁵ They made bells out of pure gold and fastened them in between the pomegranates all around the hem of the robe.

²⁶ A gold bell alternated with a pomegranate all around the hem of the robe that is worn by Aaron when he serves as priest. They followed the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

²⁷ They wove inner robes out of fine linen for Aaron and his sons.

²⁸ They also made the chief priest's turban and the other beautiful turbans out of fine linen. They made the undergarments and belt out of fine linen yarn.

²⁹ The belt was embroidered with violet, purple, and bright red yarn. They followed the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

³⁰ They made the flower-shaped medallion (the holy crown) out of pure

gold and engraved on it (as on a signet ring): Holy to the LORD.

³¹ They fastened a violet cord to it and tied it on top of the turban. They followed the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

³² So all the work on the inner tent (the tent of meeting) was now done. The Israelites followed all the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

³³ Then they brought everything to Moses—the inner tent, the outer tent and all its furnishings, the fasteners, frames, crossbars, posts, sockets,

³⁴ the cover made of rams' skins dyed red, the cover made of fine leather, the canopy over the ark,

³⁵ the ark containing the words of God's promise with its poles and the throne of mercy,

³⁶ the table with all the dishes, the bread of the presence,

³⁷ the pure gold lamp stand with its lamps in a row and all its utensils, the olive oil for the lamps,

³⁸ the gold altar, the anointing oil, the sweet-smelling incense, the screen for the entrance to the tent,

³⁹ the bronze altar with its bronze grate, its poles, and all its accessories, the basin with its stand,

⁴⁰ the curtains for the courtyard, the posts, bases, and screen for the entrance to the courtyard, the ropes and pegs—all the equipment needed for the service of the inner tent (the tent of meeting)—

⁴¹ the special clothes worn when serving as priests in the holy place—both the holy clothes for the priest Aaron and the clothes for his sons when serving as priests.

⁴² The Israelites had done all the work following the LORD'S instructions to Moses.

⁴³ Moses inspected all the work and saw that they had followed the LORD'S instructions. So Moses blessed them.

40 ¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "Set up the tent (the tent of meeting) on the first day of the first month of the year.

³ Place the ark containing the words of my promise inside it, and hang the canopy over the ark.

⁴ Bring in the table, and arrange everything on it. Bring in the lamp stand, and set up the lamps.

⁵ Put the gold altar for incense in front of the ark. Put up the screen at the entrance to the tent.

⁶ "Put the altar for burnt offerings in front of the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁷ Put the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it.

⁸ Set up the surrounding courtyard, and put up the screen at the entrance to the courtyard.

⁹ Take the anointing oil, and anoint the tent and everything in it. In this way you will dedicate it and all its furnishings. Then it will be holy.

¹⁰ Anoint the altar for burnt offerings and all the utensils. In this way you will dedicate the altar, and it will be most holy.

¹¹ Anoint the basin and stand, and they will be dedicated.

¹² "Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and wash them.

¹³ Then dress Aaron in the holy clothes, and anoint him. In this way you will dedicate him to serve me as priest.

¹⁴ Have his sons come forward, and dress them in their linen robes.

¹⁵ Anoint them to serve me as priests, as you anointed their father. Their anointing will begin a permanent priesthood for them for generations to come."

¹⁶ Moses did everything as the LORD commanded him.

¹⁷ So the tent was set up on the first day of the first month of the second year after the Israelites had left Egypt.

¹⁸ When Moses set up the tent, he put the sockets in place, put up the frames, inserted the crossbars, and set up the posts.

¹⁹ He spread the outer tent over the inner tent and put the cover on top. Moses followed the LORD'S instructions.

²⁰ He took the words of God's promise and put them in the ark. He put the poles on the ark and placed the throne of mercy on top of the ark.

²¹ Then he brought the ark into the tent and hung the canopy over it to mark off where the ark was. Moses followed the LORD'S instructions.

²² Moses put the table in the tent of meeting on the north side of the tent outside the canopy.

²³ He arranged the bread on the table in the LORD'S presence, following the LORD'S instructions.

²⁴ He placed the lamp stand in the tent of meeting opposite the table, on the south side of the tent.

²⁵ He set up the lamps in the LORD'S presence, following the LORD'S instructions.

²⁶ Moses put the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the canopy.

²⁷ He burned sweet-smelling incense on it, following the LORD'S instructions.

²⁸ Then he put up the screen at the entrance to the tent.

²⁹ He put the altar for burnt offerings at the entrance to the tent (the tent of meeting). He sacrificed burnt offerings and grain offerings on it. Moses followed the LORD'S instructions.

³⁰ He put the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing.

³¹ Moses, Aaron, and his sons used this water to wash their hands and feet.

³² They would wash whenever they went into the tent of meeting or whenever they approached the altar. Moses followed the LORD'S instructions.

³³ He set up the courtyard around the tent and the altar and put up the screen at the entrance to the courtyard. Finally, Moses finished the work.

³⁴ Then the column of smoke covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tent.

³⁵ Moses couldn't go into the tent of meeting, because the smoke settled on it and the glory of the LORD filled the tent.

³⁶ In all their travels, whenever the column of smoke moved from the tent, the Israelites would break camp.

³⁷ But if the column didn't move, they wouldn't break camp.

³⁸ So the LORD'S column stayed over the tent during the day, and there was fire in the smoke at night. In this way all the Israelites could see the column throughout their travels.

Leviticus

1 ¹ The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting. He said,

² "Tell the Israelites: If any of you bring a sacrifice to the LORD, you must offer an animal from your cattle, sheep, or goats.

³ "If you bring a burnt offering from your cattle, you must offer a male that has no defects. Offer it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that the LORD will accept you.

⁴ Place your hand on the animal's head. The burnt offering will be accepted to make peace with the LORD.

⁵ Then slaughter the bull in the LORD'S presence. Aaron's sons, the priests, will offer the blood. They will throw it

against all sides of the altar that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁶ Skin the burnt offering, and cut it into pieces.

⁷ Then the sons of the priest Aaron will start a fire on the altar and lay the wood on the fire.

⁸ Aaron's sons, the priests, will also lay the pieces, the head, and the fat on top of the wood burning on the altar.

⁹ Wash the internal organs and legs. Then the priest will burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁰ "If your offering is a sheep or goat, you must bring a male that has no defects.

¹¹ Slaughter it in the LORD'S presence on the north side of the altar. Aaron's sons, the priests, will throw the blood against the altar on all sides.

¹² Then cut it into pieces. The priest will lay the head and the fat on the wood burning on the altar.

¹³ Wash the internal organs and legs. Then the priest will burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁴ "If your offering to the LORD is a bird, you must sacrifice a mourning dove or pigeon.

¹⁵ The priest must bring it to the altar. He will break its neck and burn the bird on the altar. First, he will drain the blood against the side of the altar.

¹⁶ Remove the gizzard with its filth and throw it on the east side of the altar on the place for the ashes.

¹⁷ Then pull on the bird's wings to tear the bird open, but don't pull the wings off. Then the priest will lay the bird on the wood burning on the altar. It is a

burnt offering, an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD."

2¹ The LORD continued, "Now, if any of you bring a grain offering to the LORD, your offering must be flour. Pour olive oil on it, and put incense on it.

² Then bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests. Take from this a handful of flour with olive oil, and all the incense. The priest will burn it on the altar as a reminder. It is an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

³ The rest of the grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons. It is very holy, set apart from the LORD'S offering by fire.

⁴ "If you bring a grain offering which has been baked in an oven, it must be rings of unleavened bread made of flour mixed with olive oil or wafers of unleavened bread brushed with olive oil.

⁵ If your grain offering is prepared in a frying pan, it, too, will be unleavened bread made of flour mixed with olive oil.

⁶ Break it into pieces and pour olive oil over it. It is a grain offering.

⁷ If your grain offering is prepared in a skillet, it will be made of flour with olive oil.

⁸ "Bring the LORD the grain offering prepared in any of these ways. Offer it to the priest who will bring it to the altar.

⁹ The priest will remove part of the grain offering and burn it as a reminder on the altar. It is an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁰ The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons. It is very holy, set apart from the LORD'S offering by fire.

¹¹ "Every grain offering that you bring to the LORD must be prepared without yeast. Never burn yeast or honey as an offering to the LORD.

¹² You may bring them to the LORD as offerings of your first products. But they must never be placed on the altar to make a soothing aroma.

¹³ Also put salt on each of your grain offerings. The salt of God's promise must never be left out of your grain offerings. Put salt on all your offerings.

¹⁴ "If you bring a grain offering to the LORD from the first grain you harvest, roast the cracked grain over fire.

¹⁵ Put olive oil on it, and place incense on it. It is a grain offering.

¹⁶ The priest will burn the flour, olive oil, and all the incense as a reminder. It is an offering by fire to the LORD."

3 ¹ The LORD continued, "If your sacrifice is a fellowship offering of cattle in the LORD'S presence, it must be a male or female animal that has no defects.

² Place your hand on the animal's head. Then slaughter it at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons, the priests, will throw the blood against the altar on all sides.

³ From your offering remove the fat that covers the internal organs

⁴ and the two kidneys with the fat on them and offer them by fire to the LORD. Also cut off the lobe of the liver along with the kidneys.

⁵ Then Aaron's sons will lay them on top of the burnt offering on the burning wood. It is an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

⁶ "If your sacrifice is a fellowship offering of sheep to the LORD, you must bring a male or female animal that has no defects.

⁷ If your offering is a lamb, you must bring it to the LORD.

⁸ Place your hand on the animal's head. Slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons will throw the blood against the altar on all sides.

⁹ Then take the fat from the fellowship offering and offer it by fire to the LORD. Remove all the fat from the tail and the fat that covers the internal organs.

¹⁰ Also remove the two kidneys with the fat on them along with the lobe of the liver.

¹¹ Then the priest will burn the fellowship offering on the altar. It is food, an offering by fire to the LORD.

¹² "If your offering is a goat, you must bring it to the LORD.

¹³ Place your hand on its head. Slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons will throw the blood against the altar on all sides.

¹⁴ Then bring the fat that covers the internal organs

¹⁵ and the two kidneys with the fat on them as an offering by fire to the LORD. Also remove the lobe of the liver along with the kidneys.

¹⁶ Then the priest will burn them on the altar. It is food, an offering by fire to the LORD. It is a soothing aroma. All the fat belongs to the LORD.

¹⁷ This is a permanent law for generations to come wherever you live: Never eat any fat or blood."

4 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell the Israelites: If a person unintentionally does something wrong—even one thing that is forbidden by any of the LORD'S commands—this is what he must do.

³ "If the anointed priest does something wrong and brings guilt on the people, he must bring a bull that has no defects as an offering for sin to the LORD.

⁴ He must bring the bull into the LORD'S presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He will place his hand on the bull's head. He will then slaughter the bull in the LORD'S presence.

⁵ Then the anointed priest will take some of the bull's blood and bring it into the tent of meeting.

⁶ The priest will dip his finger in it and sprinkle some of the blood seven times in the LORD'S presence facing the canopy in the holy place.

⁷ Then the priest will put some of the blood on the horns of the altar for sweet-smelling incense in the LORD'S presence in the tent of meeting. He will pour the rest of the bull's blood at the bottom of the altar for burnt offerings at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁸ He will remove all of the fat from the bull that is the offering for sin, the fat that covers the internal organs,

⁹ and the two kidneys with the fat on them. He will also remove the lobe of the liver and the kidneys

¹⁰ the same way they were removed from the bull used for the fellowship offering. The priest will lay them on the altar for burnt offerings.

¹¹ Then he will take the entire bull (the skin, meat, head, legs, internal organs, and excrement)

¹² to a clean place outside the camp where the ashes are dumped. He will burn it there on a wood fire.

¹³ "If the whole congregation of Israel unintentionally does something wrong, without the assembly being aware of it, if they do even one thing that is forbidden by any of the LORD'S commands, they will be guilty.

¹⁴ When the wrong they have done becomes known, the congregation must sacrifice a bull as an offering for sin.

They must bring it in front of the tent of meeting.

¹⁵ The leaders of the congregation will place their hands on the bull's head in the LORD'S presence. One of them will slaughter it in the LORD'S presence.

¹⁶ Then the anointed priest will bring some of the bull's blood into the tent of meeting.

¹⁷ The priest will dip his finger in some of the blood and sprinkle it seven times in the LORD'S presence facing the canopy.

¹⁸ He will also put some blood on the horns of the altar in the LORD'S presence in the tent of meeting. He will pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar for burnt offerings at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

¹⁹ He will remove all the fat and burn it on the altar.

²⁰ He will do the same thing with this bull that he did with the bull used as the offering for sin. So the priest will make peace with the LORD for the people, and they will be forgiven.

²¹ Then he will take the bull outside the camp and will burn it the same way he burned the first bull. It is an offering for sin for the community.

²² "When a leader unintentionally does something wrong—even one thing that is forbidden by any of the commands of the LORD his God—he will be guilty.

²³ When he is told about what he has done wrong, he must bring a male goat that has no defects as his offering.

²⁴ He will place his hand on the goat's head and slaughter it in the LORD'S presence where he slaughters animals for burnt offerings. It is an offering for sin.

²⁵ Then the priest will take some of the blood of the offering for sin with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offerings. He will pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar for burnt offerings.

²⁶ He will burn all the fat on the altar the same way the fat of the fellowship offering is burned. So the priest will make peace with the LORD for what the leader did wrong, and the leader will be forgiven.

²⁷ "If a common person unintentionally does something wrong—even one thing forbidden by the LORD'S commands—he will be guilty.

²⁸ When he is told about what he has done wrong, he must bring a female goat that has no defects as his offering for what he has done wrong.

²⁹ He will place his hand on the animal's head and slaughter it where animals for burnt offerings are slaughtered.

³⁰ The priest will take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offerings. He will pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar.

³¹ He will remove all the fat the same way it is removed from the fellowship offering. The priest will burn it on the altar for a soothing aroma to the LORD. So the priest will make peace with the LORD for that person, and that person will be forgiven.

³² "If someone brings a lamb as his offering for sin, he must bring a female that has no defects.

³³ He will place his hand on the animal's head and slaughter it where he slaughters animals for burnt offerings.

³⁴ Then the priest will take some of the blood from the offering for sin with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offerings. He will pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar.

³⁵ He will remove all the fat the same way the fat of the lamb is removed from the fellowship offerings. Then the priest will burn it on the altar with the offering by fire to the LORD. So the priest will make peace with the LORD for what that person did wrong, and that person will be forgiven."

5 ¹ The LORD continued, "Now, if you are a witness under oath and won't tell what you saw or what you know, you are sinning and will be punished.

² "If you touch anything unclean—the unclean dead body of a wild or tame animal or the body of an unclean, swarming creature—and then ignore

what you did, you are unclean and will be guilty.

³ "If you become unclean by touching human uncleanness of any kind and then ignore it (although you know what you did), you will be guilty.

⁴ "If you hastily take a vow about what you will or will not do (as some people do) and then ignore it (although you know what you said), you will be guilty.

⁵ "So if you are guilty of any of these sins, you must confess it.

⁶ Bring your guilt offering to the LORD for the sin you committed. It must be a female sheep or goat as an offering for sin. Then the priest will make peace with the LORD for what you did wrong.

⁷ "Now, if you cannot afford a sheep, you must bring to the LORD two mourning doves or two pigeons as a guilt offering for the sin you committed.

One will be an offering for sin, the other a burnt offering.

⁸ Bring them to the priest, and he will sacrifice the offering for sin first. He will break the bird's neck without pulling its head off.

⁹ He will sprinkle some of the blood from the offering for sin on the side of the altar, and the rest of the blood will be drained at the bottom of the altar. It is an offering for sin.

¹⁰ Then, following the proper procedures, he will sacrifice the second bird as a burnt offering. So the priest will make peace with the LORD for what you did wrong.

¹¹ "But if you cannot afford two mourning doves or two pigeons, then bring eight cups of flour as an offering for the sin you committed. Never put olive oil on it or add incense to it, because it is an offering for sin.

¹² Bring it to the priest. The priest will take a handful of it. He will burn it as a reminder on top of the offering by fire to the LORD on the altar. It is an offering for sin.

¹³ So the priest will make peace with the LORD for what you did wrong, and you will be forgiven. The offering will belong to the priest like the grain offering."

¹⁴ The LORD spoke to Moses,

¹⁵ "If any of you fail to do your duty by unintentionally doing something wrong with any of the LORD'S holy things, bring a guilt offering to the LORD. It must be a ram that has no defects or its value in silver weighed according to the official standards of the holy place.

¹⁶ Pay for whatever holy things you used plus one-fifth more. Give it to the priest. So the priest will use the ram sacrificed for the guilt offering to make

peace with the LORD for what you did wrong, and you will be forgiven.

¹⁷ "If any of you do wrong—even one thing forbidden by any of the LORD'S commands, but you didn't know it—when you realize your guilt, you must be punished.

¹⁸ You must bring the priest a ram that has no defects from the flock or its value in money for a guilt offering. The priest will make peace with the LORD for the wrong you did unintentionally (although you didn't know what you did), and you will be forgiven.

¹⁹ It is a guilt offering because you are certainly guilty as far as the LORD is concerned."

6 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "If any of you sin against the LORD by failing to do your duty, if you lie to your neighbor about something you were supposed to take care of or if you

lie about something stolen or seized from your neighbor, you are sinning and will be guilty.

³ If you find something that someone lost and lie about it under oath, or commit any other sin like this,

⁴ you are sinning and will be guilty. Return what you stole or seized, what you were supposed to take care of, the lost item you found,

⁵ or whatever it was that you swore falsely about. Pay it back in full plus one-fifth more. Give it back to its owner on the day you bring your guilt offering.

⁶ Then bring the LORD your guilt offering, a ram that has no defects or its value in money. Bring it to the priest.

⁷ So the priest will make peace with the LORD. Then you will be forgiven for whatever you did that made you guilty."

⁸ The LORD spoke to Moses,

⁹ "Command Aaron and his sons: These are the instructions for the burnt offering that stays on the altar overnight while the altar fire is kept burning.

¹⁰ "The priest must put on his linen clothes, including his linen undergarments. Then he will remove the ashes left on the altar from the fire that consumed the burnt offering and will put them next to the altar.

¹¹ Then he will take off these clothes and put on some others. He will take the ashes to a clean place outside the camp.

¹² The fire must always be burning on the altar. It must never go out. The priest will burn wood on it every morning. He will lay the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offering.

¹³ The fire must always be burning on the altar. It must never go out.

¹⁴ "These are the instructions for the grain offering. Aaron's sons must bring it

into the LORD'S presence in front of the altar.

¹⁵ One of them will remove a handful of flour from the grain offering, together with the olive oil and all the incense. He will burn it on the altar as a reminder. It is a soothing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁶ Aaron and his sons will eat the rest of it. They will eat unleavened bread in a holy place, in the courtyard of the tent of meeting.

¹⁷ Don't use yeast in baking the bread. I have given it to them as their share from the offerings by fire made to me. It is very holy like the offering for sin and the guilt offering.

¹⁸ Every male descendant of Aaron may eat it. It is a permanent law for generations to come regarding the offering by fire to the LORD. Everyone who touches it will become holy."

¹⁹ The LORD spoke to Moses,

²⁰ "This is the offering that Aaron and his sons must bring to the LORD on the day he is anointed—eight cups of flour. They must do this every day. He must offer half of it in the morning and half in the evening.

²¹ Prepare it in a frying pan with olive oil, mixing it well. Offer baked pieces of the grain offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD.

²² Aaron's son who is anointed to take his place as priest will prepare it. This is a permanent law of the LORD: It must be completely burned.

²³ Every grain offering made by a priest must be completely burned. It must not be eaten."

²⁴ The LORD spoke to Moses,

²⁵ "Tell Aaron and his sons: These are the instructions for the offering for sin. The offering for sin must be slaughtered in the LORD'S presence in the same place

where the burnt offering is slaughtered. It is very holy.

²⁶ The priest who makes the offering for sin will eat it in a holy place, in the courtyard of the tent of meeting.

²⁷ Anything that touches its meat will be holy. If blood gets on someone's clothes, he must wash them in a holy place.

²⁸ Any piece of pottery in which the offering for sin is cooked must be broken into pieces. Any copper kettle in which the offering for sin is cooked must be scoured and rinsed with water.

²⁹ Any male among the priests may eat the offering for sin. It is very holy.

³⁰ Any offering for sin must not be eaten if some of the blood was brought into the holy place in the tent of meeting to make peace with the LORD. It must be burned."

7¹ The LORD continued, "These are the instructions for the guilt offering. It is very holy.

² It must be slaughtered in the same place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. A priest will throw the blood against the altar on all sides.

³ He will offer all the fat, the fat from the tail, the fat covering the internal organs,

⁴ and the two kidneys with the fat on them. He will also remove the lobe of the liver along with the kidneys.

⁵ The priest will burn them on the altar. It is a guilt offering by fire to the LORD.

⁶ Any male among the priests may eat it. It will be eaten in a holy place. It is very holy.

⁷ "The same instructions apply to the offering for sin and the guilt offering. Both offerings belong to the priest to make peace with the LORD.

⁸ The skin of the burnt offering belongs to the priest who sacrifices it.

⁹ Every grain offering, whether baked in an oven or prepared in a skillet or a frying pan, belongs to the priest who offers it.

¹⁰ Every grain offering, whether mixed with olive oil or dry, will be shared equally by all of Aaron's sons.

¹¹ "These are the instructions for the fellowship offering that you must bring to the LORD.

¹² If you offer it as a thank offering, you must also bring rings of unleavened bread mixed with olive oil, wafers of unleavened bread brushed with olive oil, and loaves made from flour mixed well with olive oil.

¹³ In addition to these rings of bread, you must bring bread with yeast along with your fellowship offering of thanksgiving.

¹⁴ From every offering you must bring one loaf to the LORD as a special contribution. It will belong to the priest who throws the blood of the fellowship offering.

¹⁵ "The meat from your fellowship offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the day it is offered. Never leave any of it until morning.

¹⁶ "If your sacrificial offering is something you vowed or a freewill offering, it must be eaten the day you offer it or the next day.

¹⁷ However, on the third day any meat left over from the sacrifice must be burned.

¹⁸ You will not be accepted if any meat from the fellowship offering is eaten on the third day. You will not receive credit for it. It is repulsive to God. The person who eats any of it must be punished.

¹⁹ "Meat that touches anything unclean must not be eaten. It must be burned. Anyone who is clean may eat from these sacrifices.

²⁰ Those who eat meat from the LORD'S fellowship offering while unclean must be excluded from the people.

²¹ Those who touch anything unclean, human or animal, or any other disgusting uncleanness and still eat the LORD'S fellowship offering must be excluded from the people."

²² The LORD spoke to Moses,

²³ "Tell the Israelites: Never eat any fat from bulls, sheep, or goats.

²⁴ The fat from an animal that dies naturally or is killed by wild animals you may use for any other purpose, but you must never eat it.

²⁵ Those who eat the fat from an animal which they sacrificed by fire to the LORD must be excluded from the people.

²⁶ "Never eat the blood of any bird or animal no matter where you live.

²⁷ Those who eat any blood must be excluded from the people."

²⁸ The LORD spoke to Moses,

²⁹ "Tell the Israelites: Anyone who offers the LORD a fellowship offering must bring a part of that sacrifice as a gift to the LORD.

³⁰ Bring the sacrifices by fire made to the LORD yourself. Bring the fat with the breast. Take the breast and present it to the LORD.

³¹ "The priest will burn the fat on the altar. However, the breast will belong to Aaron and his sons.

³² You will also give the priest the right thigh as a contribution.

³³ When any of Aaron's sons offer the blood and fat of the fellowship offering, the right thigh will belong to him as his share.

³⁴ From the fellowship offerings of the Israelites, I have taken the breast that was presented to me and the thigh from the contribution offering. I have given them to the priest Aaron and his sons. This is a permanent law for generations to come.

³⁵ "This is the share for Aaron and his sons from the sacrifices by fire made to the LORD. It was given to them on the day Moses ordained them to serve the LORD as priests.

³⁶ The LORD commanded the Israelites to give it to them on the day he anointed them. This is a permanent law for generations to come."

³⁷ These are the instructions for the burnt offering, the grain offering, the offering for sin, the guilt offering, the ordination offering, and the fellowship offering.

³⁸ On Mount Sinai the LORD gave Moses commands about these offerings at the same time that he commanded the Israelites to bring their offerings to him in the Sinai Desert.

8 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Take Aaron and his sons, the priests' clothes, the anointing oil, the bull that will be the offering for sin, the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread.

³ Gather the whole congregation at the entrance to the tent of meeting."

⁴ Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the congregation gathered at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁵ Moses told the congregation, "The LORD has commanded that this is what you must do."

⁶ Moses had Aaron and his sons come forward, and he washed them.

⁷ He put the linen robe on Aaron and fastened the belt around him. He also dressed him in the robe that is worn with the ephod. He fastened the ephod to it.

⁸ Then he put the breastplate on him, and into it he placed the Urim and Thummim.

⁹ He put the turban on him and fastened the gold medallion (the holy crown) to the front of the turban as the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹⁰ Moses took the anointing oil to anoint the tent and everything in it and dedicate them.

¹¹ He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times and anointed the altar, all the utensils, and the basin with its stand to dedicate them.

¹² He also poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to set him apart for his holy duties.

¹³ Moses had Aaron's sons come forward. He put linen robes on them, fastened their belts around them, and put turbans on them as the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹⁴ He brought the bull that was the offering for sin. Aaron and his sons placed their hands on its head.

¹⁵ When it was slaughtered, Moses took the blood and put it on the horns of the altar all around with his finger and cleansed the altar from sins. He poured the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar and declared it holy so that priests could use it to make peace with the LORD.

¹⁶ Moses took all the fat that was on the internal organs, the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys with their fat, and he burned them on the altar.

¹⁷ He burned the rest of the bull, its skin, meat, and excrement outside the camp, as the LORD commanded him.

¹⁸ He brought forward the ram for the burnt offering. Aaron and his sons placed their hands on the ram's head.

¹⁹ Moses slaughtered it and threw the blood against the altar on all sides.

²⁰ When the ram was cut into pieces, Moses burned the head with the other pieces and the fat.

²¹ He washed the internal organs and the legs. Then Moses burned the whole ram on the altar as the LORD commanded him. It was a burnt offering, a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

²² He brought forward the second ram for the ordination offering. Aaron and his sons placed their hands on the ram's head.

²³ Moses slaughtered it, took some of the blood, and put it on Aaron's right ear lobe, on his right thumb, and on the big toe of his right foot.

²⁴ Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward. He put some of the blood on their right ear lobes, on their right thumbs, and on the big toes of their right feet. Moses threw the rest of the blood against all the sides of the altar.

²⁵ He took the fat, the fat from the tail, all the fat on the internal organs, the lobe of the liver, the two kidneys with their fat, and the right thigh.

²⁶ He took a loaf of unleavened bread, a ring of bread made with olive oil, and a wafer from the basket of unleavened bread which was in the LORD'S presence. He put them on the fat and the right thigh.

²⁷ Then he placed all these things in the hands of Aaron and his sons. Moses

presented all these things to the LORD as an offering.

²⁸ Then he took them from their hands and burned them on top of the burnt offering on the altar. These were ordination offerings, offerings by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

²⁹ Moses also took the breast from the ram of the ordination offering and presented it to the LORD. It was Moses' share, as the LORD had commanded.

³⁰ Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar, sprinkled it on Aaron and his clothes and on his sons and their clothes. In this way he dedicated Aaron, his clothes, his sons, and their clothes.

³¹ Moses told Aaron and his sons: "Cook the meat at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Take the meat and the bread in the basket of the ordination offering. Eat

them there as I commanded when I said, 'Aaron and his sons will eat it.'

³² You must burn any meat or bread that is left over.

³³ You will not leave the entrance to the tent of meeting for seven days, not until the last day of your ordination is over. It will take seven days to ordain you.

³⁴ I did today what the LORD commanded me to make peace with the LORD for you.

³⁵ You will stay at the entrance to the tent of meeting day and night for seven days and serve as the LORD tells you. Then you will not die. This is what I was commanded."

³⁶ So Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD commanded through Moses.

9¹ On the eighth day Moses summoned Aaron and his sons and the leaders of Israel.

² He told Aaron, "Take a calf that has no defects for yourself as an offering for sin and a ram that has no defects as a burnt offering. Sacrifice them in the LORD'S presence.

³ Also tell the Israelites: 'Take a male goat as an offering for sin, a calf and a lamb (each one-year-old and without defects) as a burnt offering,

⁴ a bull and a ram as a fellowship offering, and a grain offering mixed with olive oil to sacrifice in the LORD'S presence. The LORD will appear to you today.'

⁵ So they took the things Moses commanded and brought them in front of the tent of meeting. The whole congregation came and stood in the LORD'S presence.

⁶ Moses said, "The LORD has commanded you to offer these sacrifices so that you may see the LORD'S glory."

⁷ Moses told Aaron, "Come to the altar and sacrifice an offering for sin and a burnt offering to make peace with the LORD for your sins and the sins of the people. Also make an offering for the people, to make peace with the LORD for them as the LORD commanded."

⁸ Aaron came to the altar and slaughtered the calf as his own offering for sin.

⁹ Aaron's sons brought him the blood. He dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar. Then he poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar.

¹⁰ On the altar he burned the fat, kidneys, and lobe of the liver from the offering for sin as the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹¹ He burned the meat and the skin outside the camp.

¹² He slaughtered the animal for the burnt offering. Aaron's sons gave him the blood, and he threw it against the altar on all sides.

¹³ They also gave him the burnt offering, which was cut in pieces and included the head. He burned it on the altar.

¹⁴ He washed the internal organs and the legs and laid them on top of the burnt offering on the altar.

¹⁵ He brought the people's offerings. He took the male goat for the people's offering for sin and slaughtered it. He sacrificed it to take away sins as he had done before.

¹⁶ Following the proper procedures, he brought forward the burnt offering and sacrificed it.

¹⁷ He also brought the grain offering. He took a handful of grain and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning burnt offering.

¹⁸ He slaughtered the bull and the ram for the people's fellowship offering. Aaron's sons gave him the blood, which he threw against the altar on all sides.

¹⁹ However, the fat from the bull and the ram (the fat from the tail, the layer of fat, the kidneys, and the lobe of the liver)

²⁰ they placed on the breasts. Aaron burned them all on the altar.

²¹ However, he first took the breasts and the right thighs and presented them to the LORD as Moses commanded.

²² Then Aaron raised his hands toward the people and blessed them. He sacrificed the offering for sin, the burnt offering, and the fellowship offering. Then he came down from the altar.

²³ Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people. Then the LORD'S glory appeared to all the people.

²⁴ Fire came out from the LORD'S presence and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar. When all the people saw this, they shouted and bowed with their faces touching the ground.

10 ¹ Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took an incense burner and put burning coals and incense in it. Then in the LORD'S presence they offered this unauthorized fire.

² A fire flashed from the LORD and burned them, and they died in the presence of the LORD.

³ Moses said to Aaron, "This is exactly what the LORD said: 'I will show my holiness among those who come to me. I will show my glory to all the people.'" Aaron was speechless.

⁴ Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle, Uzziel. He told them, "Come and take your relatives

away from in front of the holy place. Take them outside the camp."

⁵ So they came and took them away to a place outside the camp, as Moses told them. The dead men were still in their linen robes.

⁶ Moses told Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar: "Do not mourn by leaving your hair uncombed or tearing your clothes. If you do, you will die and the LORD will become angry with the whole congregation. All the other Israelites may cry over the fire the LORD sent, but you may not.

⁷ You must not leave the entrance to the tent of meeting or else you, too, will die, because the LORD has anointed you with his oil." They obeyed Moses.

⁸ The LORD spoke to Aaron,

⁹ "You and your sons must not drink any wine or liquor when you go into the

tent of meeting, or you will die. This is a permanent law for generations to come.

¹⁰ Teach them the difference between what is holy and what is unholy, what is clean and what is unclean.

¹¹ Also teach the Israelites all the laws that I gave them through Moses."

¹² Moses told Aaron and his surviving sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take the grain offering left over from the offering by fire to the LORD. Make unleavened bread, and eat it next to the altar because it is very holy.

¹³ Eat it in a holy place because it is the part of the offering by fire to the LORD that belongs to you and your children. That is the command I received.

¹⁴ Also eat the breast presented to the LORD and the thigh that was given as a contribution. You and your sons and daughters may eat them in a clean

place because they are your part of the fellowship offerings from the Israelites.

¹⁵ They will bring the thigh given as a contribution, the breast presented to the LORD, and the fat that is to be burned and present them to the LORD. These parts will belong to you and your children. This will be a permanent law, as the LORD has commanded."

¹⁶ Moses tried to find out what had happened to the male goat that was supposed to be the offering for sin. To his surprise, it had already been burned. So he became angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's surviving sons.

¹⁷ He asked them, "Why didn't you eat the offering for sin in the holy place? It is very holy and was given to you to take away the sins of the congregation and to make peace with the LORD for them.

¹⁸ Since its blood was not brought inside the holy place, you certainly should have eaten it there, as I commanded."

¹⁹ Aaron answered Moses, "Today they sacrificed their offering for sin and their burnt offering in the LORD'S presence, and look what happened to me. If I had eaten the offering for sin today, would the LORD have approved?"

²⁰ When Moses heard this, he was satisfied.

11 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron,

² "Tell the Israelites: Here are the kinds of land animals you may eat:

³ all animals that have completely divided hoofs and that also chew their cud.

⁴ However, from those that either chew their cud or have divided hoofs, these are the kinds you must never eat: You must never eat camels. (Camels are

unclean because they chew their cud but do not have divided hoofs.)

⁵ You must never eat rock badgers. (Rock badgers are unclean because they chew their cud but do not have divided hoofs.)

⁶ You must never eat rabbits. (Rabbits are unclean because they chew their cud but do not have divided hoofs.)

⁷ You must never eat pigs. (Because pigs have completely divided hoofs but do not chew their cud, they are also unclean.)

⁸ Never eat the meat of these animals or touch their dead bodies. They are unclean for you.

⁹ "Here are the kinds of creatures that live in the water which you may eat—anything in the seas and streams that has fins and scales.

¹⁰ However, you must consider all swarming creatures living in the seas or

the streams that have no fins or scales disgusting.

¹¹ They must remain disgusting to you. Never eat their meat. Consider their dead bodies disgusting.

¹² Every creature in the water without fins or scales is disgusting to you.

¹³ "Here are the kinds of birds you must consider disgusting and must not eat. They are eagles, bearded vultures, black vultures,

¹⁴ kites, all types of buzzards,

¹⁵ all types of crows,

¹⁶ ostriches, nighthawks, seagulls, all types of falcons,

¹⁷ little owls, cormorants, great owls,

¹⁸ barn owls, pelicans, ospreys,

¹⁹ storks, all types of herons, hoopoes, and bats.

²⁰ "Every swarming, winged insect that walks across the ground like a four-legged animal is disgusting to you.

²¹ However, you may eat winged insects that swarm if they use their legs to hop on the ground.

²² You may eat any kind of locust, cricket, katydid, or grasshopper.

²³ Every kind of winged insect that walks across the ground like a four-legged animal is disgusting to you.

²⁴ "Regarding the creatures mentioned above, this is how you would become unclean: Whoever touches their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

²⁵ Whoever carries any part of their dead bodies must wash his clothes. He will be unclean until evening.

²⁶ All animals whose hoofs are not completely divided or that don't chew their cud are unclean for you. Whoever touches them is unclean.

²⁷ All four-legged animals that walk on their paws are unclean for you.

Whoever touches their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

²⁸ Those who carry the dead body of any of these animals must wash their clothes and will be unclean until evening. These animals are unclean for you.

²⁹ "The following swarming creatures that move on the ground are unclean for you—moles, mice, and all types of lizards:

³⁰ geckos, monitors, lizards, skinks, and chameleons.

³¹ Among all the swarming creatures that move on the ground, these are unclean for you. Whoever touches their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

³² When the dead body of one of these creatures falls on something, that thing will be unclean. It may be a wooden article, clothing, leather, a sack, or anything used for any purpose. It should

be put in water and will be unclean until evening. Then it will be clean again.

³³ "If any of these creatures falls into a piece of pottery, break the pottery because everything in it is unclean.

³⁴ If water from that pottery touches any food, the food is unclean. Any liquid that you drink from that pottery is unclean.

³⁵ Anything on which their dead bodies fall is unclean. If it is an oven or a stove, smash it. It is unclean and will remain unclean for you.

³⁶ However, a spring or a cistern holding water will remain clean. But anyone who touches their dead bodies will be unclean.

³⁷ If their dead bodies fall on seed that is to be planted, the seed is clean.

³⁸ But if water is poured on the seed and their dead bodies fall on it, the seed is unclean for you.

³⁹ "When any animal that you are allowed to eat dies, whoever touches its dead body will be unclean until evening.

⁴⁰ Those who eat any of its dead body must wash their clothes and will be unclean until evening. Those who carry its dead body away will wash their clothes and will be unclean until evening.

⁴¹ "Any creature that swarms on the ground is disgusting and must not be eaten.

⁴² Don't eat any creature with many legs that goes on its belly or on the ground like a four-legged animal, or any creature that swarms on the ground. Consider them disgusting.

⁴³ Don't become disgusting by eating anything that swarms on the ground. Never allow yourselves to become unclean because of them.

⁴⁴ "Here is the reason: I am the LORD your God. You must live holy lives. Be holy because I am holy. Never become unclean by touching anything that swarms or crawls on the ground.

⁴⁵ Here is the reason again: I am the LORD. I brought you out of Egypt to be your God. Be holy because I am holy.

⁴⁶ "These are the instructions about animals, birds, and every living creature that swims in the water and every creature that swarms on the ground.

⁴⁷ These instructions help you distinguish between clean and unclean, the animals you may eat and those you may not eat."

12 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell the Israelites: When a woman gives birth to a boy, she will be unclean for seven days. This is the same number of days she is unclean for her monthly period.

³ The boy must be circumcised when he is eight days old.

⁴ Then she must stay at home for 33 days in order to be made clean from her bleeding. She must not touch anything holy or go into the holy place until the days needed to make her clean are over.

⁵ "When a woman gives birth to a girl, she will be unclean as in her monthly period. However, she will be unclean for two weeks. Then she must stay at home for 66 days in order to be made clean from her bleeding.

⁶ "When the days needed to make her clean are over, she must bring a one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a pigeon or a mourning dove as an offering for sin. She must bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁷ The priest will offer them in the LORD'S presence to make peace with

the LORD for her. Then she will be clean from her flow of blood. "These are the instructions for the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl.

⁸ If she cannot afford a lamb, she must use two mourning doves or two pigeons. One will be the burnt offering and the other the offering for sin. So the priest will make peace with the LORD for her, and she will be clean."

13 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron,

² "If anyone has a sore, a rash, or an irritated area on his skin that turns into an infectious skin disease, he must be taken to the priest Aaron or to one of his sons who are also priests.

³ The priest will examine the disease. If the hair in the diseased area has turned white, and the diseased area looks deeper than the rest of his skin, it is an infectious skin disease. When the priest

has examined him, he must declare him unclean.

⁴ But if the irritated area is white and does not look deeper than the rest of the skin, and the hair has not turned white, the priest must put him in isolation for seven days.

⁵ On the seventh day the priest will examine him again. If the disease looks the same and has not spread, the priest must put him in isolation for another seven days.

⁶ On the seventh day the priest will examine him again. If the diseased area has faded and not spread, the priest must declare him clean. It is only a rash. The person must wash his clothes and will be clean.

⁷ But if the rash has spread after he has shown himself to the priest to be declared clean, he must show himself to the priest again.

⁸ The priest will examine him one more time, and if the rash has spread, the priest must declare him unclean. It is an infectious skin disease.

⁹ "If anyone has an infectious skin disease, he must be taken to the priest.

¹⁰ The priest will examine him. If there is a white sore that has turned the hair white, and if there is raw flesh in the sore,

¹¹ he has a chronic skin disease.

Without putting him in isolation, the priest must declare him unclean because he is unclean.

¹² If skin disease develops and covers the whole person from head to foot (so far as the priest can see),

¹³ the priest will examine him. If the disease does cover his whole body, the priest must declare the diseased person clean. His body has turned white. The person is clean.

¹⁴ But if raw flesh appears, he will be unclean.

¹⁵ The priest will examine the raw flesh and declare him unclean. The raw flesh is unclean. It is an infectious skin disease.

¹⁶ But if the raw flesh turns white again, he must go to the priest.

¹⁷ The priest will examine him again, and if the diseased area has turned white, the priest must declare the diseased person clean. He is clean.

¹⁸ "If a boil on the skin has healed

¹⁹ and in its place there is a white sore or a pink area, it must be shown to the priest.

²⁰ The priest will examine it. If it looks deeper than the rest of the skin and its hair has turned white, the priest must declare the person unclean. An infectious skin disease has developed in the boil.

²¹ But if the priest examines the affected area and the hair in it is not white or the affected area is not deeper than the rest of the skin but has faded, the priest must put him in isolation for seven days.

²² If the area has spread, the priest must declare him unclean. It is a skin disease.

²³ But if the irritated area has not spread, it is a scar caused by the boil. The priest must declare him clean.

²⁴ "If anyone has a burn on his skin and the raw flesh of the burn turns into a pink or bright white area,

²⁵ the priest will examine it. If the hair on the affected area has turned white and the affected area looks deeper than the rest of the skin, an infectious skin disease has developed in the burn. The priest must declare him unclean. It is an infectious skin disease.

²⁶ But if the priest examines it and the hair in it is not white and the affected area is not deeper than the rest of the skin but has faded, the priest must put him in isolation for seven days.

²⁷ On the seventh day the priest will examine him again. If the area has spread, the priest must declare him unclean. It is an infectious skin disease.

²⁸ If the irritated area does not spread but has faded, it is only a sore caused by the burn. The priest must declare him clean, because it is a scar caused by the burn.

²⁹ "If a man or a woman has some disease on the head or chin,

³⁰ the priest will examine the disease. If it looks deeper than the rest of the skin and there is thin yellow hair on it, the priest must declare the person unclean. It is a scab, a disease on the head or the chin.

³¹ But if the priest examines the scabby disease and it does not look deeper than the rest of the skin and there is no black hair in it, the priest must put the person with the scabby disease in isolation for seven days.

³² On the seventh day the priest will examine the disease. If the scab has not spread, there is no yellow hair on it, and the scab does not look deeper than the rest of the skin,

³³ the person will shave everything except the scab. The priest will put the person with the scab in isolation for another seven days.

³⁴ On the seventh day the priest will examine the scab again. If the scab has not spread on the skin and does not look deeper than the rest of the skin, the priest must declare him clean. When he has washed his clothes, he will be clean.

³⁵ But if the scab spreads after the person has been declared clean,

³⁶ the priest will make another examination. If the scab has spread on the skin, the priest does not have to look for yellow hair. The person is unclean.

³⁷ But if he sees that the scab hasn't spread and black hair grows on it, the scab is healed. The person is clean, so the priest must declare him clean.

³⁸ "If a man or a woman has white irritated areas of skin,

³⁹ the priest will make an examination. If the irritated areas on the skin are pale white, a rash has developed on the skin. The person is clean.

⁴⁰ "If a man loses his hair, he is clean, even though he is bald.

⁴¹ If he loses the hair on the front of his head, he is clean, even though he is bald on the forehead.

⁴² But if there is a pink patch on the bald places in back or in front, a skin disease is developing in those places.

⁴³ The priest will examine him. If the sore from the disease in the bald places in back or in front is pink like a skin disease somewhere else on the body,

⁴⁴ the man has come down with an infectious skin disease. He is unclean. The priest must declare him unclean because of the skin disease on his head.

⁴⁵ "People who come down with a skin disease must wear torn clothes and leave their hair uncombed. They must cover their upper lips and call out, 'Unclean, unclean!'

⁴⁶ As long as they have the skin disease, they are unclean. They must live outside the camp.

⁴⁷ "Now about clothing—if there is a green or red area on a piece of clothing

⁴⁸ that is woven or knitted from linen or wool or on any leather article,

⁴⁹ it is mildew. It must be shown to the priest.

⁵⁰ The priest will examine the mildew and will put the clothing in a separate place for seven days.

⁵¹ On the seventh day he will examine the area again. If the spot is spreading, it is unclean.

⁵² He must burn the piece of clothing or the leather article because the mildew is growing.

⁵³ But if the priest sees that the area has not spread,

⁵⁴ he must order the area to be washed and put the clothing in a separate place for seven more days.

⁵⁵ The priest will examine the area again after it is washed. If it doesn't look any different and the mildew has not spread, it is still unclean. It must

be burned, whether the area is on the outside or the inside.

⁵⁶ If the priest sees that the area is pale after washing, he will tear it out of the clothing or the leather.

⁵⁷ However, if it shows up again, you must burn the clothing or the leather article.

⁵⁸ But if the area disappears from the woven or knitted clothing or any leather article when it is washed, wash it again, and it will be clean.

⁵⁹ "These are the instructions for deciding whether mildew in clothing that is woven or knitted from linen or wool or in any leather article is clean or unclean."

14 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "These are the instructions for making a person clean after a skin disease. He must be taken to the priest.

³ The priest will go outside the camp and examine him. If the person is healed,

⁴ the priest will order someone to get two living, clean birds, some cedar wood, red yarn, and a hyssop sprig to use for the cleansing.

⁵ Then the priest will order someone to kill one bird over a clay bowl containing fresh water.

⁶ The priest will take the living bird, the cedar wood, the red yarn, and the hyssop sprig and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water.

⁷ He will sprinkle the blood seven times on the one to be cleansed and will declare that person clean. Then he will let the living bird fly away into the open country.

⁸ "The one to be cleansed must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash. Then he will be clean. After that

he may go into the camp. However, for seven days he will live outside his tent.

⁹ On the seventh day he must shave off all the hair on his head, his beard, and his eyebrows, and he must wash his clothes and body. Then he will be clean.

¹⁰ "On the eighth day he must take two male lambs that have no defects and a one-year-old female lamb that has no defects. He must also take eight cups of flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering along with a quart of olive oil.

¹¹ The priest who will declare him clean must bring the person and his offerings into the LORD'S presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

¹² The priest will take one of the male lambs and the quart of olive oil and present them to the LORD as a guilt offering.

¹³ He will slaughter the lamb in the holy place where he slaughters the offering

for sin and the burnt offering. He will do this because the guilt offering, like the offering for sin, belongs to the priest. It is very holy.

¹⁴ Then the priest will take some of the blood from the guilt offering and put it on the right ear lobe, on the right thumb, and on the big toe of the right foot of the one to be cleansed.

¹⁵ The priest will also take some of the olive oil and pour it into his own left hand.

¹⁶ He will dip his right finger in the oil in his left hand, and with his finger sprinkle some of the oil seven times in the LORD'S presence.

¹⁷ The priest will put some of the oil that is still in his hand on the right ear lobe, on the right thumb, and on the big toe of the right foot of the one to be cleansed. These are the same places he had put the blood of the guilt offering.

¹⁸ The priest will put the rest of the oil in his hand on the head of the one to be cleansed. So he will make peace with the LORD for that person in the LORD'S presence.

¹⁹ The priest will also sacrifice the offering for sin to make peace with the LORD for the one who is being cleansed from his impurity. After that, he will slaughter the burnt offering.

²⁰ The priest will sacrifice the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest will make peace with the LORD for that person, and the person who had the skin disease will be clean.

²¹ "But if the one to be cleansed is poor and cannot afford that much, he must take one male lamb, present it to make peace with the LORD for himself, and use it for his guilt offering. He will take only eight cups of flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering, a quart of olive oil,

²² and two mourning doves or two pigeons (whatever he can afford). The one will be an offering for sin and the other a burnt offering.

²³ On the eighth day he will take them to the priest for his cleansing at the entrance to the tent of meeting in the LORD'S presence.

²⁴ The priest will take the lamb for the guilt offering and the quart of olive oil and present them to the LORD.

²⁵ He will slaughter the lamb as a guilt offering. Then the priest will take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the right ear lobe, on the right thumb, and on the big toe of the right foot of the one to be cleansed.

²⁶ The priest will pour some of the olive oil into his own left hand.

²⁷ With his right finger he will sprinkle some of the oil seven times in the LORD'S presence.

²⁸ The priest will put some of the oil that is in his hand on the right ear lobe, on the right thumb, and on the big toe of the right foot of the one to be cleansed. These are the same places he had put the blood of the guilt offering.

²⁹ In the LORD'S presence, the priest will pour the rest of the oil in his hand on the head of the one to be cleansed in order to make a payment for him.

³⁰ Then the one to be cleansed must take one of the mourning doves or pigeons (whichever he can afford),

³¹ and sacrifice it as an offering for sin. He will take the other and sacrifice it as a burnt offering together with the grain offering. So in the LORD'S presence the priest will make peace with the LORD for the one who is being cleansed.

³² These are the instructions for one who has an infectious skin disease but

cannot afford what is needed for his cleansing."

³³ The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron,

³⁴ "When you come to Canaan that I am going to give to you, mildew may appear in a house.

³⁵ The owner of that house must come and tell the priest that there is something that looks like mildew in his house.

³⁶ "Before the priest examines the house, he will order everything taken out of it so that nothing in the house will become unclean. Then the priest will go inside to examine the house.

³⁷ He will examine the mildew area on the walls. If it is green and red in sunken areas that are deeper than the rest of the wall,

³⁸ the priest will go out to the door of the house and close up the house for seven days.

³⁹ On the seventh day the priest will go back and examine it again. If the mildew in the walls of the house has spread,

⁴⁰ the priest must order the stones that have the mildew to be torn out and thrown outside the city in an unclean place.

⁴¹ He must have the entire inside of the house scraped. The plaster dust scraped off the walls must be dumped in an unclean place outside the city.

⁴² The stones must be replaced, and the house must be plastered again.

⁴³ If the mildew develops again in the house after all this,

⁴⁴ the priest will examine it one more time. If it is a spreading type of mildew, the house is unclean.

⁴⁵ The house—stones, wood, and all the plaster—must be torn down and taken to an unclean place outside the city.

⁴⁶ Whoever goes into the house any time it is closed up will be unclean until evening.

⁴⁷ Whoever sleeps or eats in the house must wash his clothes.

⁴⁸ But if the priest comes and makes an examination and the mildew has not spread in the house after it is plastered again, the priest must declare the house clean. The mildew is gone.

⁴⁹ "The priest must take two birds, cedar wood, red yarn, and a hyssop sprig and use them to make the house clean.

⁵⁰ He must kill the one bird over a clay bowl containing fresh water.

⁵¹ He must take the cedar wood, the hyssop sprig, the red yarn, and the living bird and dip them in the fresh water containing the blood of the bird that was killed. He must sprinkle the house seven times.

⁵² So he must use the bird's blood, the fresh water, the living bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the red yarn to make the house clean.

⁵³ Then he will let the living bird fly from the city into the open country. He will make peace with the LORD for the house, and it will be clean.

⁵⁴ "These are the instructions for any kind of mildew or fungus

⁵⁵ that infects clothing or houses

⁵⁶ and for skin diseases where there is a sore, a rash, or an irritated area.

⁵⁷ These instructions for skin diseases and mildew help you distinguish between what is clean and what is unclean."

15 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron,

² "Tell the Israelites: If a man has a discharge from his penis, his discharge is unclean.

³ He is unclean because of the discharge from his penis. Whether it is chronic or not makes no difference; he is still unclean.

⁴ "The man who has a discharge makes everything he lies on or sits on unclean.

⁵ Those who touch his bed must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening.

⁶ Those who sit on anything he sat on must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening.

⁷ Those who touch a man who has a discharge must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening.

⁸ If a man who has a discharge spits on anyone who is clean, the person he spits on must wash his clothes and his body. He will be unclean until evening.

⁹ When a man who has a discharge sits on a saddle, it becomes unclean.

¹⁰ Those who carry such things must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening.

¹¹ If a man who has a discharge touches anyone without first rinsing his hands, the person he touched must wash his clothes and his body. He will be unclean until evening.

¹² When a man who has a discharge touches pottery, it must be broken, and any wooden bucket he touches must be rinsed.

¹³ "When a man's discharge stops, he must wait seven days to be cleansed. He must wash his clothes and his body in fresh water. Then he will be clean.

¹⁴ On the eighth day he must take two mourning doves or two pigeons and come into the LORD'S presence at the

entrance to the tent of meeting. He will give these birds to the priest.

¹⁵ The priest will sacrifice one as an offering for sin and the other as a burnt offering. So in the LORD'S presence, the priest will make peace with the LORD for the man who had a discharge.

¹⁶ "If a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body. He will be unclean until evening.

¹⁷ Any clothes or any leather with semen on it must be washed. It will be unclean until evening.

¹⁸ "When a man has sexual intercourse with a woman and has an emission of semen, they must wash themselves. They will be unclean until evening.

¹⁹ "When a woman has her monthly period, she will be unclean for seven days. Those who touch her will be unclean until evening.

²⁰ Everything she lies on or sits on during her period will be unclean.

²¹ Those who touch her bed must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening.

²² Those who touch anything she sits on must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening.

²³ If her blood touches anything on the bed or anything she sits on, it will be unclean until evening.

²⁴ If a man has sexual intercourse with her while she has her period, he will be unclean for seven days. Any bed he lies on will become unclean.

²⁵ "If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days other than her monthly period, she is unclean. If her period lasts longer than usual, she will be unclean as long as she has a discharge. It is like her period.

²⁶ As long as she has a discharge, any bed she lies on or anything she sits on is unclean. It is like her period.

²⁷ Those who touch these things are unclean and must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening.

²⁸ "When her discharge stops, she must wait seven days. After that, she will be clean.

²⁹ On the eighth day she must take two mourning doves or two pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

³⁰ The priest will offer one as an offering for sin and the other as a burnt offering. So in the LORD'S presence the priest will make peace with the LORD for the woman who had an unclean discharge.

³¹ "You must separate the Israelites from anything that keeps them from being presentable to me. Otherwise,

they will die because they make my tent, which is among them, unclean.

³² "These are the instructions for any man who has a discharge or an emission of semen that makes him unclean,

³³ for any woman who has her period, for any man or woman who has a discharge, or for any man who has sexual intercourse with a woman when she is unclean."

16 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses after Aaron's two sons had come into the LORD'S presence and died.

² The LORD said, "Tell your brother Aaron that he cannot go into the holy place whenever he wants to. If he goes up to the canopy and stands in front of the throne of mercy on the ark, he will die, because I appear in the smoke above the throne of mercy.

³ "This is what Aaron must do in order to come into the holy place: He must

take a bull as an offering for sin and a ram as a burnt offering.

⁴ He must put on a holy linen robe and wear linen undergarments. He must wear a linen belt and turban. These are holy clothes. He must wash his body and put them on.

⁵ He will take two male goats from the congregation of Israel as an offering for sin and a ram as a burnt offering.

⁶ "Aaron must sacrifice the bull as his own offering for sin. By doing this, he will make peace with the LORD for himself and his family.

⁷ He must take the two male goats and bring them into the LORD'S presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁸ Then Aaron must throw lots for the two goats. One lot will be for the LORD and the other for Azazel.

⁹ Aaron must sacrifice the goat chosen by lot for the LORD as an offering for sin.

¹⁰ But he must bring the goat chosen by lot for Azazel into the LORD'S presence. He will release it in the desert to Azazel in order to make peace with the LORD for himself and his family.

¹¹ "Aaron will bring the bull. He will then slaughter it as his own offering for sin. By doing this he will make peace with the LORD for himself and his family.

¹² He will take an incense burner full of burning coals from the altar, which is in the LORD'S presence, and two handfuls of finely ground, sweet-smelling incense. He will bring them up to the canopy.

¹³ Then he will put the incense on the fire in the LORD'S presence. The cloud of incense will cover the throne of mercy, which is over the words of God's promise, so that he will not die.

¹⁴ He will take some of the bull's blood and sprinkle it with his finger on the east

side of the throne of mercy. Then he will sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times in front of the throne of mercy.

¹⁵ "Next, Aaron will slaughter the goat for the people's offering for sin. He will take the blood inside, go up to the canopy, and sprinkle it on the throne of mercy and in front of it, as he did with the bull's blood.

¹⁶ So he will make peace with the LORD for all the sins the Israelites committed against the holy place. These sins happened because the Israelites were unclean and because they committed rebellious acts. He will do the same for the tent of meeting which is among an unclean people.

¹⁷ No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron enters the holy place to do this until he comes out. Aaron will make peace with the LORD for

his own sins, his family's sins, and the sins of the entire assembly of Israel.

¹⁸ Then he will go out to the altar that is in the LORD'S presence and make peace with the LORD there for the sins committed. He will take some of the blood from the bull and some of the goat's blood and put it all around the horns of the altar.

¹⁹ With his finger he will sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times. Because the Israelites made it unclean, he will cleanse it and declare it holy.

²⁰ "When he finishes making peace with the LORD at the holy place, the tent of meeting, and the altar, he will bring the living goat forward.

²¹ Aaron will place both hands on its head. He will confess over it all the sins, all the rebellious acts, and all the things the Israelites did wrong. He will transfer them to the goat's head. A man will be

appointed to release the goat in the desert.

²² The goat will take all their sins away to a deserted place. The man must release the goat in the desert.

²³ "Then Aaron will go to the tent of meeting, take off the linen clothes he had put on to go into the holy place, and leave them there.

²⁴ He will wash his body in the holy place and put on his other clothes. Then he will come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and for the people to make peace with the LORD for his own sins and the sins of the people.

²⁵ He will burn the fat of the offering for sin on the altar.

²⁶ "The man who released the goat to Azazel must wash his clothes and his body. Then he may return to the camp.

²⁷ He must take the bull and the goat outside the camp. These animals were

the offering for sin whose blood was brought into the holy place to make peace with the LORD for sins. The skin, meat, and excrement from the animals must be burned.

²⁸ Whoever burns them must wash his clothes and his body. Then he may return to the camp.

²⁹ "This will be a permanent law for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month both native Israelites and foreigners must humble themselves. They must do no work.

³⁰ On this day Aaron will make peace with the LORD to make you clean. Then you will be clean from all your sins in the LORD'S presence.

³¹ This is the most important worship festival there is for you. You will humble yourselves. It is a permanent law.

³² The priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as chief priest in his

father's place will pay for sins. He will put on the holy linen clothes

³³ and will make peace with the LORD at the holy place, the tent of meeting, and the altar. He will make peace with the LORD for the priests and all the worshipers.

³⁴ "This permanent law tells you how to make peace with the LORD once a year for all the sins the Israelites committed." Aaron did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

17 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell Aaron, his sons, and all the Israelites that this is what the LORD has commanded:

³ Any Israelite who slaughters a bull, sheep, or goat inside or outside the camp

⁴ is guilty of bloodshed. He has shed blood and must be excluded from the people. Bring the animal to the entrance

of the tent of meeting. Offer it to the LORD in front of the LORD'S tent.

⁵ This means that the people of Israel must take the sacrifices they have been making in the open fields and bring them to the LORD. They must bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. The people will sacrifice them as fellowship offerings to the LORD.

⁶ The priest will pour the blood against the LORD'S altar at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He will burn the fat as a soothing aroma to the LORD.

⁷ The people must stop sacrificing to goat idols and chasing after them as though they were prostitutes. This is a permanent law for the people and for future generations.

⁸ "Tell them: If Israelites or foreigners make burnt offerings or sacrifices

⁹ but do not bring them to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer them to

the LORD, they must be excluded from the people.

¹⁰ "If Israelites or foreigners eat any blood, I will condemn them and exclude them from the people,

¹¹ because blood contains life. I have given this blood to you to make peace with me on the altar. Blood is needed to make peace with me.

¹² That is why I have said to the people of Israel: Neither you nor foreigners should ever eat blood.

¹³ "If Israelites or foreigners hunt any animal or bird that may be eaten, they must pour out the animal's blood and cover it with dirt.

¹⁴ This is because the life of any creature is in its blood. So I have said to the people of Israel: Never eat any blood, because the life of any creature is in its blood. Whoever eats blood must be excluded from the people.

¹⁵ "Native Israelites or foreigners who eat the body of an animal that dies naturally or is killed by another animal must wash their clothes and their bodies. They will be unclean until evening. Then they will be clean.

¹⁶ If they don't wash their clothes and their bodies, they will be guilty of sin."

18 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell the Israelites: I am the LORD your God.

³ You used to live in Egypt. Don't live the way the Egyptians do. I am bringing you to Canaan. Don't live the way the Canaanites do. Never live by their standards.

⁴ Follow my rules, and live by my standards. I am the LORD your God.

⁵ Live by my standards, and obey my rules. You will have life through them. I am the LORD.

⁶ "Never have sexual intercourse with anyone related to you by blood. I am the LORD.

⁷ "Never have sexual intercourse with your mother. She is your own mother. Never have sexual intercourse with her.

⁸ Never have sexual intercourse with your stepmother. She is related to you through your father.

⁹ Never have sexual intercourse with your stepsister, whether she is your father's daughter or your mother's daughter. It makes no difference whether or not she was born in your house.

¹⁰ Never have sexual intercourse with your granddaughter, whether she is your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, because she is related to you.

¹¹ Never have sexual intercourse with a daughter of your father and his wife. She is your own sister.

¹² Never have sexual intercourse with your father's sister. She is your paternal aunt.

¹³ Never have sexual intercourse with your mother's sister. She is your maternal aunt.

¹⁴ Never have sexual intercourse with the wife of your father's brother. She, too, is your aunt.

¹⁵ Never have sexual intercourse with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife. Never have sexual intercourse with her.

¹⁶ Never have sexual intercourse with your sister-in-law. She is your brother's wife.

¹⁷ Never have sexual intercourse with a woman and her daughter or a woman and her granddaughter. They are related. Doing this is perverted.

¹⁸ While your wife is living, never marry her sister as a rival wife and have sexual intercourse with her.

¹⁹ "Never have sexual intercourse with a woman while she is unclean during her monthly period.

²⁰ Never have sexual intercourse with your neighbor's wife and become unclean with her.

²¹ Never give your children as sacrifices to the god Molech by burning them alive. If you do, you are dishonoring the name of your God. I am the LORD.

²² Never have sexual intercourse with a man as with a woman. It is disgusting.

²³ Never have sexual intercourse with any animal and become unclean with it. A woman must never offer herself to an animal for sexual intercourse. It is unnatural.

²⁴ "Do not become unclean in any of these ways. By these practices all the

nations which I am forcing out of your way have become unclean.

²⁵ The land has become unclean. I will punish it for its sins. The land will vomit out those who live in it.

²⁶ Live by my standards, and obey my rules. Neither you nor any foreigner should ever do any of these disgusting things.

²⁷ The people of the land who were there before you did all these disgusting things. As a result, the land has become unclean.

²⁸ If you make the land unclean, it will vomit you out as it has vomited out the people who were there before you.

²⁹ Whoever does any of these disgusting things must be excluded from the people.

³⁰ So you must follow my instructions. Don't live by the standards of the people who lived there before you. What they

do is disgusting. Never become unclean that way. I am the LORD your God."

19 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell the whole congregation of Israel: Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

³ "Respect your mother and father. Observe my days of worship. I am the LORD your God.

⁴ "Don't turn to worthless gods or cast metal idols. Never make any gods for yourselves. I am the LORD your God.

⁵ "When you bring a fellowship offering to the LORD, sacrifice it properly so that you will be accepted.

⁶ Eat your sacrifice on the day you bring it and on the next day. On the third day burn whatever is left over.

⁷ If you eat any of it on the third day, it is repulsive and will not be accepted.

⁸ Those who eat it will be punished because they have dishonored what is

holy to the LORD. They must be excluded from the people.

⁹ "When you harvest the grain in your land, don't harvest the grain in the corners of your fields or gather what is left after you're finished.

¹⁰ Don't harvest your vineyard a second time or pick up fallen grapes. Leave them for poor people and foreigners. I am the LORD your God.

¹¹ "Never steal, lie, or deceive your neighbor.

¹² "Never swear by my name in order to deceive anyone. This dishonors the name of your God. I am the LORD.

¹³ "Never oppress or rob your neighbor. Never keep the pay you owe a hired worker overnight.

¹⁴ Never curse deaf people or put anything in the way of blind people to make them stumble. Instead, fear your God. I am the LORD.

15 "Don't be corrupt when administering justice. Never give special favors to poor people, and never show preference to important people. Judge your neighbor fairly.

16 Never gossip. Never endanger your neighbor's life. I am the LORD.

17 "Never hate another Israelite. Be sure to correct your neighbor so that you will not be guilty of sinning along with him.

18 Never get revenge. Never hold a grudge against any of your people. Instead, love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am the LORD.

19 "Obey my laws. Never crossbreed different kinds of animals. Never plant two kinds of crops in your field. Never wear clothes made from two kinds of material.

20 "If a man has sexual intercourse with a female slave who is engaged

to another man and if her freedom was never bought or given to her, they should not be put to death. He will only pay a fine because she is a slave.

²¹ He must bring a ram for his guilt offering to the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

²² In the LORD'S presence the priest will use them to make peace with the LORD for this sin. The man will be forgiven for this sin.

²³ "When you come into the land and plant all kinds of fruit trees, you must not eat the fruit for the first three years.

²⁴ In the fourth year all the fruit will be a holy offering of praise to the LORD.

²⁵ In the fifth year you may eat the fruit. Do this to make the trees produce more for you. I am the LORD your God.

²⁶ "Never eat any meat with blood still in it." Never cast evil spells, and never consult fortunetellers.

27 "Never shave the hair on your foreheads, and never cut the edges of your beard.

28 Never slash your body to mourn the dead, and never get a tattoo. I am the LORD.

29 "Never dishonor your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the country will turn to prostitution and be filled with people who are perverted.

30 "Observe my days of worship and respect my holy tent. I am the LORD.

31 "Don't turn to psychics or mediums to get help. That will make you unclean. I am the LORD your God.

32 "Show respect to the elderly, and honor older people. In this way you show respect for your God. I am the LORD.

33 "Never mistreat a foreigner living in your land.

³⁴ Foreigners living among you will be like your own people. Love them as you love yourself, because you were foreigners living in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

³⁵ "Don't be corrupt when administering justice concerning length, weight, or measuring liquid.

³⁶ Use honest scales, honest weights, and honest measures. I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt.

³⁷ "Obey all my laws and all my rules, and live by them. I am the LORD."

20 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell the Israelites: If Israelites or foreigners living among you give one of their children as a sacrifice to the god Molech, they must be put to death. The common people must stone them to death.

³ I will condemn them and exclude them from the people. They gave one of

their children to Molech, made my holy tent unclean, and dishonored my holy name.

⁴ If the common people ignore those who give their children to Molech and do not put them to death,

⁵ I will condemn them and their families. I will exclude them from the people. I will exclude from the people everyone who chases after Molech as if he were a prostitute.

⁶ "I will condemn people who turn to mediums and psychics and chase after them as though they were prostitutes. I will exclude them from the people.

⁷ "Live holy lives. Be holy because I am the LORD your God.

⁸ Obey my laws, and live by them. I am the LORD who sets you apart as holy.

⁹ "Whoever curses his father or mother must be put to death. He has cursed his father or mother and deserves to die.

¹⁰ "If a man commits adultery with another man's wife or with his neighbor's wife, both he and the woman must be put to death for their adultery.

¹¹ Whoever has sexual intercourse with his father's wife has violated his father's marriage. Both he and his father's wife must be put to death. They deserve to die.

¹² If a man has sexual intercourse with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death. They have done a disgusting thing and deserve to die.

¹³ When a man has sexual intercourse with another man as with a woman, both men are doing something disgusting and must be put to death. They deserve to die.

¹⁴ When a man marries a woman and her mother, they have done a perverted thing. The man and the two women

must be burned. Never do this perverted thing.

¹⁵ A man who has sexual intercourse with an animal must be put to death. You must kill the animal, too.

¹⁶ When a woman offers herself sexually to any animal, you must kill both the woman and the animal. They must be put to death. They deserve to die.

¹⁷ Whoever takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and has sexual intercourse does a shameful thing. They both must be publicly excluded from the people. He has had sexual intercourse with his sister and must be punished.

¹⁸ If a man has sexual intercourse with a woman while she has her monthly period, both of them have had sexual intercourse in blood. They must be excluded from the people.

¹⁹ Never have sexual intercourse with your mother's sister or your father's sister. Whoever has sexual intercourse with a close relative must be punished.

²⁰ Whoever has sexual intercourse with his uncle's wife violates his uncle's marriage. That man and woman are guilty of sin. They will die without children.

²¹ Whoever marries his brother's wife violates his brother's marriage and does an unclean thing. That man and woman will have no children.

²² "If you carefully obey all my laws and my rules, the land I am bringing you to live in will not vomit you out.

²³ Never follow the practices of the people I am forcing out of your way. I cannot stand them because they did all these things.

²⁴ I have told you that you will take their land. I will give it to you as your own. It is

a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the LORD your God who separated you from other people.

²⁵ Separate clean and unclean animals and birds. Never become disgusting by eating any animal or bird or anything that crawls on the ground. I have separated you from every unclean thing.

²⁶ Be my holy people because I, the LORD, am holy. I have separated you from other people to be my very own.

²⁷ "Every man or woman who is a medium or a psychic must be put to death. They must be stoned to death because they deserve to die."

21 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses, "Tell the priests, Aaron's sons: None of you should become unclean by touching one of your relatives who has died.

² However, you are allowed to become unclean when one of your nearest relatives dies. These relatives include

your mother, father, son, daughter, or brother,

³ and especially an unmarried virgin sister who is still close to you.

⁴ As the head of your people, you should never become unclean. That would make you unholy.

⁵ "You should never mourn by shaving bald spots on your heads, shaving the edges of your beards, or slashing your bodies.

⁶ "Be God's holy men, and don't dishonor the name of your God. Be holy because you bring sacrifices by fire to the LORD. It is the food of your God.

⁷ You should never marry prostitutes, those who have lost their virginity, or divorced women because a priest is God's holy man.

⁸ Be holy because you offer the food of your God. Be holy because I, the LORD, am holy. I set you apart as holy.

⁹ When a priest's daughter dishonors herself by becoming a prostitute, she dishonors her father. She must be burned.

¹⁰ "The priest who is anointed with oil and wears the chief priest's clothes is chief over his brothers. He must never mourn by leaving his hair uncombed or by tearing his clothes.

¹¹ He must never go near any dead bodies or become unclean, even for his father or mother.

¹² He must not leave the holy tent of his God. If he does, he will be dishonoring it, because he is dedicated with the anointing oil of his God. I am the LORD.

¹³ "The anointed priest must marry a virgin.

¹⁴ He must never marry a widow, a divorced woman, a woman who has lost her virginity, or a prostitute. He may only marry a virgin from his own people.

¹⁵ He must not dishonor his children among his people because I, the LORD, set him apart as holy."

¹⁶ The LORD spoke to Moses,

¹⁷ "Tell Aaron: If any of your descendants (now or in future generations) has a physical defect, he must never bring food to offer to God.

¹⁸ Indeed, no one who has a physical defect may ever come near the altar. That means anyone who is blind or lame, who has a disfigured face, a deformity,

¹⁹ or a crippled hand or foot,

²⁰ who is a hunchback or dwarf, who has defective sight, skin diseases, or crushed testicles.

²¹ If a descendant of the priest Aaron has a physical defect, he must never bring sacrifices by fire to the LORD. He has a defect. He must never bring food to offer to God.

²² He may eat the food of his God—what is holy and what is very holy.

²³ However, he must never come up to the canopy or to the altar, since he has a physical defect. He must never dishonor the holy places because I, the LORD, set them apart as holy."

²⁴ So Moses spoke to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites.

22 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell Aaron and his sons that they must respect the holy offerings which the Israelites set apart for me. In this way they will not dishonor my holy name. I am the LORD.

³ "Tell them: In future generations if any of your descendants, while unclean, comes near the holy offerings the Israelites set apart for the LORD, that person must be excluded from my presence. I am the LORD.

⁴ "No descendant of Aaron who has a skin disease or a discharge may eat any of the holy offerings until he is clean. Any person who has an emission of semen or touches a dead body,

⁵ an unclean swarming creature, or an unclean person

⁶ will be unclean until evening. He must not eat any of the holy offerings unless he has washed himself.

⁷ When the sun has set, he will be clean. Then he may eat the holy offerings because they are his food.

⁸ He must never eat the meat of an animal that dies naturally or is killed by wild animals. It will make him unclean. I am the LORD.

⁹ The priests must do what I order, or their sin will bring them death because they dishonored a holy offering. I am the LORD, who sets them apart as holy.

¹⁰ "Laypeople must never eat any holy offering, even if they are visiting a priest or are working for him.

¹¹ But if a priest buys a slave, the slave and anyone born in his household may eat the priest's food.

¹² However, if a priest's daughter marries a layman, she must never eat the food taken from the holy contributions.

¹³ If a priest's daughter is widowed or divorced, doesn't have any children, and comes back to live in her father's home, she may eat her father's food. But a layperson must never eat it.

¹⁴ "Those who eat a holy offering by mistake must give another holy offering to the priest and add one-fifth more to it.

¹⁵ Priests must not dishonor the holy offerings that the Israelites contribute to the LORD.

¹⁶ They must make those people pay the penalty for their guilt because they have eaten the priests' holy offerings. I am the LORD, who sets them apart as holy."

¹⁷ The LORD spoke to Moses,

¹⁸ "Tell Aaron, his sons, and all the Israelites: Israelites or foreigners may bring burnt offerings to the LORD for anything they vowed or as freewill offerings.

¹⁹ The offering must be a male that has no defects from your cattle, sheep, or goats in order to be accepted.

²⁰ Never bring any animal with a physical defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf.

²¹ A person may bring the LORD a fellowship offering to fulfill a vow or for a freewill offering. Whether it is from the cattle, sheep, or goats, it must be an animal that has no defects in order to

be accepted. It must never be an animal that has defects.

²² Never bring the LORD an animal that is blind, has broken bones, cuts, warts, scabs, or ringworm. Never give the LORD any of these in a sacrifice by fire on the altar.

²³ You may use a bull or a sheep with a deformity or one that is stunted in growth as a freewill offering. However, it will not be accepted for a vow.

²⁴ Never bring the LORD an animal that has bruised, crushed, torn out, or cut out testicles. Never do any of these things to an animal in your land.

²⁵ Never bring any kind of castrated animal received from a foreigner as a food offering for your God. A castrated animal will not be accepted on your behalf because castration is a physical defect."

²⁶ The LORD spoke to Moses,

²⁷ "When a calf, a lamb, or a goat is born, it must stay with its mother for seven days. From the eighth day on it may be accepted as a sacrifice by fire to the LORD.

²⁸ Never slaughter a cow or a sheep and its young the same day.

²⁹ "When you sacrifice a thank offering to the LORD, do it in the proper way.

³⁰ Eat it the same day. Never leave any of it until morning. I am the LORD.

³¹ "Carefully obey my commands. I am the LORD.

³² Never dishonor my holy name. I will show my holiness among the Israelites. I am the LORD, who sets you apart as holy.

³³ I brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD."

23 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell the Israelites: These are the appointed festivals with the LORD,

which you must announce as holy assemblies.

³ You may work for six days. But the seventh day is a day of worship, a day when you don't work, a holy assembly. Don't do any work. It is the LORD'S day of worship wherever you live.

⁴ "The following are the LORD'S appointed festivals with holy assemblies, which you must announce at their appointed times.

⁵ "The fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening, is the LORD'S Passover.

⁶ The fifteenth day of this same month is the LORD'S Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you must eat unleavened bread.

⁷ On the first day there will be a holy assembly. Don't do any regular work.

⁸ Bring the LORD a sacrifice by fire for seven days. On the seventh day there

will be a holy assembly. Don't do any regular work."

⁹ The LORD spoke to Moses,

¹⁰ "Tell the Israelites: When you come to the land I am going to give you and you harvest grain, bring the priest a bundle of the first grain you harvest.

¹¹ He will present it to the LORD so that you will be accepted. He will present it on the day after Passover.

¹² On the day you present the bundle, you must sacrifice a one-year-old male lamb that has no defects as a burnt offering to the LORD.

¹³ Bring a grain offering of four quarts of flour mixed with olive oil with it. This will be a sacrifice by fire made to the LORD, a soothing aroma. Use one quart of wine for the wine offering.

¹⁴ Don't eat bread, roasted grain, or fresh grain until this same day, when you bring the offering to your God. It is a

permanent law for generations to come wherever you live.

¹⁵ "Count seven full weeks from the day after Passover (the day you bring the bundle of grain as an offering presented to the LORD)

¹⁶ until the day after the seventh week. This is a total of fifty days. Then bring a new grain offering to the LORD.

¹⁷ Bring two loaves of bread from your homes to present to the LORD. Bake them with four quarts of flour. They are the first harvested grain for the LORD.

¹⁸ With the bread bring seven one-year-old lambs that have no defects, one bull, and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD. With these offerings also bring grain and wine offerings. They will be a sacrifice by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁹ Also sacrifice one male goat as an offering for sin and two one-year-old lambs as a fellowship offering.

²⁰ The priest must present them along with the bread of the first harvested grain as an offering to the LORD. All this, along with the two lambs, will be holy and will belong to the LORD'S priests.

²¹ Make an announcement that there will be a holy assembly on that same day. Don't do any regular work. It is a permanent law for generations to come wherever you live.

²² "When you harvest the grain in your land, don't harvest the grain in the corners of your fields or gather what is left after you're finished. Leave it for poor people and foreigners. I am the LORD your God."

²³ The LORD spoke to Moses,

²⁴ "Tell the Israelites: On the first day of the seventh month hold a worship

festival. It will be a memorial day, a holy assembly announced by the blowing of rams' horns.

²⁵ Don't do any regular work. Bring a sacrifice by fire to the LORD."

²⁶ The LORD spoke to Moses,

²⁷ "In addition, the tenth day of this seventh month is a special day for the payment for sins. There will be a holy assembly. Humble yourselves, and bring the LORD a sacrifice by fire.

²⁸ Don't do any work that day. It is a special day for the payment for sins. It is a time when you make peace with the LORD your God.

²⁹ Those who do not humble themselves on that day will be excluded from the people.

³⁰ I will kill those who do any work on that day.

³¹ Don't do any work. It is a permanent law for generations to come wherever you live.

³² It is a day of worship, a day when you don't work. Humble yourselves starting on the evening of the ninth day of the month. From that evening to the next, observe the day of worship."

³³ The LORD spoke to Moses,

³⁴ "Tell the Israelites: The fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Festival of Booths to the LORD. It will last seven days.

³⁵ On the first day there will be a holy assembly. Don't do any regular work.

³⁶ For seven consecutive days bring a sacrifice by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day there will be a holy assembly. Bring the LORD a sacrifice by fire. This is the last festival of the year. Don't do any regular work.

³⁷ "These are the LORD'S appointed festivals. Announce them as holy assemblies for bringing sacrifices by fire to the LORD. Bring burnt offerings, grain offerings, other sacrifices, and wine offerings—each one on its special day.

³⁸ This is in addition to the LORD'S days of worship, your gifts, all your vows, and your freewill offerings to the LORD.

³⁹ "However, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered what the land produces, celebrate the LORD'S festival for seven days. The first and the eighth days will be worship festivals.

⁴⁰ On the first day take the best fruits, palm branches, the branches of leafy trees and poplars, and celebrate in the presence of the LORD your God for seven days.

⁴¹ It is the LORD'S festival. Celebrate it for seven days each year. This is a

permanent law for generations to come. Celebrate this festival in the seventh month.

⁴² Live in booths for seven days.

Everyone born in Israel must live in booths

⁴³ so that generations to come may learn how I made the people of Israel live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

⁴⁴ So Moses told the Israelites about the LORD'S appointed festivals.

24 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Command the Israelites to bring you pure, virgin olive oil for the lamp stand so that the lamps won't go out.

³ In the tent of meeting, outside the canopy where the words of my promise are, Aaron must keep the lamps lit in the LORD'S presence from evening

until morning. It is a permanent law for generations to come.

⁴ Aaron must keep the lamps on the pure gold lamp stand lit in the LORD'S presence.

⁵ "Also take flour and bake twelve rings of bread. Each ring will contain four quarts of flour.

⁶ Put them in two stacks of six each on the gold table in the LORD'S presence.

⁷ Lay pure incense on top of each stack. The incense on the bread will be a reminder, an offering by fire to the LORD.

⁸ Every day of worship a priest must arrange the bread in the LORD'S presence. It is a continual reminder of my promise to the Israelites.

⁹ The bread will belong to Aaron and his sons. They will eat it in a holy place. It is very holy, set apart from the LORD'S offering by fire. This is a permanent law."

¹⁰ A man, whose mother was Shelomith (daughter of Dibri, from the tribe of Dan in Israel) and whose father was from Egypt, got into a quarrel with an Israelite in the camp.

¹¹ The Israelite woman's son began cursing the LORD'S name and treating it with contempt. So they brought him to Moses.

¹² They kept him in custody until the LORD told them what to do.

¹³ The LORD spoke to Moses,

¹⁴ "The man who cursed my name must be taken outside the camp. All who heard him curse my name must lay their hands on his head. Then the whole congregation must stone him to death.

¹⁵ "Also tell the Israelites: Those who treat their God with contempt will be punished for their sin.

¹⁶ But those who curse the LORD'S name must be put to death. The whole

congregation must stone them to death. It makes no difference whether they are Israelites or foreigners. Whoever curses the LORD'S name must die.

¹⁷ "Whoever kills another person must be put to death.

¹⁸ Whoever kills an animal must replace it, life for life.

¹⁹ Whoever injures a neighbor must receive the same injury in return—

²⁰ a broken bone for a broken bone, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Whoever injures another person must receive the same injury in return.

²¹ Whoever kills an animal must replace it. Whoever kills a person must be put to death.

²² The same rule applies to every one of you. It makes no difference whether you are a foreigner or an Israelite, because I am the LORD your God."

²³ Moses spoke to the people of Israel. So the man who had cursed the LORD'S name was taken outside the camp. There they stoned him to death as the LORD commanded Moses. The Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses.

25 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai,

² "Tell the Israelites: When you come into the land I'm giving you, the land will celebrate a year to honor the LORD.

³ Then, for six years you may plant crops in your fields, prune your vineyards, and gather what they produce.

⁴ However, the seventh year will be a festival year for the land. It will be a year to honor the LORD. Don't plant crops in your fields or prune your vineyards.

⁵ Don't harvest what grows by itself or harvest grapes from your vines. That year will be a festival for the land.

⁶ Whatever the land produces during that year is for all of you to eat—for you, your male and female slaves, your hired workers, foreigners among you,

⁷ your animals, and the wild animals in your land. Everything the land produces will be yours to eat.

⁸ "Count seven of these years seven times for a total of 49 years.

⁹ On the tenth day of the seventh month, the special day for the payment for sin, sound rams' horns throughout the country.

¹⁰ Set apart the fiftieth year as holy, and proclaim liberty to everyone living in the land. This is your jubilee year. Every slave will be freed in order to return to his property and to his family.

¹¹ That fiftieth year will be your jubilee year. Don't plant or harvest what grows by itself or pick grapes from the vines in the land.

¹² The jubilee year will be holy to you. You will eat what the field itself produces.

¹³ "In this jubilee year every slave will be freed in order to return to his property.

¹⁴ If you sell anything to your neighbor or buy anything from him, don't take advantage of him.

¹⁵ When you buy property from your neighbor, take into account the number of years since the jubilee. Your neighbor must sell it to you taking into account the number of crops until the next jubilee.

¹⁶ If there are still many years until the jubilee, you will pay more for it. If there are only a few years until the jubilee, you will pay less for it because he is selling you only the number of crops.

¹⁷ Never take advantage of each other. Fear your God, because I am the LORD your God.

¹⁸ "Obey my laws, and carefully follow my rules. Then you will live securely in the land.

¹⁹ The land will give you its products, and you will eat all you want and live there securely.

²⁰ You may ask, 'What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or bring in our crops?'

²¹ I will give you my blessing in the sixth year so that the land will produce enough for three years.

²² You will plant again in the eighth year but live on what the land already produced. You will eat it, even in the ninth year, until the land produces more.

²³ "Land must never be sold permanently, because the land is mine. To me you are strangers without permanent homes.

²⁴ People must always have the right to buy their property back.

²⁵ If your brother becomes poor and sells some of his property, then the one who can assume responsibility, his nearest relative, must buy back what he sold.

²⁶ If a man doesn't have anyone to buy it back for him, but if he prospers and earns enough to buy it back himself,

²⁷ he must count the years from its sale. Then he will pay what is left to the man to whom he sold it, and it will be his property again.

²⁸ However, if he cannot earn enough to buy it back, what he sold stays in the hands of the buyer until the year of jubilee. In the jubilee it will be released, and he will own it again.

²⁹ "If anyone sells a home in a walled city, for one year after selling it he has the right to buy it back. He may buy it back only within that time.

³⁰ If he does not buy it back during that year, the house in the city belongs to the buyer for generations to come. It will not be released in the jubilee.

³¹ However, houses in villages without walls are regarded as belonging to the fields of the land. They can be bought back. They will be released in the jubilee.

³² "The Levites always have the right to buy back their property in the cities they own.

³³ If any Levite buys back a house, in the jubilee the purchased house in the city will be released, because the houses in the Levite cities are their property among the Israelites.

³⁴ But a field that belongs to their cities must not be sold, because it is their permanent property.

³⁵ "If an Israelite becomes poor and cannot support himself, help him. He

must live with you as a stranger without a permanent home.

³⁶ Don't collect interest or make any profit from him. Fear your God by respecting other Israelites' lives.

³⁷ Never collect any kind of interest on your money or on the food you give them.

³⁸ I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you Canaan and to be your God.

³⁹ "If an Israelite becomes poor and sells himself to you, don't work him like a slave.

⁴⁰ He will be like a hired worker or a visitor to you. He may work with you until the year of jubilee.

⁴¹ Then you will release him and his children to go back to their family and the property of their ancestors.

⁴² They are my servants. I brought them out of Egypt. They must never be sold as slaves.

⁴³ Do not treat them harshly. Fear your God.

⁴⁴ "You may have male and female slaves, but buy them from the nations around you.

⁴⁵ You may also buy them from the foreigners living among you and from their families born in your country. They will be your property.

⁴⁶ You may acquire them for yourselves and for your descendants as permanent property. You may work them as slaves. However, do not treat the Israelites harshly. They are your relatives.

⁴⁷ "Someone who is a foreigner without a permanent home among you may become rich, and your relative living with him may be poor. The poor Israelite

may sell himself to that foreigner or a member of his family.

⁴⁸ After he has sold himself, he has the right to be bought back. One of his brothers may buy him back.

⁴⁹ His uncle, his cousin, or some other relative could also buy him back. If he becomes rich, he could buy his own freedom.

⁵⁰ Then he and his buyer must take into account the number of years from the year he was bought until the year of jubilee. His sale price will be adjusted based on the number of years he was with his buyer, like the wages of a hired worker.

⁵¹ If there are many years left, he must refund from his purchase price an amount equal to those years.

⁵² If there are only a few years left until the year of jubilee, he must take them into account. He must refund from his

purchase price an amount equal to those years.

⁵³ During those years he should serve his buyer as a hired worker. His buyer should not treat him harshly.

⁵⁴ If he cannot buy his freedom in these ways, he and his children will be released in the year of jubilee.

⁵⁵ "The Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants. I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

26 ¹ The LORD continued, "Never make worthless idols or set up a carved statue or a sacred stone for yourselves. Never cut figures in stone to worship them in your country, because I am the LORD your God.

² Observe my days of worship and respect my holy tent. I am the LORD.

³ "This is what I will do if you will live by my laws and carefully obey my commands:

⁴ "I will give you rain at the right time. The land will produce its crops, and the trees in the field will produce their fruit.

⁵ Threshing time will last until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until planting. You will eat all you want and live securely in your land.

⁶ "I will bring peace to your land. You will lie down with no one to scare you. I will remove dangerous animals, and there will be no war in your land.

⁷ You will chase your enemies, and you will defeat them.

⁸ Five of you will chase a hundred of them, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand of them. You will defeat your enemies,

⁹ and I will be pleased with you. Your families will be large, and I will keep my promise to you.

¹⁰ You will clear out old food supplies to make room for new ones.

¹¹ "I will put my tent among you, and I will never look at you with disgust.

¹² So I will live among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

¹³ I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of Egypt so that you are no longer slaves of the Egyptians. I have broken their power over you and made you live as a free people.

¹⁴ "If you will not listen to me and obey all these commands,

¹⁵ if you reject my laws and look at my rules with disgust, if you reject my promise by disobeying my commands,

¹⁶ then this is what I will do to you: I will terrorize you with disease and fever. You will suffer from eye problems and

depression. You will plant your crops and get nothing because your enemies will eat them.

¹⁷ I will condemn you so that you will go down in defeat in front of your enemies. Those who hate you will be your rulers. You will run away even when no one is chasing you.

¹⁸ "If you still will not listen to me, I will discipline you seven times for your sins.

¹⁹ I will crush your arrogance. You will have no rain, and your land will be as hard as cement.

²⁰ You will work hard for nothing because your land will produce no crops and the trees will produce no fruit.

²¹ "If you resist and don't listen to me, I will increase the punishment for your sins seven times.

²² I will send wild animals among you. They will rob you of your children,

destroy your cattle, and make you so few that your roads will be deserted.

²³ "If this discipline does not help and you still resist,

²⁴ then I, too, will resist you. I will punish you seven times for your sins.

²⁵ I will bring war on you to get revenge for my promise that you rejected. When you gather in your cities, I will send plagues on you and you will fall under the control of your enemy.

²⁶ I will destroy your food supply. Ten women will need only one oven to prepare your food. You will eat and go away hungry.

²⁷ "If in spite of this you do not listen to me and still resist me,

²⁸ I will fiercely resist you. I will discipline you seven times for your sins.

²⁹ You will eat the bodies of your sons and daughters.

³⁰ I will destroy your worship sites, cut down your incense altars, and pile your dead bodies on top of your dead idols. I will look at you with disgust.

³¹ I will make your cities deserted and ruin your sacred places. I will no longer accept the soothing aroma from your sacrifices.

³² I will make your land so deserted that your enemies will be shocked as they settle in it.

³³ I will scatter you among the nations. War will follow you. Your country will be in ruins. Your cities will be deserted.

³⁴ "Then the land will enjoy its time to honor the LORD while it lies deserted and you are in your enemies' land. Then the land will joyfully celebrate its time to honor the LORD.

³⁵ All the days it lies deserted, it will celebrate the time to honor the LORD it never celebrated while you lived there.

³⁶ I will fill with despair those who are left in the land of their enemies. The sound of a windblown leaf will make them run. They will run away and fall, but no one will be chasing them.

³⁷ They will stumble over each other, but no one will be after them. They will not be able to stand up to their enemies.

³⁸ They will be destroyed among the nations. The land of their enemies will devour them.

³⁹ Those who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins and the sins of their ancestors.

⁴⁰ "But if they confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors—the treacherous things they did to oppose me—

⁴¹ I will oppose them and bring them into the lands of their enemies. Then, if they humble their uncircumcised hearts and accept their guilt,

⁴² I will remember my promise to Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham. I will also remember the land.

⁴³ The land, abandoned by them, will enjoy its time to honor the LORD while it lies deserted without them. They must accept their guilt because they rejected my rules and looked at my laws with disgust.

⁴⁴ Even when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or look at them with disgust. I will not reject or cancel my promise to them, because I am the LORD their God.

⁴⁵ But for their sake, I will remember the promise to their ancestors. I brought them out of Egypt to be their God while nations looked on. I am the LORD."

⁴⁶ These are the laws, rules, and instructions that the LORD gave to the Israelites through Moses on Mount Sinai.

27 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses,
² "Tell the Israelites: If any of you makes a special vow to give a person to the LORD, you may give money instead of the person.

³ The amount you must give for a man from 20 to 60 years old is 20 ounces of silver. Use the standard weight of the holy place.

⁴ If it is a woman, give 12 ounces.

⁵ For a boy from 5 to 20 years old, give 8 ounces and for a girl give 4 ounces.

⁶ For a boy from one month to five years old, give 2 ounces of silver and for a girl give about one ounce.

⁷ For a man 60 years or over, give 6 ounces and for a woman give 4 ounces.

⁸ But the person who is too poor to pay the required amount must stand in front of the priest. The priest will determine the amount based on what the person can afford.

⁹ "If the vow is to give the kind of animal that people offer to the LORD, it will be considered holy.

¹⁰ Don't exchange or substitute animals, a good one for a bad one or a bad one for a good one. If you do exchange one animal for another, then both animals will be holy.

¹¹ If it is an unclean animal that cannot be brought to the LORD as an offering, bring it in front of the priest.

¹² The priest will determine what its value is. The value will be whatever the priest decides.

¹³ If you want to buy it back, you must pay its full value plus one-fifth more.

¹⁴ "If you give your house to the LORD as something holy, the priest will determine what its value is. The value will be whatever the priest decides.

¹⁵ If you want to buy it back, you must pay its full value plus one-fifth more.

¹⁶ "If a person gives part of a field to the LORD as something holy, its value will be based on the seed planted on it. Ground planted with 2 quarts of barley will be worth 20 ounces of silver.

¹⁷ If you give your field in the jubilee year, it will have its full value.

¹⁸ But if you give the field after the jubilee year, the priest will estimate its value based on the number of years left until the next jubilee year.

¹⁹ If you want to buy it back, you must pay its full value plus one–fifth more.

²⁰ But if you don't buy it back and it is sold to someone else, you cannot buy it back.

²¹ When the field is released in the jubilee year, it will be holy like a field claimed by the LORD. It will become the property of the priest.

²² You may give a field you bought (not one that was a part of your family

property) to the LORD as something holy.

²³ The priest must figure out the field's value until the jubilee year. You will pay its value on that day as something holy, belonging to the LORD.

²⁴ In the jubilee year the field will go back to the person from whom it was bought, to whom it belongs as family property.

²⁵ "All values will be set using the standard weight of the holy place.

²⁶ "A firstborn animal already belongs to the LORD because it was born first. Therefore, it cannot be set apart as holy. Whether it is a bull or a sheep, it belongs to the LORD.

²⁷ But if it is an unclean animal, it must be bought back. The payment will be its full value plus one-fifth more. If it is not bought back, it must be sold at the value given it.

²⁸ "However, everything dedicated to the LORD for destruction—a person, an animal, or a field that belongs to you—must not be sold or bought back. Everything dedicated in that way is very holy. It belongs to the LORD.

²⁹ People dedicated this way cannot be bought back. They must be put to death.

³⁰ "One-tenth of what comes from the land, whether grain or fruit, is holy and belongs to the LORD.

³¹ If you buy back any part of it, you must add one-fifth more to it.

³² Every tenth head of cattle or sheep that you counted is holy and belongs to the LORD.

³³ You must not look to see if it is good or bad or exchange it. But if you do exchange it, both the first animal and its substitute will be holy. They cannot be bought back."

³⁴ These are the commands the LORD gave Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

Numbers

1 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Desert of Sinai. It was the first day of the second month in the second year after leaving Egypt. He said,

² "Take a census of the whole community of Israel by families and households. List every man by name ³ who is at least 20 years old. You and Aaron must register everyone in Israel who is eligible for military duty. List them by divisions.

⁴ One man from each tribe will help you. Each of these men must be the head of a household.

⁵ "Here are the names of the men who will help you: Elizur, son of Shedeur, from the tribe of Reuben;

⁶ Shelumiel, son of Zurishaddai, from the tribe of Simeon;

⁷ Nahshon, son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah;

⁸ Nethanel, son of Zuar, from the tribe of Issachar;

⁹ Eliab, son of Helon, from the tribe of Zebulun;

¹⁰ Elishama, son of Ammihud, from the tribe of Ephraim; Gamaliel, son of Pedahzur, from the tribe of Manasseh; (Ephraim and Manasseh are Joseph's descendants.)

¹¹ Abidan, son of Gideoni, from the tribe of Benjamin;

¹² Ahiezer, son of Ammishaddai, from the tribe of Dan;

¹³ Pagiel, son of Ocran, from the tribe of Asher;

¹⁴ Eliasaph, son of Deuel, from the tribe of Gad;

¹⁵ Ahira, son of Enan, from the tribe of Naphtali."

¹⁶ These were the men chosen from the community, the leaders of their ancestors' tribes, and heads of the divisions of Israel.

¹⁷ Moses and Aaron took the men who had been named

¹⁸ and assembled the whole community on the first day of the second month. Each man at least 20 years old provided his genealogy by family and household. Then his name was listed.

¹⁹ So Moses registered the men of Israel in the Desert of Sinai as the LORD had commanded him.

²⁰ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Reuben, Israel's firstborn son, listed every man by name who was at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

²¹ The total for the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.

²² The roster of families and households for the descendants of Simeon registered and listed every man by name who was at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

²³ The total for the tribe of Simeon was 59,300.

²⁴ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Gad listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

²⁵ The total for the tribe of Gad was 45,650.

²⁶ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Judah listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

²⁷ The total for the tribe of Judah was 74,600.

²⁸ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Issachar listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

²⁹ The total for the tribe of Issachar was 54,400.

³⁰ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Zebulun listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

³¹ The total for the tribe of Zebulun was 57,400.

³² The roster of families and households for the descendants of Joseph—those from Ephraim—listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

³³ The total for the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500.

³⁴ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Manasseh listed

the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

³⁵ The total for the tribe of Manasseh was 32,200.

³⁶ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Benjamin listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

³⁷ The total for the tribe of Benjamin was 35,400.

³⁸ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Dan listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

³⁹ The total for the tribe of Dan was 62,700.

⁴⁰ The roster of families and households for the descendants of Asher listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

⁴¹ The total for the tribe of Asher was 41,500.

⁴² The roster of families and households for the descendants of Naphtali listed the men by name who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty.

⁴³ The total for the tribe of Naphtali was 53,400.

⁴⁴ Moses, Aaron, and the 12 leaders of Israel, each representing his own family, added up these totals.

⁴⁵ So the Israelites were registered by households. The grand total of men who were at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty

⁴⁶ was 603,550.

⁴⁷ But the households from the tribe of Levi were not registered along with the other Israelites.

⁴⁸ The LORD had said to Moses,

⁴⁹ "Don't register the tribe of Levi or include them in the census with the other Israelites.

⁵⁰ Put the Levites in charge of the tent of God's words, including the equipment for the tent and everything else having to do with the tent. The Levites will carry the tent and all its equipment. They will take care of the tent and camp around it.

⁵¹ When the tent has to be moved, the Levites will take it down. When we camp, they will set it up. Anyone else who comes near the tent will be put to death.

⁵² "The other Israelites will camp with each family in its own area under its own flag.

⁵³ The Levites will camp all around the tent of God's words. In this way the LORD won't be angry with the community of Israel. So the Levites will be in charge of the tent of God's words."

⁵⁴ The Israelites did everything as the LORD commanded Moses.

2 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron,

² "The Israelites will put up their tents with each family under the flag that symbolizes its household. They will put their tents around the tent of meeting, facing it.

³ "On the east side, facing the rising sun, the armies led by Judah will camp under their flag. The leader for the people of Judah is Nahshon, son of Amminadab.

⁴ The total number of men in his army is 74,600.

⁵ "Next to them will be the tribe of Issachar. The leader for the people of Issachar is Nethanel, son of Zuar.

⁶ The total number of men in his army is 54,400.

⁷ "Then will be the tribe of Zebulun. The leader for the people of Zebulun is Eliab, son of Helon.

⁸ The total number of men in his army is 57,400.

⁹ "The grand total of all the troops in Judah's camp is 186,400. They will be the first group to move out.

¹⁰ "On the south side the armies led by Reuben will camp under their flag. The leader for the people of Reuben is Elizur, son of Shedeur.

¹¹ The total number of men in his army is 46,500.

¹² "Next to them will be the tribe of Simeon. The leader for the people of Simeon is Shelumiel, son of Zurishaddai.

¹³ The total number of men in his army is 59,300.

¹⁴ "Then will be the tribe of Gad. The leader for the people of Gad is Eliasaph, son of Deuel.

¹⁵ The total number of men in his army is 45,650.

¹⁶ "The grand total of all the troops in Reuben's camp is 151,450. They will be the second group to move out.

¹⁷ "When the tent of meeting is moved, the Levites will stay in the middle of the groups. The tribes will move out in the same order as they are in the camp, everyone in place under his own flag.

¹⁸ "On the west side the armies led by Ephraim will camp under their flag. The leader for the people of Ephraim is Elishama, son of Ammihud.

¹⁹ The total number of men in his army is 40,500.

²⁰ "Next to them will be the tribe of Manasseh. The leader for the people of Manasseh is Gamaliel, son of Pedahzur.

²¹ The total number of men in his army is 32,200.

²² "Then will be the tribe of Benjamin. The leader for the people of Benjamin is Abidan, son of Gideoni.

²³ The total number of men in his army is 35,400.

²⁴ "The grand total of all the troops in Ephraim's camp is 108,100. They will be the third group to move out.

²⁵ "On the north side the armies led by Dan will camp under their flag. The leader for the people of Dan is Ahiezer, son of Ammishaddai.

²⁶ The total number of men in his army is 62,700.

²⁷ "Next to them will be the tribe of Asher. The leader for the people of Asher is Pagiël, son of Ocran.

²⁸ The total number of men in his army is 41,500.

²⁹ "Then will be the tribe of Naphtali. The leader for the people of Naphtali is Ahira, son of Enan.

³⁰ The total number of men in his army is 53,400.

³¹ "The grand total of all the men in Dan's camp is 157,600. They will be the last group to move out. They will travel under their own flag."

³² This is the total number of Israelites, counted by households. The grand total of all the troops in the camps was 603,550.

³³ As the LORD had commanded Moses, the Levites were not registered along with the other Israelites.

³⁴ So the Israelites did everything as the LORD had commanded Moses. They set up camp under their flags, and each person traveled with his own family and household.

3 ¹ This is the list of Aaron and Moses' descendants at the time when the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai.

² The names of Aaron's sons are Nadab (the firstborn), Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

³ These are the names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests, who were ordained to serve as priests.

⁴ Nadab and Abihu died in the LORD'S presence because they offered unauthorized fire in his presence in the Desert of Sinai. They had no children. So only Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests during the lifetime of their father Aaron.

⁵ The LORD said to Moses,

⁶ "Bring the tribe of Levi, and have them stand in front of the priest Aaron to assist him.

⁷ They will work for him and the whole community in front of the tent of meeting, doing what needs to be done for the inner tent.

⁸ They will take care of all the furnishings in the tent of meeting and work for the Israelites, doing what needs to be done for the inner tent.

⁹ Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons. The Levites will be the only Israelites given to them.

¹⁰ Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests. Anyone else who tries to do the priests' duties must be put to death."

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses,

¹² "Out of all the Israelites, I have taken the Levites to be substitutes for every firstborn male offspring among them.

The Levites are mine,

¹³ because every firstborn is mine. The day I killed every firstborn male in Egypt, I set apart as holy every firstborn in Israel, whether human or animal. They will be mine. I am the LORD."

¹⁴ The LORD said to Moses in the Desert of Sinai,

¹⁵ "Count the Levites by households and families. Count every male who is at least one month old."

¹⁶ So Moses did what the LORD said and registered them as he had been commanded.

¹⁷ Gershon, Kohath, and Merari were the sons of Levi.

¹⁸ Libni and Shimei were the sons of Gershon. Their families were named after them.

¹⁹ Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel were the sons of Kohath. Their families were named after them.

²⁰ Mahli and Mushi were the sons of Merari. Their families were named after them. These were the households of Levite families.

²¹ To Gershon belonged the families descended from Libni and Shimei. These were the families descended from Gershon.

²² The total number of all the males at least one month old was 7,500.

²³ The families descended from Gershon put up their tents on the west side behind the tent of meeting.

²⁴ The leader of the Gershonite households was Eliasaph, son of Lael.

²⁵ At the tent of meeting the Gershonites were in charge of the inner tent, the outer tent and cover, the screen for the entrance to the tent of meeting,

²⁶ the curtains for the courtyard, the screen for the entrance to the courtyard that surrounds the inner tent and the altar, and the ropes. They took care of all these things.

²⁷ To Kohath belonged the families descended from Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. These were the families descended from Kohath.

²⁸ The number of all the males at least one month old was 8,600. They were in charge of the holy place.

²⁹ The families descended from Kohath put up their tents on the south side of the tent of meeting.

³⁰ The leader of the Kohathite families and households was Elizaphan, son of Uzziel.

³¹ They were in charge of the ark, the table, the lamp stand, the altars, the utensils used in the holy place, and the screen. They took care of all these things.

³² The chief leader of the Levites was Eleazar, son of the priest Aaron. It was Eleazar's duty to supervise those who were in charge of the holy place.

³³ To Merari belonged the families descended from Mahli and Mushi. These were the families descended from Merari.

³⁴ The total number of all the males at least one month old was 6,200.

³⁵ The leader of the Merarite families and households was Zuriel, son of Abihail. They put up their tents on the north side of the tent of meeting.

³⁶ It was the duty of the Merarites to be in charge of the framework of the inner tent, the crossbars, posts, sockets, and all the equipment. They took care of all these things.

³⁷ They also took care of the posts for the surrounding courtyard, the bases, pegs, and ropes.

³⁸ Moses, Aaron, and his sons put up their tents on the east side in front of the tent of meeting. They were in charge of the holy place on behalf of the Israelites. Anyone else who tried to do the Levites' duties had to be put to death.

³⁹ The grand total of Levites that Moses and Aaron counted at the LORD'S command, by families, every male who was at least one month old, was 22,000.

⁴⁰ The LORD said to Moses, "Register every firstborn male of the Israelites who is at least one month old, and make a list of their names.

⁴¹ I am the LORD. Take the Levites for me to be substitutes for all firstborn Israelites. Also take the animals of the Levites to be substitutes for all firstborn animals of the Israelites."

⁴² So Moses registered all the firstborn Israelites as the LORD commanded him.

⁴³ The total of all the firstborn males at least one month old was 22,273. They were listed by name.

⁴⁴ The LORD said to Moses,

⁴⁵ "Take the Levites to be substitutes for all the firstborn Israelites and the animals of the Levites to be substitutes for their animals. The Levites will be mine. I am the LORD.

⁴⁶ There are 273 more firstborn male Israelites than there are Levites.

⁴⁷ It will cost you two ounces of silver per person (using the standard weight of the holy place) to buy them back.

⁴⁸ Give the silver to Aaron and his sons. It will buy back those Israelites who outnumber the Levites."

⁴⁹ So Moses took this ransom money from the Israelites who outnumbered the Levites.

⁵⁰ The silver Moses collected for the firstborn Israelites weighed 34 pounds using the standard weight of the holy place.

⁵¹ Then Moses did what the LORD said and gave Aaron and his sons this ransom money as he had been commanded.

4 ¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,
² "Take a census of the Levites who are descended from Kohath. List them by families and households.

³ Register all the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who are qualified to work at the tent of meeting.

⁴ "This is the work the Kohathites will do in the tent of meeting: They will take care of the most holy things.

⁵ When the camp is supposed to move, Aaron and his sons will go in and take down the canopy that hangs over the ark containing the words of God's promise. First they will cover the ark with the canopy.

⁶ Over this they will put a covering of fine leather. On top of that they will spread a cloth made entirely of violet material. Then they will put the poles in place.

⁷ "They will spread a violet cloth over the table of the presence and put on it the plates, dishes, bowls, and pitchers for the wine offerings. The bread that is

always in the LORD'S presence will also be on it.

⁸ They will spread a bright red cloth over everything on the table. They will cover all this with fine leather. Then they will put the poles in place.

⁹ "They will take a violet cloth and cover the lamp stand, as well as the lamps, tongs, trays, and all the containers for the olive oil used in the lamps.

¹⁰ Then they will put the lamp stand and all its utensils under a covering of fine leather and put them on a frame to carry them.

¹¹ "They will spread a violet cloth over the gold altar and cover the cloth with fine leather. Then they will put the poles in place.

¹² "They will take all the articles that are used in the holy place, put them in a violet cloth, cover that with fine leather, and put them on a frame to carry them.

¹³ "After they take the ashes away, they will spread a purple cloth over the altar.

¹⁴ Next, they will put all the accessories used at the altar on it. These are the trays, forks, shovels, and bowls—all the altar's accessories. They will spread a covering of fine leather over all this. Then they will put the poles in place.

¹⁵ "When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy things and the camp is ready to move, the Kohathites will come to carry all the holy articles. They must never touch the holy things, or they will die. The Kohathites will carry all the things from the tent of meeting.

¹⁶ "Eleazar, son of the priest Aaron, will be in charge of the oil for the lamps, the sweet-smelling incense, the daily grain offering, and the anointing oil. He is in charge of the whole tent and everything in it, the holy place and its contents."

¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

¹⁸ "Don't let the Kohathite families from Levi's tribe be destroyed.

¹⁹ This is what you must do so that they won't die when they come near the most holy things: Aaron and his sons will go into the holy place and tell each man what he will do and what he will carry.

²⁰ But the Kohathites must not go in to look at the holy things, even for a moment, or they will die."

²¹ The LORD said to Moses,

²² "Also take a census of the Gershonites. List them by households and families.

²³ Register all the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who are qualified to serve at the tent of meeting.

²⁴ "This is what the Gershonite families will do and what they will carry:

²⁵ They will carry the sheets that are part of the inner tent and the tent of meeting. They will also carry the inner

cover for the tent of meeting, the outer cover of fine leather that goes over it, the screen for the entrance to the tent of meeting,

²⁶ the curtains for the courtyard around the tent and the altar, the screen for the entrance to the courtyard, the ropes, and all the equipment used to set up the curtains. The Gershonites will do everything that needs to be done with these things.

²⁷ All their work, whatever they carry and all their duties, will be done under the direction of Aaron and his sons. You are in charge of telling them everything they're supposed to carry.

²⁸ This is the work of the Gershonite families in the tent of meeting. Ithamar, son of the priest Aaron, will be in charge of them.

²⁹ "Register the Merarites by families and households.

³⁰ Register all the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who are qualified to serve at the tent of meeting.

³¹ These are their duties as they work at the tent of meeting: They will carry the framework for the inner tent, the crossbars, posts, and sockets,

³² the posts for the surrounding courtyard, the bases, pegs, and ropes. They must take care of all this equipment. Tell each man by name the things he will carry.

³³ This is what the Merarite families will do as they work at the tent of meeting. Ithamar, son of the priest Aaron, will be in charge of them."

³⁴ Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the community registered the Kohathites by their families and households.

³⁵ They registered all the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who were qualified to work at the tent of meeting.

³⁶ The total of those who were registered was 2,750. They were listed by families.

³⁷ This was the total of all those in the Kohathite families who served at the tent of meeting. Moses and Aaron did as the LORD had commanded Moses and registered the Kohathites.

³⁸ The Gershonites were registered by families and households.

³⁹ All the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who were qualified to serve at the tent of meeting were registered.

⁴⁰ The total of those who were registered was 2,630. They were listed by families and households.

⁴¹ This was the total of all those in the Gershonite families who worked at the tent of meeting. Moses and Aaron did as the LORD had commanded Moses and registered the Gershonites.

⁴² The Merarites were registered by families and households.

⁴³ All the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who were qualified to serve at the tent of meeting were registered.

⁴⁴ The total of all those who were registered was 3,200. They were listed by families.

⁴⁵ This was the total of those registered in the Merarite families. Moses and Aaron did as the LORD had commanded Moses and registered the Merarites.

⁴⁶ The grand total of all the Levites whom Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel registered was 8,580. They were listed by families and households.

⁴⁷ These were the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who were qualified to do the work of serving and who carried the tent of meeting.

⁴⁸ (SEE 4:46)

⁴⁹ At the LORD'S command through Moses each man was registered and told what to do and what to carry. So they were registered as the LORD commanded Moses.

5 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Command the Israelites to send outside the camp anyone who has a serious skin disease or a discharge or anyone who is unclean from touching a dead body.

³ Send all of these unclean men and women outside the camp. They must not make this camp where I live among you unclean."

⁴ So the Israelites did as the LORD had told Moses. They sent these unclean people outside the camp.

⁵ The LORD said to Moses,

⁶ "Tell the Israelites: If you do something wrong to another person, you have been

unfaithful to the LORD. When you realize your guilt,

⁷ you must confess your sin, pay in full for what you did wrong, add one-fifth to it, and give it to the person who was wronged.

⁸ But there may be no heir to whom the payment can be made. In that case, the payment for what you did wrong must be given to the LORD for the priest to use. This payment is in addition to the ram which makes peace with the LORD.

⁹ "Any contribution over and above the holy offerings that the Israelites bring to the priest will belong to the priest.

¹⁰ Each person's holy offerings will belong to that person, but whatever is given to the priest will belong to the priest."

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses:

¹² "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: A man's wife may have been unfaithful to him

¹³ and may have had sexual intercourse with another man without her husband's knowledge. She may have kept it secret if there were no witnesses to accuse her and she wasn't caught in the act.

¹⁴ "A husband may have a fit of jealousy and suspect his wife, whether she was actually unfaithful or not.

¹⁵ He must then take his wife to the priest along with eight cups of barley flour as an offering for her. He must not pour olive oil on the flour or put frankincense on it, since it is a grain offering brought because of the husband's jealousy, an offering used for a confession—to remind someone of a sin that was committed.

¹⁶ "The priest will have the woman come forward and stand in the LORD'S presence.

¹⁷ Then the priest will take holy water in a piece of pottery and put some dust from the floor of the tent into the water.

¹⁸ The priest will bring the woman into the LORD'S presence and loosen her hair. In her hands he will put the offering used for a confession (that is, the grain offering brought because of the husband's jealousy). The priest will hold in his hands the bitter water that can bring a curse.

¹⁹ "Then the priest will say to her, 'If no other man has had sexual intercourse with you and you haven't been unfaithful to your husband, you're not guilty. This bitter water that can bring a curse will not harm you.'

²⁰ If, in fact, you have been unfaithful and have had sexual intercourse with another man,

²¹ may the LORD make you an example for your people to see what happens when the curse of this oath comes true: The LORD will make your uterus drop and your stomach swell.' "Then the priest will administer the oath and the curse by saying:

²² 'May this water that can bring a curse go into your body and make your stomach swell and your uterus drop!' "Then the woman will say, 'Amen, amen!'

²³ "The priest will write these curses on a scroll and wash them off into the bitter water.

²⁴ Then he will have the woman drink the bitter water that can bring the curse. This water will go into her and become bitter.

²⁵ The priest will take the grain offering she was holding, present it to the LORD, and bring it to the altar.

²⁶ The priest will take a handful of the grain offering as a memorial portion and burn it on the altar. Then he will have the woman drink the water.

²⁷ If she has become unclean by being unfaithful to her husband, the water that can bring the curse will go into her and become bitter. Her stomach will swell, her uterus will drop, and she will become cursed among her people.

²⁸ But if the woman is not unclean and is pure, she is not guilty and will be able to have children.

²⁹ "These are the instructions for how to deal with jealousy. They tell you what to do when a woman is unfaithful to her husband and becomes unclean.

³⁰ They also tell you what to do when a husband has a fit of jealousy and is

suspicious of his wife. He will make his wife stand in the LORD'S presence, and the priest will do everything these instructions tell him to do.

³¹ The husband isn't guilty of doing anything wrong, but the woman will suffer the consequences of her sin."

6 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: A man or a woman may make a special vow to live as a Nazirite dedicated to the LORD.

³ Nazirites must never drink wine, liquor, vinegar made from wine or liquor, or any kind of grape juice, and they must never eat fresh grapes or raisins.

⁴ As long as they are Nazirites, they must never eat anything that comes from a grapevine, not even grape seeds or skins.

⁵ "As long as they are under the Nazirite vow, no razor may touch their heads.

During the entire time that they are dedicated to the LORD as Nazirites, they will be holy. They must let their hair grow long.

⁶ While they are dedicated to the LORD as Nazirites, they must never go near a dead body.

⁷ Even if their own father, mother, brother, or sister dies, they must not make themselves unclean by going near them. Nazirites show their vow to God with their long hair.

⁸ As long as they are Nazirites, they will be holy to the LORD.

⁹ "Someone might suddenly drop dead next to a Nazirite and make the Nazirite's hair unclean. Seven days later he must shave his head in order to be declared clean.

¹⁰ On the eighth day he must bring two mourning doves or two young pigeons

to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

¹¹ The priest will sacrifice one as an offering for sin and the other one as a burnt offering. The priest will make peace with the LORD for the person who touched the dead body. That same day the person must dedicate his head again.

¹² Once again he will dedicate himself to the LORD as a Nazirite for the same length of time as before. He must bring a one-year-old male lamb as an offering for guilt. The first time period won't count. He has to start over from when he became unclean.

¹³ "These are the instructions for Nazirites who complete their vows: They must come to the entrance of the tent of meeting.

¹⁴ They must bring these offerings to the LORD: a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering, a one-year-old female

lamb as an offering for sin, and a ram as a fellowship offering. All of these animals must have no defects.

¹⁵ They must also bring a basket of unleavened bread containing some rings of bread made with olive oil and wafers of unleavened bread brushed with olive oil, along with other grain offerings and wine offerings.

¹⁶ "The priest will bring these offerings to the LORD and make the offering for sin and the burnt offering.

¹⁷ He will sacrifice the ram as a fellowship offering to the LORD, offer the basket of unleavened bread along with it, and make the grain offerings and wine offerings.

¹⁸ "Then the Nazirites will shave their heads at the entrance to the tent of meeting, take the hair as proof that they had made this vow, and put it on the fire under the fellowship offering.

¹⁹ "Then the priest will take one of the shoulders from a boiled ram, one ring of unleavened bread from the basket, and one wafer of unleavened bread and hand them to the Nazirites after they have shaved off their hair.

²⁰ The priest will present them as an offering to the LORD. They are holy and belong to the priest, along with the ram's breast that is presented and the thigh that is given. After that, the Nazirites may drink wine.

²¹ "These are the instructions for those who have vowed to bring their offerings to the LORD because they were Nazirites. They must bring these offerings in addition to anything else they can afford. They must fulfill the requirements of these instructions for Nazirites and finish whatever they vowed to do."

²² The LORD said to Moses,

²³ "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you will bless the Israelites. Say to them:

²⁴ The LORD will bless you and watch over you.

²⁵ The LORD will smile on you and be kind to you.

²⁶ The LORD will look on you with favor and give you peace.'

²⁷ "So whenever they use my name to bless the Israelites, I will bless them."

7¹ When Moses finished setting up the tent, he anointed it and dedicated it and all the furnishings. He also anointed and dedicated the altar and all the utensils.

² Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of the households—those tribal leaders who helped in the census—came to give their offerings.

³ They brought these gifts to the LORD: six freight wagons and twelve oxen, one wagon from every two leaders and one

ox from each leader. They brought them in front of the tent.

⁴ The LORD said to Moses,

⁵ "Accept these gifts from them to use in the work done for the tent of meeting. Give them to the Levites to use wherever they need these gifts for their work."

⁶ Moses took the wagons and the oxen and gave them to the Levites.

⁷ He gave two wagons and four oxen to the Gershonites for the work they had to do.

⁸ He gave four wagons and eight oxen to the Merarites for the work they had to do under the direction of Ithamar, son of the priest Aaron.

⁹ But Moses gave none of these gifts to the Kohathites, because they took care of the holy things. They had to carry the holy things on their own shoulders.

¹⁰ The leaders also brought offerings for the dedication of the altar when it was

anointed. They presented their gifts in front of the altar.

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, "Each day a different leader will bring his gift for the dedication of the altar."

¹² The one who brought his gifts on the first day was Nahshon, son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah.

¹³ He brought a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

¹⁴ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

¹⁵ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

¹⁶ a male goat as an offering for sin;

¹⁷ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs

as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Nahshon, son of Amminadab.

¹⁸ On the second day Nethanel, son of Zuar, the leader from the tribe of Issachar, brought his gifts.

¹⁹ He brought a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

²⁰ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

²¹ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

²² a male goat as an offering for sin;

²³ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Nethanel, son of Zuar.

²⁴ On the third day the leader of the descendants of Zebulun, Eliab, son of Helon,

²⁵ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

²⁶ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

²⁷ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

²⁸ a male goat as an offering for sin;

²⁹ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Eliab, son of Helon.

³⁰ On the fourth day the leader of the descendants of Reuben, Elizur, son of Shedeur,

³¹ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

³² He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

³³ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

³⁴ a male goat as an offering for sin;

³⁵ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Elizur, son of Shedeur.

³⁶ On the fifth day the leader of the descendants of Simeon, Shelumiel, son of Zurishaddai,

³⁷ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each

dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

³⁸ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

³⁹ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

⁴⁰ a male goat as an offering for sin;

⁴¹ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Shelumiel, son of Zurishaddai.

⁴² On the sixth day the leader of the descendants of Gad, Eliasaph, son of Deuel,

⁴³ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

⁴⁴ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

⁴⁵ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

⁴⁶ a male goat as an offering for sin;

⁴⁷ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Eliasaph, son of Deuel.

⁴⁸ On the seventh day the leader of the descendants of Ephraim, Elishama, son of Ammihud,

⁴⁹ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

⁵⁰ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

⁵¹ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

⁵² a male goat as an offering for sin;

⁵³ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Elishama, son of Ammihud.

⁵⁴ On the eighth day the leader of the descendants of Manasseh, Gamaliel, son of Pedahzur,

⁵⁵ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

⁵⁶ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

⁵⁷ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

⁵⁸ a male goat as an offering for sin;

⁵⁹ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Gamaliel, son of Pedahzur.

⁶⁰ On the ninth day the leader of the descendants of Benjamin, Abidan, son of Gideoni,

⁶¹ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

⁶² He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

⁶³ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

⁶⁴ a male goat as an offering for sin;

⁶⁵ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Abidan, son of Gideoni.

⁶⁶ On the tenth day the leader of the descendants of Dan, Ahiezer, son of Amishaddai,

⁶⁷ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

⁶⁸ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

⁶⁹ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

⁷⁰ a male goat as an offering for sin;

⁷¹ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Ahiezer, son of Amishaddai.

⁷² On the eleventh day the leader of the descendants of Asher, Pagiël, son of Ocran,

⁷³ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each

dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

⁷⁴ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

⁷⁵ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

⁷⁶ a male goat as an offering for sin;

⁷⁷ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Pagiël, son of Ochrán.

⁷⁸ On the twelfth day the leader of the descendants of Naphtali, Ahira, son of Enán,

⁷⁹ brought his gifts: a silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds and a silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds using the standard weight of the holy place. Each dish was filled with flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering.

⁸⁰ He also brought a gold dish that weighed 4 ounces, filled with incense;

⁸¹ a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb as a burnt offering;

⁸² a male goat as an offering for sin;

⁸³ and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering. These were the gifts from Ahira, son of Enan.

⁸⁴ These were the gifts from the leaders of Israel for the dedication of the altar when it was anointed: 12 silver plates, 12 silver bowls, and 12 gold dishes.

⁸⁵ Each silver plate weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds, and each bowl weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds. Together all the silver dishes weighed 60 pounds using the standard weight of the holy place.

⁸⁶ The 12 gold dishes filled with incense weighed 4 ounces each using the standard weight of the holy place. Together all the gold dishes weighed about 3 pounds.

⁸⁷ The total number of animals for the burnt offerings was 12 young bulls, 12 rams, 12 one-year-old male lambs, along with their grain offerings. Twelve male goats were used as offerings for sin.

⁸⁸ The total number of animals for fellowship offerings was 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 male goats, and 60 one-year-old male lambs. These were the gifts for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed.

⁸⁹ Whenever Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the throne of mercy on the ark containing the words of God's promise, from between the two angels. This is how the LORD spoke with Moses.

8 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Speak to Aaron and tell him:
When you set up the seven lamps on the

lamp stand, they should light up the area in front of it."

³ So Aaron set up the lamps on the lamp stand to light up the area in front of it, as the LORD commanded Moses.

⁴ This is how the lamp stand was made: The whole lamp stand, from top to bottom, was hammered out of gold. It was made exactly like the one the LORD had shown Moses.

⁵ The LORD said to Moses,

⁶ "Separate the Levites from the rest of the Israelites, and make them clean.

⁷ This is what you must do to make them clean: Sprinkle them with water to take away their sins. Make them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes. Then they will be clean.

⁸ Next, they must take a young bull and the grain offering of flour mixed with olive oil that is offered with it. You must

take a second young bull as an offering for sin.

⁹ Bring the Levites to the front of the tent of meeting, and assemble the whole community of Israel.

¹⁰ Then bring the Levites into the LORD'S presence, and the Israelites will place their hands on them.

¹¹ Aaron will present the Levites to the LORD as an offering from the Israelites. Then they will be ready to do the LORD'S work.

¹² "The Levites will place their hands on the heads of the young bulls. Sacrifice one of them as an offering for sin and the other one as a burnt offering to the LORD. These sacrifices will make peace with the LORD for the Levites.

¹³ Make the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons, and present them as an offering to the LORD.

¹⁴ In this way you will separate the Levites from the other Israelites, and the Levites will be mine.

¹⁵ "Once you have made them clean and presented them as an offering, the Levites may come and do their work at the tent of meeting.

¹⁶ They will be the only Israelites given to me. I have taken them to be mine as substitutes for every firstborn male offspring of the Israelites.

¹⁷ Every firstborn in Israel, whether human or animal, is mine. The day I killed every firstborn male in Egypt, I set them apart as holy to me.

¹⁸ So I have taken the Levites as substitutes for all the firstborn sons of the Israelites.

¹⁹ The Levites will be the only Israelites I give to Aaron and his sons. They will work for the Israelites at the tent of meeting. They will make peace with the

LORD for the Israelites. Then no plague will strike the Israelites when they come near the holy place."

²⁰ Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel did what the LORD commanded Moses to do to the Levites.

²¹ The Levites performed the ceremonies to take away their sins and washed their clothes. Aaron presented them as an offering to the LORD and made peace with the LORD for them in order to make them clean.

²² After that, the Levites came and did their work at the tent of meeting in the presence of Aaron and his sons. They did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²³ The LORD said to Moses,

²⁴ "These are the instructions for the Levites: Men 25 years old or older are eligible to serve at the tent of meeting.

²⁵ But when they're 50 years old, they must retire from active service and not work anymore.

²⁶ They may assist the other Levites in their duties at the tent of meeting, but they may not do any regular work. This is how you will handle the Levites' duties."

9 ¹ In the first month of the second year after the Israelites left Egypt, the LORD spoke to Moses in the Desert of Sinai. He said,

² "The Israelites must celebrate the Passover at the same time every year.

³ You must celebrate it on the fourteenth day of this month at dusk. Follow all the rules and regulations for the celebration of the Passover."

⁴ So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover,

⁵ and they celebrated it on the fourteenth day of the first month at dusk while they were in the Desert of Sinai.

The Israelites did everything as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁶ But there were some men who had become unclean from touching a dead body, and they couldn't celebrate the Passover that day. They came to Moses and Aaron

⁷ and said, "We are unclean because we touched a dead body. Why won't you let us bring our offerings to the LORD at the same time the rest of the Israelites bring their offerings?"

⁸ Moses answered them, "Wait here until I find out what the LORD commands you to do."

⁹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites:

¹⁰ Suppose you or any of your descendants is unclean from touching a dead body or is away on a long trip. You may still celebrate the Passover.

¹¹ You will celebrate it on the fourteenth day of the second month at dusk. You must eat the Passover animal along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

¹² You must never leave any of the meat until morning or break any of the animal's bones. You must follow all the rules for the Passover when you celebrate it.

¹³ But if you are clean and not on a trip and yet don't bother to celebrate the Passover, you must be excluded from the people. You didn't bring your offering to the LORD at the right time. You must suffer the consequences for your sin.

¹⁴ "Foreigners living with you may want to celebrate the LORD'S Passover. They must follow these same rules and regulations. The same rules will apply to foreigners and native-born Israelites."

¹⁵ On the day the tent of the words of God's promise was set up, the column

of smoke covered it. From evening until morning, the smoke over the tent glowed like fire.

¹⁶ The smoke always glowed this way. At night the smoke covering the tent glowed like fire.

¹⁷ Whenever the smoke moved from the tent, the Israelites would break camp, and wherever it stopped, the Israelites would set up camp.

¹⁸ At the LORD'S command the Israelites would break camp, and at his command they would set up camp. As long as the column of smoke stayed over the tent, they would stay in the same place.

¹⁹ When the smoke stayed over the tent for a long time, the Israelites obeyed the LORD'S command and wouldn't break camp.

²⁰ The same thing happened when the smoke stayed only a few days over the tent: At the LORD'S command they

would set up camp, and at his command they would break camp.

²¹ Sometimes the column of smoke stayed only from evening until morning. When the smoke moved in the morning, they broke camp. Day or night, when the smoke moved, they broke camp.

²² Whether it was two days, a month, or a year, as long as the column of smoke stayed over the tent, the Israelites would stay in the same place and not break camp. But when the smoke moved, they would break camp.

²³ At the LORD'S command they set up camp, and at his command they broke camp. They obeyed the command that the LORD had given through Moses.

10 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Make two trumpets out of hammered silver. Use them to call the community together and as a signal to break camp.

³ When you blow both trumpets, the whole community will meet with you at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁴ If only one trumpet blows, the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, will meet with you.

⁵ When they hear the trumpet fanfare, the tribes that are camped on the east side will break camp first.

⁶ When the trumpets sound a second fanfare, the tribes that are camped on the south will break camp. The fanfare is the signal to break camp.

⁷ But when you gather the assembly, the trumpets will blow without sounding a fanfare.

⁸ The sons of Aaron, the priests, will blow the trumpets. This will be a permanent law for you and your descendants.

⁹ "When you go to war in your own country against an enemy who is

oppressing you, the trumpets will sound a fanfare. Then the LORD your God will remember you and rescue you from your enemies.

¹⁰ Also, on your festival days and on the first day of the month, blow the trumpets when you sacrifice your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. The trumpets will be a reminder for you in God's presence. I am the LORD your God."

¹¹ On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the column of smoke left the tent of the words of God's promise.

¹² So the Israelites moved from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the column of smoke stopped in the Desert of Paran.

¹³ This was the first time they moved, following the command that the LORD had given through Moses.

¹⁴ With their flag in front, the armies led by Judah's descendants broke camp first. Nahshon, son of Amminadab, was in command.

¹⁵ Nethanel, son of Zuar, commanded the army of Issachar.

¹⁶ Eliab, son of Helon, commanded the army of Zebulun.

¹⁷ Then the tent of meeting was taken down, and the Gershonites and Merarites, who carried it, broke camp.

¹⁸ With their flag in front, the armies led by Reuben's descendants broke camp next. Elizur, son of Shedeur, was in command.

¹⁹ Shelumiel, son of Zurishaddai, commanded the army of Simeon.

²⁰ Eliasaph, son of Deuel, commanded the army of Gad.

²¹ Then the Kohathites, who carried the holy things, broke camp. By the time

they arrived, the tent of meeting would already be set up.

²² With their flag in front, the armies led by Ephraim's descendants broke camp next. Elisha, son of Ammihud, was in command.

²³ Gamaliel, son of Pedahzur, commanded the army of Manasseh.

²⁴ Abidan, son of Gideoni, commanded the army of Benjamin.

²⁵ As a rear guard for the whole camp, the armies led by Dan's descendants broke camp last with their flag in front. Ahiezer, son of Ammishaddai, was in command.

²⁶ Pagiél, son of Ochrán, commanded the army of Asher.

²⁷ Ahira, son of Enan, commanded the army of Naphtali.

²⁸ This was the order in which the Israelite armies broke camp when they went from place to place.

²⁹ Moses said to his brother-in-law Hobab, son of Reuel the Midianite, "We are going to the place the LORD promised to give us. Come with us. We will be good to you, because the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

³⁰ Hobab answered, "No, I won't go. I want to go back to my own country where my relatives are."

³¹ But Moses said, "Please don't leave us. You know where we can set up camp in the desert, and you could be our guide."

³² If you come with us, we will share with you all the good things the LORD gives us."

³³ So they left the mountain of the LORD and traveled for three days. The ark of the LORD'S promise went ahead of them a distance of three days' journey to find them a place to rest.

³⁴ The LORD'S column of smoke was over them by day when they moved the camp.

³⁵ Whenever the ark started to move, Moses would say, "Arise, O LORD! Scatter your enemies! Make those who hate you run away from you!"

³⁶ And whenever it stopped, he would say, "Return, O LORD, to the countless thousands of Israel!"

11 ¹ The people began complaining out loud to the LORD about their troubles. When the LORD heard them, he became angry, and fire from the LORD began to burn among them. It destroyed some people on the outskirts of the camp.

² The people cried out to Moses, Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down.

³ That place was called Taberah [Fire] because fire from the LORD burned among them there.

⁴ Some foreigners among the Israelites had a strong craving for other kinds of food. Even the Israelites started crying again and said, "If only we had meat to eat!

⁵ Remember all the free fish we ate in Egypt and the cucumbers, watermelons, leeks, onions, and garlic we had?

⁶ But now we've lost our appetite! Everywhere we look there's nothing but manna!"

⁷ (Manna was small like coriander seeds and looked like resin.

⁸ The people would go around and gather it, then grind it in a handmill or crush it in a mortar. They would cook it in a pot or make round loaves of bread out of it. It tasted like rich pastry made with olive oil.

⁹ When dew fell on the camp at night, manna fell with it.)

¹⁰ Moses heard people from every family crying at the entrance to their tents. The LORD became very angry, and Moses didn't like it either.

¹¹ So he asked, "LORD, why have you brought me this trouble? How have I displeased you that you put the burden of all these people on me?"

¹² Am I their mother? Did I give birth to them? Are you really asking me to carry them in my arms—as a nurse carries a baby—all the way to the land you promised their ancestors with an oath?

¹³ Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep crying for me to give them meat to eat.

¹⁴ I can't take care of all these people by myself. This is too much work for me!

¹⁵ If this is how you're going to treat me, why don't you just kill me? I can't face this trouble anymore."

¹⁶ The LORD answered Moses, "Bring me 70 Israelite men who you know are leaders and officers of the people. Take them to the tent of meeting, and have them stand with you.

¹⁷ I'll come down and speak with you there. I'll take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will help you take care of the people. You won't have to take care of the people alone.

¹⁸ Tell the people to get ready for tomorrow. They must be set apart as holy. Then they will eat meat. I, the LORD, heard them crying and saying, 'If only we had meat to eat! We were better off in Egypt!' So I will give them meat.

¹⁹ They won't eat it just for one or two days, or five, or ten, or twenty days,

²⁰ but for a whole month, until it comes out of their ears and they're sick of it. This is because they rejected the LORD who is here among them and cried in front of him, asking, 'Why did we ever leave Egypt?'"

²¹ But Moses said, "Here I am with 600,000 foot soldiers around me. Yet, you say, 'I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!'"

²² Would they have enough if all the flocks and herds were butchered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?"

²³ The LORD asked Moses, "Is there a limit to the LORD'S power? Now you will see whether or not my words come true."

²⁴ Moses went out and told the people what the LORD said. He gathered 70 of the leaders of the people and had them stand around the tent.

²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the column of smoke and spoke with him. He took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the 70 leaders. When the Spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied, but they never prophesied again.

²⁶ Two men, named Eldad and Medad, had stayed in the camp. They were on the list with the other leaders but hadn't gone with them to the tent. The Spirit came to rest on them, too, and they prophesied in the camp.

²⁷ Then a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

²⁸ So Joshua, son of Nun, who had been Moses' assistant ever since he was a young man, spoke up and said, "Stop them, sir!"

²⁹ But Moses asked him, "Do you think you need to stand up for me? I wish all

the LORD'S people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them."

³⁰ Then Moses and the leaders went back to the camp.

³¹ The LORD sent a wind from the sea that brought quails and dropped them all around the camp. There were quails on the ground about three feet deep as far as you could walk in a day in any direction.

³² All that day and night and all the next day the people went out and gathered the quails. No one gathered less than 60 bushels. Then they spread the quails out all around the camp.

³³ While the meat was still in their mouths—before they had even had a chance to chew it—the LORD became angry with the people and struck them with a severe plague.

³⁴ That place was called Kibroth Hattaavah [Graves of Those Who Craved Meat] because there they buried the people who had a strong craving for meat.

³⁵ From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and they stayed there.

12 ¹ Miriam and Aaron began to criticize Moses because he was married to a woman from Sudan.

² They asked, "Did the LORD speak only through Moses? Didn't he also speak through us?" The LORD heard their complaint.

³ (Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on earth.)

⁴ Suddenly, the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "All three of you come to the tent of meeting." So all three of them came.

⁵ Then the LORD came down in the column of smoke and stood at the entrance to the tent. He called to Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward.

⁶ He said, "Listen to my words: When there are prophets of the LORD among you, I make myself known to them in visions or speak to them in dreams.

⁷ But this is not the way I treat my servant Moses. He is the most faithful person in my household.

⁸ I speak with him face to face, plainly and not in riddles. He even sees the form of the LORD. Why weren't you afraid to criticize my servant Moses?"

⁹ The LORD was angry with them, so he left.

¹⁰ When the smoke left the tent, Miriam was covered with an infectious skin disease. She was as white as snow.

Aaron turned to her and saw she was covered with the disease.

¹¹ So he said to Moses, "Please, sir, don't punish us for this foolish sin we committed.

¹² Don't let her be like a stillborn baby that's not completely developed."

¹³ So Moses cried to the LORD, "Please, God, heal her!"

¹⁴ The LORD replied to Moses, "If her own father had spit in her face, wouldn't she be excluded from the community for seven days? She must be put in isolation outside the camp for seven days. Then she can be brought back."

¹⁵ So Miriam was put in isolation outside the camp for seven days. The people didn't break camp until she was brought back.

¹⁶ After that, the people moved from Hazeroth and set up camp in the Desert of Paran.

13 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Send men to explore Canaan,
which I'm giving to the Israelites. Send
one leader from each of their ancestors'
tribes."

³ So at the LORD'S command, Moses
sent these men from the Desert of
Paran. All of them were leaders of the
Israelites.

⁴ These are their names: Shammua, son
of Zaccur, from the tribe of Reuben;

⁵ Shaphat, son of Hori, from the tribe of
Simeon;

⁶ Caleb, son of Jephunneh, from the
tribe of Judah;

⁷ Igal, son of Joseph, from the tribe of
Issachar;

⁸ Hoshea, son of Nun, from the tribe of
Ephraim;

⁹ Palti, son of Raphu, from the tribe of
Benjamin;

¹⁰ Gaddiel, son of Sodi, from the tribe of Zebulun;

¹¹ Gaddi, son of Susi, from the tribe of Joseph (that is, the tribe of Manasseh);

¹² Ammiel, son of Gemalli, from the tribe of Dan;

¹³ Sethur, son of Michael, from the tribe of Asher;

¹⁴ Nahbi, son of Vophsi, from the tribe of Naphtali;

¹⁵ Geuel, son of Machi, from the tribe of Gad.

¹⁶ These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. But Moses gave Hoshea, son of Nun, the name Joshua.

¹⁷ When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he told them, "Go through the Negev and then into the mountain region.

¹⁸ See what the land is like and whether the people living there are strong or weak, few or many.

¹⁹ Is the land they live in good or bad? Do their cities have walls around them or not?

²⁰ Is the soil rich or poor? Does the land have trees or not? Do your best to bring back some fruit from the land." (It was the season when grapes were beginning to ripen.)

²¹ So the men explored the land from the Desert of Zin to the border of Hamath.

²² They went through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi lived. They are descendants of Anak. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

²³ When they came to the Eshcol Valley, they cut off a branch with only one bunch of grapes on it. They carried it on

a pole between two of them. They also brought some pomegranates and figs.

²⁴ So they called that valley Eshcol [Bunch of Grapes] because of the bunch of grapes the Israelites cut off there.

²⁵ Forty days later, they came back from exploring the land.

²⁶ They came back to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. They gave their report and showed them the fruit from the land.

²⁷ This is what they reported to Moses: "We went to the land where you sent us. It really is a land flowing with milk and honey. Here's some of its fruit.

²⁸ But the people who live there are strong, and the cities have walls and are very large. We even saw the descendants of Anak there.

²⁹ The Amalekites live in the Negev. The Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites

live in the mountain region. And the Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and all along the Jordan River."

³⁰ Caleb told the people to be quiet and listen to Moses. Caleb said, "Let's go now and take possession of the land. We should be more than able to conquer it."

³¹ But the men who had gone with him said, "We can't attack those people! They're too strong for us!"

³² So they began to spread lies among the Israelites about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored is one that devours those who live there. All the people we saw there are very tall.

³³ We saw Nephilim there. (The descendants of Anak are Nephilim.) We felt as small as grasshoppers, and that's how we must have looked to them."

14 ¹ Then all the people in the Israelite community raised their voices and cried out loud all that night.

² They complained to Moses and Aaron, "If only we had died in Egypt or this desert!

³ Why is the LORD bringing us to this land—just to have us die in battle? Our wives and children will be taken as prisoners of war! Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

⁴ They said to each other, "Let's choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

⁵ Immediately, Moses and Aaron bowed with their faces touching the ground in front of the whole community of Israel assembled there.

⁶ At the same time, two of those who had explored the land, Joshua (son of Nun) and Caleb (son of Jephunneh), tore their clothes in despair.

⁷ They said to the whole community of Israel, "The land we explored is very good.

⁸ If the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us. This is a land flowing with milk and honey!

⁹ Don't rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. We will devour them like bread. They have no protection, and the LORD is with us. So don't be afraid of them."

¹⁰ But when the whole community of Israel talked about stoning Moses and Aaron to death, they all saw the glory of the LORD shining at the tent of meeting.

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to trust me in spite of all the miraculous signs I have done among them?"

¹² I'll strike them with a plague, I'll destroy them, and I'll make you into a nation larger and stronger than they are."

¹³ But Moses said to the LORD, "What if the Egyptians hear about it? (You used your power to take these people away from them.)

¹⁴ What if the Egyptians tell the people who live in this land? LORD, they have already heard that you are with these people, that they have seen you with their own eyes, that your column of smoke stays over them, and that you go ahead of them in a column of smoke by day and in a column of fire by night.

¹⁵ But if you kill all these people at the same time, then the nations who have heard these reports about you will say,

¹⁶ 'The LORD wasn't able to bring these people into the land he promised them, so he slaughtered them in the desert.'

¹⁷ "Lord, let your power be as great as when you said,

¹⁸ 'The LORD...patient, forever loving...He forgives wrongdoing and disobedience...He never lets the guilty go unpunished, punishing children...for their parents' sins to the third and fourth generation...'

¹⁹ By your great love, please forgive these people's sins, as you have been forgiving them from the time they left Egypt until now."

²⁰ The LORD said, "I forgive them, as you have asked.

²¹ But as I live and as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, I solemnly swear that

²² none of the people who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I did in Egypt and in the desert will see the land which I promised their ancestors. They have

tested me now ten times and refused to obey me.

²³ None of those who treat me with contempt will see it!

²⁴ But because my servant Caleb has a different attitude and has wholeheartedly followed me, I'll bring him to the land he already explored. His descendants will possess it.

²⁵ (The Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the valleys.) Tomorrow you must turn around, go back into the desert, and follow the road that goes to the Red Sea."

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²⁷ "How long must I put up with this wicked community that keeps complaining about me? I've heard the complaints the Israelites are making about me.

²⁸ So tell them, 'As I live, declares the LORD, I solemnly swear I will do everything to you that you said I would do.

²⁹ Your bodies will drop dead in this desert. All of you who are at least 20 years old, who were registered and listed, and who complained about me will die.

³⁰ I raised my hand and swore an oath to give you this land to live in. But none of you will enter it except Caleb (son of Jephunneh) and Joshua (son of Nun).

³¹ You said your children would be taken as prisoners of war. Instead, I will bring them into the land you rejected, and they will enjoy it.

³² However, your bodies will drop dead in this desert.

³³ Your children will be shepherds in the desert for 40 years. They will suffer for

your unfaithfulness until the last of your bodies lies dead in the desert.

³⁴ For 40 days you explored the land. So for 40 years—one year for each day—you will suffer for your sins and know what it means for me to be against you.'

³⁵ I, the LORD, have spoken. I swear I will do these things to all the people in this whole wicked community who have joined forces against me. They will meet their end in this desert. Here they will die!"

³⁶ So the men Moses sent to explore the land died in front of the LORD from a plague.

³⁷ They died because they had returned and made the whole community complain about Moses by spreading lies about the land.

³⁸ Of all the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua (son of Nun) and Caleb (son of Jephunneh) survived.

³⁹ When Moses told these things to all the Israelites, the people mourned bitterly, as if someone had died.

⁴⁰ Early the next morning they headed into the mountain region. They said, "We have sinned. Now we'll go to the place the LORD promised."

⁴¹ But Moses asked, "Why are you disobeying the LORD'S command? Your plan won't work!

⁴² Don't go! You will be defeated by your enemies because the LORD is not with you.

⁴³ The Amalekites and Canaanites are there, and you will die in battle. Now that you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

⁴⁴ But they headed into the mountain region anyway, even though the ark of

the LORD'S promise and Moses stayed in the camp.

⁴⁵ The Amalekites and Canaanites who lived there came down from those mountains, attacked the Israelites, and defeated them at Hormah.

15 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: Once you're settled in the land I'm giving you,

³ you may bring offerings by fire to the LORD. They may be burnt offerings or any other kind of sacrifice. They may be offered to fulfill a vow, as a freewill offering, or as one of your festival offerings. They may be cattle, sheep, or goats—offerings that are a soothing aroma to the LORD.

⁴ Whoever brings the offering must also give the LORD a grain offering of eight cups of flour mixed with one quart of olive oil.

⁵ With each sheep or goat for the burnt offering or any other sacrifice, also give an offering of one quart of wine.

⁶ "With a ram, give a grain offering of 16 cups of flour mixed with $1\frac{1}{4}$ quarts of oil

⁷ and an offering of $1\frac{1}{4}$ quarts of wine. Offer them as a soothing aroma to the LORD.

⁸ "Suppose you sacrifice a young bull as a burnt offering to the LORD or make any other kind of sacrifice—to keep a vow or as a fellowship offering.

⁹ Offer with the young bull a grain offering of 24 cups of flour mixed with two quarts of olive oil.

¹⁰ Also give an offering of two quarts of wine. It is an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

¹¹ Do this for each bull, each ram, and each sheep or goat.

¹² Do it for each animal, however many you sacrifice.

¹³ All native-born Israelites must do it this way when they bring an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁴ "Suppose foreigners are visiting you or living among you in future generations. If they bring an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD, they must do as you do.

¹⁵ There is one law for the whole assembly: for you and foreigners who are living with you. It is a permanent law for future generations. As far as the LORD is concerned, you and foreigners are the same.

¹⁶ The instructions and rules are the same for you as well as foreigners who are living with you."

¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁸ "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you enter the land where I'm taking you

¹⁹ and eat any of the food from the land, give some of it as a contribution to the LORD.

²⁰ Shape one part of your dough into a ring the same way you do with the contribution you make from the threshing floor.

²¹ For generations to come, you must give one part of your dough as a contribution to the LORD.

²² "Suppose you unintentionally do something wrong by not obeying all these commands the LORD gave Moses.

²³ (Everything the LORD commanded you through Moses holds as true for generations to come as it did the day the LORD gave the commands.)

²⁴ If it was unintentional and no one else knows about it, the whole

community must sacrifice a young bull as a burnt offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD, along with the proper grain and wine offerings, and a male goat as an offering for sin.

²⁵ The priest will make peace with the LORD for the whole community of Israel. Then they will be forgiven because the wrongdoing was unintentional and they brought these two offerings to the LORD for their sin: an offering by fire and an offering for sin.

²⁶ So the whole community of Israel will be forgiven, including foreigners who are living among them, since all the people were involved in the unintentional wrongdoing.

²⁷ "If one person unintentionally does something wrong, a one-year-old female goat must be sacrificed as an offering for sin.

²⁸ The priest will offer the sacrifice to make peace with the LORD for that person, and that person will be forgiven.

²⁹ You must give the same instructions to everyone who does something wrong unintentionally, whether they are native-born Israelites or not.

³⁰ "But any native-born Israelite or foreigner who deliberately does something wrong insults the LORD and must be excluded from the people.

³¹ That person has despised the word of the LORD and broken the LORD'S command. He must be excluded completely. He remains guilty."

³² While the Israelites were in the desert, they found a man gathering wood on the day of worship.

³³ Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole community.

³⁴ They kept him in custody until they decided what to do with him.

³⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, "This man must be put to death. The whole community must take him outside the camp and stone him."

³⁶ So the whole community took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁷ The LORD said to Moses,

³⁸ "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: For generations to come they must wear tassels on the corners of their clothes with violet threads in each tassel.

³⁹ Whenever you look at the threads in the tassel, you will remember all the LORD'S commands and obey them. Then you won't do whatever you want and go after whatever you see, as if you were chasing after prostitutes.

⁴⁰ You will remember to obey all my commands, and you will be holy to your God.

⁴¹ I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God."

16 ¹ Korah (son of Izhar), Dathan and Abiram (sons of Eliab), and On (son of Peleth) dared to challenge Moses. (Korah was a descendant of Kohath and Levi. Dathan, Abiram, and On were descendants of Reuben.)

² These four men were joined by 250 Israelite men, well-known leaders of the community, chosen by the assembly.

³ They came together to confront Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You've gone far enough! Everyone in the whole community is holy, and the LORD is among them. Why do you set yourselves above the LORD'S assembly?"

⁴ As soon as Moses heard this, he bowed with his face touching the ground.

⁵ Then he said to Korah and all his followers, "In the morning the LORD will show who belongs to him, who is holy, and who it is that he will allow to come near him. Only the person the LORD chooses will be allowed to come near him.

⁶ Korah, you and all your followers must do this tomorrow: Take incense burners,
⁷ and put burning coals and incense in them in the LORD'S presence. Then the LORD will choose the man who is holy. You've gone far enough!"

⁸ Moses also said to Korah, "Listen, you Levites!

⁹ Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the community of Israel? The LORD has brought you near himself to do the

work for his tent and stand in front of the community to serve them.

¹⁰ He has brought you and all the other Levites near himself, but now you demand to be priests.

¹¹ So you and all your followers have joined forces against the LORD! Who is Aaron that you should complain about him?"

¹² Then Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab. But they said, "We won't come!

¹³ Isn't it enough that you brought us out of a land flowing with milk and honey only to kill us in the desert? Do you also have to order us around?

¹⁴ Certainly you haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey or given us any fields and vineyards to own. Do you think you can still pull the wool over our eyes? We won't come."

¹⁵ Moses became angry and said to the LORD, "Don't accept their offering. I haven't taken anything from them, not even a donkey. And I haven't mistreated any of them."

¹⁶ Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow you and all your followers must come into the LORD'S presence. Aaron will also be there with you.

¹⁷ Each man will take his incense burner and put incense in it. They will offer all 250 incense burners to the LORD. Then you and Aaron offer your incense burners."

¹⁸ So each man took his incense burner, put burning coals and incense in it, and stood with Moses and Aaron at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

¹⁹ When Korah had gathered all his followers—those who opposed Moses and Aaron—at the entrance to the

tent of meeting, the glory of the LORD appeared to the whole group.

²⁰ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²¹ "Move away from these men, and I'll destroy them in an instant."

²² Immediately, they bowed with their faces touching the ground and said, "O God, you are the God who gives the breath of life to everyone! If one man sins, will you be angry with the whole community?"

²³ Then the LORD said to Moses,

²⁴ "Tell the community: Move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

²⁵ Moses got up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the leaders of Israel followed him.

²⁶ He said to the community, "Move away from the tents of these wicked men. Don't touch anything that belongs

to them, or you'll be swept away because of all their sins."

²⁷ So they moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing at the entrances to their tents with their wives and children.

²⁸ Moses said, "This is how you will know that the LORD sent me to do all these things and that it wasn't my idea:

²⁹ If these men die like all other people—if they die a natural death—then the LORD hasn't sent me.

³⁰ But if the LORD does something totally new—if the ground opens up, swallows them and everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive to their graves—then you'll know that these men have treated the LORD with contempt."

³¹ As soon as he had finished saying all this, the ground under them split,

³² and the earth opened up to swallow them, their families, the followers of Korah, and all their property.

³³ They went down alive to their graves with everything that belonged to them. The ground covered them, and so they disappeared from the assembly.

³⁴ All the Israelites around them ran away when they heard their screams. They thought the ground would swallow them, too.

³⁵ Fire came from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering incense.

³⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses,

³⁷ "Tell Eleazar, son of the priest Aaron, to take the incense burners out of the fire and scatter the coals and incense somewhere else, because the incense burners have become holy.

³⁸ The incense burners of these men who sinned and lost their lives are holy,

because they were offered to the LORD. Hammer them into thin metal sheets to cover the altar. This will be a sign to the Israelites."

³⁹ So the priest Eleazar took the bronze incense burners which had been brought by those who had been burned to death. The incense burners were then hammered into thin metal sheets to cover the altar,

⁴⁰ following the command that the LORD had given through Moses. The bronze-covered altar will remind Israel that no one but a descendant of Aaron can come near to burn incense to the LORD. Everyone else will die like Korah and his followers.

⁴¹ The next day the whole community of Israel complained to Moses and Aaron. They said, "You have killed the LORD'S people."

⁴² The community came together to confront Moses and Aaron. When they turned toward the tent of meeting, they saw the smoke covering it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

⁴³ Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the tent of meeting.

⁴⁴ The LORD said to Moses,

⁴⁵ "Get away from these people, and let me destroy them in an instant!"
Immediately, they bowed with their faces touching the ground.

⁴⁶ Moses said to Aaron, "Take your incense burner, put burning coals from the altar and incense in it, and go quickly into the community to make peace with the LORD for the people. The LORD is showing his anger; a plague has started."

⁴⁷ Aaron took his incense burner, as Moses told him, and ran into the middle of the assembly, because the plague had already begun among the people. He put

incense on the incense burner to make peace with the LORD for the people.

⁴⁸ He stood between those who had died and those who were still alive, and the plague stopped.

⁴⁹ Still, 14,700 died from the plague in addition to those who had died because of Korah.

⁵⁰ By the time Aaron came back to Moses at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the plague had stopped.

17 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Speak to the Israelites, and get 12 staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their tribes. Write each man's name on his staff.

³ Write Aaron's name on the staff for Levi because there must be one staff for the head of each tribe.

⁴ Put them in the tent of meeting where I meet with you, in front of the words of my promise.

⁵ The staff from the man I choose will begin to grow. In this way I will silence the frequent complaints the Israelites make against you and Aaron."

⁶ So Moses spoke to the Israelites. Their leaders gave him 12 staffs, one from the leader of each of their tribes. Aaron's staff was among them.

⁷ Moses put the staffs in the LORD'S presence in the tent of the words of God's promise.

⁸ The next day Moses went into the tent. He found that Aaron's staff for the tribe of Levi had not only begun to grow, but it had also blossomed and produced ripe almonds.

⁹ Moses brought out the staffs from the LORD'S presence and showed them to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his staff.

¹⁰ The LORD said to Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back in front of the words of my

promise, and keep it there as a sign to warn any other rebels. Then you will stop their complaints about me, and they won't die."

¹¹ Moses did exactly what the LORD commanded him to do.

¹² The Israelites said to Moses, "Now we're going to die! We're lost! We're all lost!"

¹³ Anyone who comes near the LORD'S tent will die! Are we all going to die?"

18 ¹ The LORD said to Aaron, "You, your sons, and your family will be responsible for any sins against the holy place. You and your sons will also be responsible for any sins you commit when you work as priests.

² Bring the other Levites from your ancestor's tribe to join you and help you and your sons serve in front of the tent of the words of my promise.

³ They will work for you, doing whatever work is necessary for the whole tent. But they must not come near the altar or the furnishings in the holy place, or they will die, and you will die, too.

⁴ They will join you and do whatever work is necessary for the tent of meeting, including all the maintenance work for the tent. But no one else may come near you.

⁵ "You must be in charge of the work done at the holy place and at the altar. Then I won't show my anger against the Israelites again.

⁶ I have chosen the other Levites from among the Israelites to help you. They are a gift given to the LORD to do whatever work is necessary at the tent of meeting.

⁷ Only you and your sons may do the work of priests—everything done at the altar and under the canopy. This is my

gift to you: You may serve me as priests. Anyone else who comes near the holy place to do this work must die."

⁸ The LORD said to Aaron, "I am putting you in charge of all the contributions given to me. I am giving you and your descendants all the holy gifts from the Israelites as your share. These contributions will always be yours.

⁹ That part of the most holy offerings which is not burned belongs to you. It may come from a grain offering, an offering for sin, or a guilt offering. Whatever is brought to me as a most holy offering will belong to you and your sons.

¹⁰ Eat it in a most holy place. Any male may eat it. You must consider it holy.

¹¹ "The contributions that come as gifts taken from the offerings presented by the Israelites are also yours. I am giving these to you, your sons, and your

daughters. They will always be yours. Anyone in your household who is clean may eat them.

¹² "I am also giving you the first of the produce they give the LORD: the best of all the olive oil and the best of the new wine and fresh grain.

¹³ The first of all produce harvested in their land that they bring to the LORD is yours. Anyone in your household who is clean may eat it.

¹⁴ "Anything in Israel that is claimed by the LORD is yours.

¹⁵ Every firstborn male, human or animal, that is brought to the LORD is yours. But you must buy back every firstborn son and the firstborn male of any unclean animal.

¹⁶ When they are one month old, you must buy them back at the fixed price of two ounces of silver using the standard weight of the holy place.

¹⁷ "But you must never buy back a firstborn ox, sheep, or goat. They are holy. Throw the blood from these animals against the altar, and burn the fat as an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁸ But the meat is yours, like the breast and the right thigh that are presented.

¹⁹ I am giving you, your sons, and your daughters all the holy contributions the Israelites bring to the LORD. These contributions will always be yours. It is an everlasting promise of salt in the LORD'S presence for you and your descendants."

²⁰ The LORD said to Aaron, "You will have no land or property of your own as the other Israelites will have. I am your possession and your property among the Israelites.

²¹ "I am giving the Levites one-tenth of every Israelite's income. This is in

return for the work they do at the tent of meeting.

²² The other Israelites must never again come near the tent of meeting. Otherwise, they'll suffer the consequences of their sin and die.

²³ Only the Levites will do the work at the tent of meeting. They will be responsible for their own sins. This is a permanent law for future generations. They will own no property as the other Israelites will.

²⁴ Instead, I will give the Levites what the Israelites contribute to the LORD— one—tenth of the Israelites' income. This is why I said about them, 'They will own no property as the other Israelites do.'

²⁵ The LORD said to Moses,

²⁶ "Speak to the Levites and say to them: You will take one—tenth of the Israelites' income which I'm giving you as your property. When you do, you must

contribute one-tenth of that income as your contribution to the LORD.

²⁷ Your contribution will be considered to be grain from the threshing floor or juice from the winepress.

²⁸ So you, too, will contribute one-tenth of your income to the LORD out of all that you receive from the Israelites' income. You will give the LORD'S contribution to the priest Aaron.

²⁹ Out of all the gifts you receive, you must contribute the best and holiest parts to the LORD.

³⁰ "Also tell them: When you contribute the best part, your contribution will be considered to be produce from the threshing floor or winepress.

³¹ So you and your households may eat it anywhere, because it's the wages you receive for your work at the tent of meeting.

³² When you contribute the best part, you won't suffer the consequences of any sin. You won't be dishonoring the holy offerings given by the Israelites, and you won't die."

19 ¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

² "This is what the LORD'S teachings have commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red cow that is perfect, with no defects. Also, it must never have worn a yoke.

³ Give it to the priest Eleazar. It must be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence.

⁴ The priest Eleazar will take some of the blood with his finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the front of the tent of meeting.

⁵ Then the entire cow (the skin, meat, blood, and excrement) will be burned while he watches.

⁶ The priest will take some cedar wood, a hyssop sprig, and some red yarn and throw them onto the burning cow.

⁷ The priest must then wash his clothes and his body. After that, he may go into the camp. But he will be unclean until evening.

⁸ The person who burned the calf must also wash his clothes and his body. He, too, will be unclean until evening.

⁹ "A man who is clean will collect the ashes from the cow and put them in a clean place outside the camp. They will be kept by the community of Israel and used in the water that takes away uncleanness. The cow is an offering for sin.

¹⁰ The person who collected the ashes from the cow must also wash his clothes. He will be unclean until evening. This will be a permanent law for the Israelites and for the foreigners who live with them.

¹¹ "Whoever touches the dead body of any human being will be unclean for seven days.

¹² The unclean person must use this water on the third day and the seventh day to take away his sin. Then he will be clean. But if he doesn't use this water on the third day and the seventh day, he will not be clean.

¹³ Whoever touches the dead body of a human being and doesn't use this water to take away his sin makes the LORD'S tent unclean. That person must be excluded from Israel, because the water that takes away uncleanness wasn't sprinkled on him. He is unclean; his uncleanness stays with him.

¹⁴ "These are your instructions for when a person dies in a tent: Everyone who goes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent will be unclean for seven days.

¹⁵ Every container without a lid fastened on it is unclean.

¹⁶ "Whoever is outdoors and touches someone who was killed or has died naturally or anyone who touches a human bone or a grave will be unclean for seven days.

¹⁷ "This is what you must do for people who become unclean from touching a dead body. Put some of the ashes from the red cow that was burned as an offering for sin into a container. Then pour fresh water on them.

¹⁸ A person who is clean will take a sprig of hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle the tent, all the furnishings, and all the people who were in the tent with the dead body. He must also sprinkle any person who has touched a human bone or a grave and any person who has touched someone who has been killed or who has died naturally.

¹⁹ A person who is clean will sprinkle these types of unclean people on the third day and the seventh day. On the seventh day the clean person will finish taking away their sins. Then they must wash their clothes and bodies, and in the evening they will be clean.

²⁰ But if the person who becomes unclean doesn't have his sin taken away, that person must be excluded from the assembly. He has made the holy place of the LORD unclean. The water to take away uncleanness wasn't sprinkled on him. He is unclean.

²¹ This will be a permanent law for them. "Whoever sprinkles the water to take away uncleanness must wash his clothes. And whoever touches this water will be unclean until evening.

²² Anything that an unclean person touches becomes unclean, and the

person who touches it will be unclean until evening."

20¹ In the first month the whole community of Israel came into the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died and was buried there.

² Since the community was without water, they came together to confront Moses and Aaron.

³ The people complained to Moses and said, "If only we had died when the other Israelites died in the LORD'S presence!

⁴ Did you bring the LORD'S assembly into this desert just to have us and our animals die here?

⁵ Why did you make us leave Egypt and bring us into this terrible place? This is no place to plant crops. Even figs, grapes, and pomegranates won't grow here. And there's no water to drink!"

⁶ Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting. Immediately, they bowed with their faces touching the ground, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

⁷ The LORD said to Moses,

⁸ "Take your staff, then you and your brother Aaron gather the community. Right before their eyes, tell the rock to give up its water. In this way you will give the community water from the rock for them and their animals to drink."

⁹ Moses took his staff out of the tent in the LORD'S presence as he had been commanded.

¹⁰ Then Moses and Aaron assembled the community in front of the rock and said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring water out of this rock for you?"

¹¹ Moses raised his hand and hit the rock twice with the staff. Water came

pouring out, and all the people and their animals drank.

¹² But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "You didn't trust me! You didn't show the Israelites how holy I am! So you will not bring this congregation into the land I'm giving them."

¹³ This was the oasis of Meribah [Complaining], where the Israelites complained about the LORD and where he showed them he was holy.

¹⁴ Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. He said, "This is what your brother Israel says: You know all the hardships we've had.

¹⁵ Our ancestors went to Egypt, and we lived there for many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our ancestors.

¹⁶ When we cried out to the LORD, he heard us, sent a messenger, and brought us out of Egypt. "Now we're

here in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory.

¹⁷ Please let us go through your country. We won't go through any of your fields or vineyards, or drink any of the water from your wells. We'll stay on the king's highway and never leave it until we've passed through your territory."

¹⁸ But the Edomites answered, "You may not pass through our country. If you try, we'll come out and attack you."

¹⁹ The Israelites replied, "We'll stay on the main road, and if we or our livestock drink any of your water, we'll pay for it. We want to pass through on foot. That's all."

²⁰ But the Edomites said, "You may not pass through." Then they came out and attacked with many well-armed troops.

²¹ Since the Edomites refused to let Israel go through their territory, the

Israelites turned around and went a different way.

²² The whole community of Israel left Kadesh and came to Mount Hor.

²³ At Mount Hor, near the border of Edom, the LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²⁴ "Aaron must now join his ancestors in death, since he cannot enter the land I'm giving the Israelites. This is because you both rebelled against my command at the oasis of Meribah.

²⁵ Bring Aaron and his son Eleazar up on Mount Hor.

²⁶ Take off Aaron's priestly clothes, and put them on his son Eleazar. Then Aaron will die there and join his ancestors."

²⁷ Moses did as the LORD commanded. The whole community saw them go up on Mount Hor.

²⁸ Moses took off Aaron's priestly clothes and put them on his son Eleazar.

Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

²⁹ The whole community saw that Aaron had died, and all the Israelites mourned for Aaron 30 days.

21 ¹ When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that the Israelites were coming on the road to Atharim, he fought them and took some of them as prisoners.

² Then the Israelites made this vow to the LORD: "If you will hand these people over to us, we'll destroy their cities because you've claimed them."

³ The LORD listened to the Israelites and handed the Canaanites over to them. They destroyed the Canaanites and their cities. So they called the place Hormah [Claimed for Destruction].

⁴ Then they moved from Mount Hor, following the road that goes to the Red

Sea, in order to get around Edom. The people became impatient on the trip⁵ and criticized God and Moses. They said, "Why did you make us leave Egypt—just to let us die in the desert? There's no bread or water, and we can't stand this awful food!"

⁶ So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people. They bit the people, and many of the Israelites died.

⁷ The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we criticized the LORD and you. Pray to the LORD so that he will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸ The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake, and put it on a pole. Anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."

⁹ So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. People looked at the bronze snake after they were bitten, and they lived.

¹⁰ The Israelites moved and set up camp at Oboth.

¹¹ Next they moved from Oboth and set up camp at Iye Abarim in the desert west of Moab.

¹² From there they moved and set up camp at the Zered River.

¹³ They moved from there and set up camp on the other side of the Arnon Valley in the desert that extends into Amorite territory. (The Arnon Valley is the border between Moab and the Amorites.)

¹⁴ This is how it's described in the Book of the Wars of the LORD: "...Waheb in Suphah and the valleys,

¹⁵ Arnon and the slopes of the valleys that go down to the site of Ar and lie along the border of Moab..."

¹⁶ From there they went to Beer [Well]. This is the well where the LORD said to

Moses, "Gather the people, and I will give them water."

¹⁷ Then Israel sang this song about the well: "Make your water spring up! Sing to the well,

¹⁸ the well dug by princes, dug out by the nobles of the people with their scepters and staffs." From the desert they went to Mattanah,

¹⁹ and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

²⁰ and from Bamoth to the valley in Moab where Mount Pisgah overlooks Jeshimon.

²¹ Then Israel sent messengers to say to King Sihon of the Amorites,

²² "Let us go through your country. We won't go through any of your fields or vineyards or drink any of the water from your wells. We'll stay on the king's highway until we've passed through your territory."

²³ Sihon wouldn't let Israel pass through his territory. Sihon gathered all his troops and came out into the desert to attack Israel. When Sihon's troops came to Jahaz, they fought against Israel.

²⁴ But Israel defeated them in battle and took possession of their land from the Arnon Valley to the Jabbok River. They stopped at the border of the Ammon because it was fortified.

²⁵ Israel took all those Amorite cities, including Heshbon and all its villages, and lived in them.

²⁶ Heshbon was the city of King Sihon of the Amorites. He had fought the former king of Moab and had taken all his land up to the Arnon Valley.

²⁷ This is why the poets say: "Come to Heshbon! Rebuild it! Restore Sihon's city!"

²⁸ Fire came out of Heshbon, flames from Sihon's city. They destroyed Ar of

Moab, the rulers of Arnon's worship sites.

²⁹ How horrible it is for you, Moab! You are destroyed, you people of the god Chemosh. Chemosh let his sons become refugees and he let his daughters become prisoners of King Sihon of the Amorites.

³⁰ But we shot the Amorites full of arrows. From Heshbon to Dibon they all died. We destroyed everyone and everything between Nophah and Medeba."

³¹ So Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.

³² After Moses sent spies to Jazer, the Israelites captured its cities and villages and forced out the Amorites who were there.

³³ Then they turned and followed the road that goes to Bashan. King Og of

Bashan and all his troops came out to fight the Israelites at Edrei.

³⁴ The LORD said to Moses, "Don't be afraid of him. I'll hand him, all his troops, and his land over to you. Do to him what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon."

³⁵ The Israelites defeated him, his sons, and all his troops, leaving no survivors. And they took possession of his land.

22 ¹ Then the Israelites moved and set up camp across from Jericho, on the plains of Moab east of the Jordan River.

² Balak, son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

³ The Moabites were very afraid because there were so many Israelites. Besides, the Moabites couldn't stand these people.

⁴ So the Moabites said to the leaders of Midian, "All those people will eventually

eat up everything around us the same way an ox eats up the grass in a field." At that time Balak, son of Zippor, was king of Moab.

⁵ He sent messengers to summon Balaam, son of Beor, who was at Pethor, on the Euphrates River, in the land where his people lived. Balak's message was, "A nation has just come here from Egypt. They've spread out all over the countryside and are setting up their camp here in front of me.

⁶ Please come and curse these people for me, because they are too strong for me. Maybe then I'll be able to defeat them and force them out of the country. I know that whomever you bless is blessed and whomever you curse is cursed."

⁷ The leaders of Moab and Midian left, taking money with them to pay for

Balaam's services. They came to Balaam and told him what Balak had said.

⁸ "Spend the night here," Balaam said to them, "and I'll report to you what the LORD tells me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

⁹ God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?"

¹⁰ Balaam answered, "Balak, son of King Zippor of Moab, sent them with this message:

¹¹ 'Some people have just come from Egypt and are spreading out all over the countryside. Now come and curse them for me. Maybe I'll be able to fight them and force them out.'

¹² But God said to Balaam, "Don't go with them! Don't curse these people, because they are blessed."

¹³ When Balaam got up in the morning, he said to Balak's princes, "Go back to

your own country, because the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

¹⁴ So the Moabite princes went back to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

¹⁵ Balak sent a larger group of more highly respected princes.

¹⁶ When they came to Balaam, they said to him, "This is what Balak, son of Zippor, says: Don't let anything keep you from coming to me.

¹⁷ I will make sure you are richly rewarded, and I will do whatever you ask. Please, come and curse these people for me."

¹⁸ But Balaam answered Balak's servants, "Even if Balak gave me his palace filled with silver and gold, I couldn't disobey the command of the LORD my God no matter whether the request was important or not.

¹⁹ Now, why don't you stay here tonight, as the others did, and I'll find out what else the LORD may have to tell me."

²⁰ That night God came to Balaam and said, "If these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you."

²¹ When Balaam got up in the morning, he saddled his donkey and left with the Moabite princes.

²² God became angry that he was going. So the Messenger of the LORD stood in the road to stop him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, accompanied by his two servants.

²³ When the donkey saw the Messenger of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn, the donkey turned off the road into a field. Balaam hit the donkey to get it back on the road.

²⁴ Where the road went through the vineyards, it was narrow, with stone

walls on both sides. Now the Messenger of the LORD stood there.

²⁵ When the donkey saw the Messenger of the LORD, it moved over and pinned Balaam's foot against the wall. So Balaam hit the donkey again.

²⁶ Then the Messenger of the LORD moved ahead and stood in a narrower place where there was no room to turn to the right or the left.

²⁷ When the donkey saw the Messenger of the LORD, it lay down under Balaam. Balaam became so angry he hit the donkey with his stick.

²⁸ Then the LORD made the donkey speak, and it asked Balaam, "What have I done to make you hit me three times?"

²⁹ Balaam answered, "You've made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I'd kill you right now."

³⁰ The donkey said to Balaam, "I'm your own donkey. You've always ridden me.

Have I ever done this to you before?"

"No," he answered.

³¹ Then the LORD let Balaam see the Messenger of the LORD who was standing in the road with his sword drawn. So Balaam knelt, bowing with his face touching the ground.

³² The Messenger of the LORD asked him, "Why have you hit your donkey three times like this? I've come here to stop you because the trip you're taking is evil.

³³ The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, I would certainly have killed you by now but spared the donkey."

³⁴ Balaam said to the Messenger of the LORD, "I've sinned. I didn't know you were standing there in the road to stop me. If you still think this trip is evil, I'll go back."

³⁵ The Messenger of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but say only what I tell you." So Balaam went with Balak's princes.

³⁶ When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at Ir Moab, in the region of the Arnon Valley, right on the border of Moab.

³⁷ Balak said to Balaam, "Why didn't you come when I summoned you? You knew I'd be able to reward you."

³⁸ Balaam replied, "Well, I've come to you now. But I can't say whatever I want to. I can only say what God tells me to say."

³⁹ Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth.

⁴⁰ Balak sacrificed cattle, sheep, and goats, and sent some of the meat to Balaam and the princes who were with him.

⁴¹ The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal. From there he could see the outskirts of the Israelites' camp.

23 ¹ Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me."

² Balak did what Balaam told him, and the two of them offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

³ Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your burnt offering while I'm gone. Maybe the LORD will come and meet with me. I will tell you whatever he reveals to me." Then Balaam went off to a higher place where there were no trees.

⁴ God came to him, and Balaam said, "I have set up seven altars, and I offered a bull and a ram on each altar."

⁵ The LORD told Balaam, "Go back to Balak, and give him my message."

⁶ So he went back to Balak and found him standing beside his burnt offering with all the princes of Moab.

⁷ Then Balaam delivered this message: "Balak brought me from Aram. The king of Moab summoned me from the eastern mountains. 'Come, curse Jacob for me,' he said. 'Come, condemn Israel.'

⁸ How can I curse those whom God hasn't cursed? How can I condemn those whom the LORD hasn't condemned?

⁹ I see them from the top of rocky cliffs, I look at them from the hills. I see a nation that lives by itself, people who do not consider themselves to be like other nations.

¹⁰ The descendants of Jacob are like specks of dust. Who can count them or number even one-fourth of the people of Israel? Let me die the death of innocent people. Let my end be like theirs."

¹¹ Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you here to curse my enemies, but all you've done is bless them!"

¹² Balaam answered, "I must say what the LORD tells me to say."

¹³ Then Balak said to him, "Please come with me to another place, where you can see the Israelites. You will see only some of them, not all of them. Curse them for me from there."

¹⁴ So he took him to the Field of Zophim on top of Mount Pisgah, where he built seven altars. He offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

¹⁵ Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your burnt offering while I meet with God over there."

¹⁶ The LORD came to Balaam and told him, "Go back to Balak, and give him my message."

¹⁷ He came to Balak and found him standing beside his burnt offering with the princes of Moab. Balak asked him, "What did the LORD say?"

¹⁸ Then Balaam delivered this message: "Stand up, Balak, and listen! Hear me, son of Zippor!

¹⁹ God is not like people. He tells no lies. He is not like humans. He doesn't change his mind. When he says something, he does it. When he makes a promise, he keeps it.

²⁰ I have received a command to bless. He has blessed, and I can't change it.

²¹ He doesn't want any trouble for the descendants of Jacob. He sees no misfortune for the people of Israel. The LORD their God is with them, praised as their king.

²² The God who brought them out of Egypt has the strength of a wild bull.

²³ No spell can curse the descendants of Jacob. No magic can harm the people of Israel. Now it will be said of Jacob and Israel: 'See what God has done!'

²⁴ Here is a nation that attacks like a lioness and is as ferocious as a lion. It doesn't lie down until it eats its prey and drinks the blood of its victim."

²⁵ Balak said to Balaam, "If you won't curse them, then at least don't bless them!"

²⁶ Balaam answered, "Didn't I tell you that I must do whatever the LORD says?"

²⁷ Balak said to Balaam, "Come, let me take you to another place. Maybe God wants you to curse them for me from there."

²⁸ So Balak took Balaam to the top of Mount Peor, which overlooks Jeshimon.

²⁹ Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me."

³⁰ Balak did what Balaam told him, and he offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

24 ¹ When Balaam saw that the LORD wanted to bless Israel, he didn't look for omens as he had done before. He turned toward the desert,

² looked up, and saw Israel's camp grouped by tribes. The Spirit of God entered him,

³ and he delivered this message: "This is the message of Balaam, son of Beor. This is the message of the man whose eyesight is clear.

⁴ This is the message of the one who hears the words of God, has a vision from the Almighty, and falls into a trance with his eyes open:

⁵ How beautiful are your tents, Jacob, and the places where you live, Israel.

⁶ Your tents spread out like rivers, like gardens by a river, like aloes planted by the LORD, like cedars by the water.

⁷ Water will flow from their buckets, and their crops will have plenty of water. Their king will be greater than Agag, and their kingdom will be considered the best.

⁸ The God who brought them out of Egypt has the strength of a wild bull. He will devour nations that are his enemies, crush their bones, and pierce them with arrows.

⁹ His people lie down and rest like a lion. They are like a lioness. Who dares to disturb them? Those who bless you will be blessed! Those who curse you will be cursed!"

¹⁰ Balak became angry with Balaam. He clapped his hands and said, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, and now you have blessed them three times.

¹¹ Get out of here! Go home! I said I'd reward you richly, but the LORD has made you lose your reward."

¹² Balaam answered Balak, "I told the messengers you sent me,

¹³ 'Even if Balak would give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I couldn't disobey the LORD'S command no matter how good or bad the request might seem to me. I must say only what the LORD says.'

¹⁴ Even though I'm going back to my people, I'll give you some advice. I'll tell you what these people will do to your people in the days to come."

¹⁵ Then Balaam delivered this message: "This is the message of Balaam, son of Beor. This is the message of the man whose eyesight is clear.

¹⁶ This is the message of the one who hears the words of God, receives knowledge from the Most High, has a

vision from the Almighty, and falls into a trance with his eyes open:

¹⁷ I see someone who is not here now. I look at someone who is not nearby. A star will come from Jacob. A scepter will rise from Israel. He will crush the heads of the Moabites and destroy all the people of Sheth.

¹⁸ Edom will be conquered, and Seir, his enemy, will be conquered. So Israel will become wealthy.

¹⁹ He will rule from Jacob and destroy whoever is left in their cities."

²⁰ Then Balaam saw the Amalekites and delivered this message: "Amalek was first among the nations, but in the end it will be destroyed."

²¹ Then he saw the Kenites and delivered this message: "You have a permanent place to live. Your nest is built in a rock.

²² But it is destined to be burned, you descendants of Cain, when Assyria takes you as prisoners of war."

²³ He delivered this message: "Oh no! Who will live when God decides to do this?"

²⁴ Ships will come from the shores of Cyprus. They will conquer Assyria and Eber. But they, too, will be totally destroyed."

²⁵ Then Balaam got up and went back home, and Balak also went on his way.

25 ¹ While Israel was staying at Shittim, the men began to have sex with Moabite women

² who invited the people to the sacrifices offered to their gods. The people ate the meat from the sacrifices and worshiped these gods.

³ Since the Israelites joined in worshiping the god Baal of Peor, the LORD became angry with Israel.

⁴ The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people, and execute them in broad daylight in the LORD'S presence. This will turn the LORD'S anger away from Israel."

⁵ So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you must kill the men who have joined in worshiping the god Baal of Peor."

⁶ One of the Israelite men brought a Midianite woman to his brothers. He did this right in front of Moses and the whole community of Israel while they were crying at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

⁷ Phinehas, son of Eleazar and grandson of the priest Aaron, saw this. So he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand,

⁸ and went into the tent after the Israelite man. He drove the spear through the man and into the woman's

body. Because of this, the plague that the Israelites were experiencing stopped.

⁹ However, 24,000 people died from that plague.

¹⁰ Then the LORD said to Moses,

¹¹ "Phinehas, son of Eleazar and grandson of the priest Aaron, turned my fury away from the Israelites. Since he stood up for me, I didn't have to stand up for myself and destroy them.

¹² So tell Phinehas that I'm making a promise of peace to him.

¹³ My promise is that he and his descendants will be priests permanently because he stood up for his God and he made peace with the LORD for the Israelites."

¹⁴ The name of the Israelite man who was killed with the Midianite woman was Zimri, son of Salu. (Salu was the leader of a family from Simeon.)

¹⁵ The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi, daughter of Zur. (Zur was the head of a family from the Midianite tribes.)

¹⁶ The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁷ "Treat the Midianites as your enemies, and kill them

¹⁸ because they treated you as enemies. They plotted to trick you in the incident that took place at Peor. They used their sister Cozbi, daughter of a Midianite leader, who was killed on the day of the plague caused by the incident at Peor."

26 ¹ After the plague the LORD said to Moses and Eleazar, son of the priest Aaron,

² "Take a census of the whole community of Israel by households. List those who are at least 20 years old and eligible for military duty."

³ So Moses and the priest Eleazar spoke to the Israelites on the plains of

Moab near the Jordan River across from Jericho. They said,

⁴ "Take a census of those at least 20 years old, as the LORD commanded Moses." These are the Israelites who came from Egypt:

⁵ Reuben was Israel's firstborn. The descendants of Reuben were the family of Hanoch, the family of Pallu,

⁶ the family of Hezron, and the family of Carmi.

⁷ These were the families of Reuben. The total number of men was 43,730.

⁸ Eliab was the son of Pallu,

⁹ and Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram were the sons of Eliab. (It was Dathan and Abiram, men chosen by the community, who defied Moses and Aaron's authority. They joined Korah's followers when they defied the LORD'S authority.)

¹⁰ The ground opened up and swallowed them along with Korah. They and their followers died when the fire consumed the 250 men. This was a warning.

¹¹ But the descendants of Korah didn't die.)

¹² The families descended from Simeon were the family of Nemuel, the family of Jamin, the family of Jakin,

¹³ the family of Zerah, and the family of Shaul.

¹⁴ These were the families of Simeon. The total number of men was 22,200.

¹⁵ The families descended from Gad were the family of Zephon, the family of Haggi, the family of Shuni,

¹⁶ the family of Ozni, the family of Eri,

¹⁷ the family of Arodi, and the family of Areli.

¹⁸ These were the families of Gad's descendants. The total number of men was 40,500.

¹⁹ Er and Onan were sons of Judah, but they died in Canaan.

²⁰ The families descended from Judah were the family of Shelah, the family of Perez, and the family of Zerah.

²¹ The descendants of Perez were the family of Hezron and the family of Hamul.

²² These were the families of Judah. The total number of men was 76,500.

²³ The families descended from Issachar were the family of Tola, the family of Puah,

²⁴ the family of Jashub, and the family of Shimron.

²⁵ These were the families of Issachar. The total number of men was 64,300.

²⁶ The families descended from Zebulun were the family of Sered, the family of Elon, and the family of Jahleel.

²⁷ These were the families of Zebulun. The total number of men was 60,500.

²⁸ The families descended from Joseph through Manasseh and Ephraim were

²⁹ (from Manasseh) the family of Machir (Machir was the father of Gilead) and the family of Gilead.

³⁰ The descendants of Gilead were the family of Iezer, the family of Helek,

³¹ the family of Asriel, the family of Shechem,

³² the family of Shemida, and the family of Hopher.

³³ (Zelophehad, son of Hopher, had no sons—only daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.)

³⁴ These were the families of Manasseh. The total number of men was 52,700.

³⁵ The families descended from Ephraim were the family of Shuthelah, the family of Beker, and the family of Tahan.

³⁶ The descendants of Shuthelah were the family of Eran.

³⁷ These were the families of Ephraim's descendants. The total number of men was 32,500. These were the families descended from Joseph.

³⁸ The families descended from Benjamin were the family of Bela, the family of Ashbel, the family of Ahiram,

³⁹ the family of Shupham, and the family of Hupham.

⁴⁰ The descendants of Bela (through Ard and Naaman) were the family of Ard and the family of Naaman.

⁴¹ These were the families descended from Benjamin. The total number of men was 45,600.

⁴² The family descended from Dan was the family of Shuham. This was the family descended from Dan.

⁴³ The total number of men in all the family of Shuham was 64,400.

⁴⁴ The families descended from Asher were the family of Imnah, the family of Ishvi, and the family of Beriah.

⁴⁵ The descendants of Beriah were the family of Heber and the family of Malchiel.

⁴⁶ (Asher had a daughter named Serah.)

⁴⁷ These were the families of Asher's descendants. The total number of men was 53,400.

⁴⁸ The families descended from Naphtali were the family of Jahzeel, the family of Guni,

⁴⁹ the family of Jezer, and the family of Shillem.

⁵⁰ These were the families of Naphtali. The total number of men was 45,400.

⁵¹ The total number of Israelite men was 601,730.

⁵² Then the LORD said to Moses,

⁵³ "The land these people will possess must be divided using the list of names from the census.

⁵⁴ Give more land to larger tribes and less land to smaller ones. Use the totals from the census in giving land to each tribe.

⁵⁵ But the land must be divided by drawing lots. The tribes will receive their land based on the names of their ancestors.

⁵⁶ Whether the tribes are large or small, the land must be divided by drawing lots."

⁵⁷ The families descended from Levi were listed as the family of Gershon, the family of Kohath, and the family of Merari.

⁵⁸ These were the families of Levi: the Libnite family, the Hebronite family, the Mahlite family, the Mushite family, and the Korahite family. Kohath was the ancestor of Amram.

⁵⁹ The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, a descendant of Levi, who was born in Egypt. She gave birth to Amram's children: Aaron, Moses, and their sister Miriam.

⁶⁰ Aaron was the father of Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

⁶¹ But Nadab and Abihu had died because they offered unauthorized fire in the LORD'S presence.

⁶² The total number of all the Levite males at least one month old was 23,000. They were not counted along with the other Israelites, because they were given no land of their own.

⁶³ Moses and the priest Eleazar added up the total number of Israelites on the

plains of Moab near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

⁶⁴ Among them there wasn't a single one of the Israelites Moses and the priest Aaron had counted in the Desert of Sinai.

⁶⁵ The LORD had said, "They must all die in the desert." The only ones left were Caleb (son of Jephunneh) and Joshua (son of Nun).

27 ¹ The daughters of Zelophehad, son of Hopher, grandson of Gilead, descendant of Machir, whose father was Manasseh, belonged to the families of Manasseh, son of Joseph.

Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They came

² to Moses and stood in front of him, the priest Eleazar, the leaders, and the whole community at the entrance to the tent of meeting. They said,

³ "Our father died in the desert. He was not a part of Korah's followers who joined forces against the LORD. He died for his own sin and left no sons.

⁴ Why should our father's name be allowed to die out in his family because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives."

⁵ So Moses brought their case to the LORD,

⁶ and the LORD said to him,

⁷ "Zelophehad's daughters are right. You must give them property of their own among their father's relatives. Turn their father's property over to them.

⁸ "Tell the Israelites: If a man dies and leaves no sons, turn his property over to his daughters.

⁹ If he has no daughters, give his property to his brothers.

¹⁰ If he has no brothers, give his property to his uncles on his father's side of the family.

¹¹ If he has no uncles, give his property to the nearest relative in his family, and that relative will take possession of it. This will be a rule for the Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses."

¹² The LORD said to Moses, "Go up into the Abarim Mountains, and take a look at the land I will give the Israelites.

¹³ After you see it, you, too, will join your ancestors in death, as your brother Aaron did.

¹⁴ You both rebelled against my command in the Desert of Zin. You didn't show the people how holy I am when they were complaining at the oasis." (This was the oasis of Meribah at Kadesh in the Desert of Zin.)

¹⁵ Moses said to the LORD,

¹⁶ "LORD, you are the God who gives the breath of life to everyone. Please appoint someone over the community

¹⁷ who will lead them in and out of battle so that the LORD'S community will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

¹⁸ So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man who has the Spirit, and place your hand on him.

¹⁹ Make him stand in front of the priest Eleazar and the whole community, and give him his instructions in their presence.

²⁰ Give him some of your authority so that the whole community of Israel will obey him.

²¹ He will stand in front of the priest Eleazar, who will use the Urim to make decisions in the LORD'S presence. At his command Joshua and the whole community of Israel will go into battle. And at his command they will return."

²² Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and made him stand in front of the priest Eleazar and the whole community.

²³ Moses placed his hands on Joshua and gave him his instructions as the LORD had told him.

28 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Give this command to the Israelites: Be sure to bring me my offerings at the right times. They are my food. They are offerings by fire, a soothing aroma.

³ These are the offerings by fire that you must bring to the LORD. Every day you must bring as a daily burnt offering two one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

⁴ Offer one in the morning and the other at dusk.

⁵ With each of them also bring a grain offering of eight cups of flour mixed with one quart of virgin olive oil.

⁶ This is the daily burnt offering which was established on Mount Sinai. This offering is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

⁷ Also bring a wine offering of one quart of wine for each lamb. Pour it out to the LORD in a holy place.

⁸ Offer the other lamb at dusk along with the same grain offering and wine offering as you brought in the morning. This is an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

⁹ "On the day of worship offer two one-year-old lambs that have no defects, a grain offering of 16 cups of flour mixed with olive oil, and the wine offering that goes with it.

¹⁰ This burnt offering is for every day of worship in addition to the daily burnt

offerings and the wine offerings that go with them.

¹¹ "On the first of every month bring the LORD a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram, and seven one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

¹² With each bull there will be a grain offering of 24 cups of flour mixed with olive oil, with each ram a grain offering of 16 cups of flour mixed with olive oil,

¹³ and with each one-year-old lamb a grain offering of 8 cups of flour mixed with olive oil. This is a burnt offering, a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

¹⁴ The wine offering that goes with each bull will be 2 quarts of wine, with each ram $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts of wine, and with each lamb 1 quart of wine. This will be the monthly burnt offering for every month of the year.

¹⁵ In addition to the daily burnt offering with its wine offering, one male goat must be offered to the LORD as an offering for sin.

¹⁶ "The fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD'S Passover.

¹⁷ The fifteenth of this same month is a pilgrimage festival. For seven days you must eat only unleavened bread.

¹⁸ On the first day there will be a holy assembly. Don't do any regular work.

¹⁹ Instead, bring the LORD an offering by fire, a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram, and seven one-year-old lambs, all of them without defects.

²⁰ Along with them bring grain offerings of flour mixed with olive oil. Bring 24 cups for each bull, 16 cups for each ram,

²¹ and 8 cups for each of the seven lambs.

²² Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin to make peace with the LORD.

²³ Offer these in addition to the morning burnt offering.

²⁴ Bring all these offerings on each of the seven days. They are food. They are offerings by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD. They will be offered in addition to the daily burnt offering and the wine offering that goes with it.

²⁵ On the seventh day you must have a holy assembly. You must not do any regular work.

²⁶ "During the Festival of Weeks, you must have a holy assembly. On that day you must not do any regular work. Bring the LORD your new grain offering, the first produce harvested from your fields.

²⁷ Bring a burnt offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD—two young bulls, one ram, and seven one-year-old lambs.

²⁸ Along with them bring grain offerings of flour mixed with olive oil. Bring 24 cups for each bull, 16 cups for each ram, ²⁹ and 8 cups for each of the seven lambs.

³⁰ Also bring one male goat to make peace with the LORD.

³¹ Offer these animals that have no defects along with their wine offerings, in addition to the daily burnt offerings and their grain offerings."

29 ¹ The LORD continued, "On the first day of the seventh month you must have a holy assembly. You must not do any regular work. It is a day for the trumpets to sound a fanfare.

² As a burnt offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD, bring one young bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

³ Along with them bring grain offerings of flour mixed with olive oil. Bring 24 cups for each bull, 16 cups for each ram, ⁴ and 8 cups for each of the seven lambs.

⁵ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin to make peace with the LORD.

⁶ Offer these in addition to the monthly burnt offering with its grain offering, and the daily burnt offerings with their proper grain offerings and wine offerings. They are a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

⁷ "On the tenth day of the seventh month you must have a holy assembly. You must humble yourselves. You must not do any work.

⁸ As a burnt offering, a soothing aroma, bring one young bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old lambs, all of them without defects.

⁹ Along with them bring grain offerings of flour mixed with olive oil. Bring 24 cups for each bull, 16 cups for each ram,
¹⁰ and 8 cups for each of the seven lambs.

¹¹ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin (in addition to the other offering for sin to make peace with the LORD) and the daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

¹² "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you must have a holy assembly. You must not do any regular work. Instead, celebrate a festival to the LORD for seven days.

¹³ As a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD, bring 13 young bulls, 2 rams, and 14 one-year-old lambs, all of them without defects.

¹⁴ Along with them bring grain offerings of flour mixed with olive oil. Bring 24

cups for each of the 13 bulls, 16 cups for each of the 2 rams,

¹⁵ and 8 cups for each of the 14 one-year-old lambs.

¹⁶ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin in addition to the daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

¹⁷ "On the second day bring 12 young bulls, 2 rams, and 14 one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

¹⁸ Along with them bring the proper amount of grain offerings and wine offerings for each of the bulls, rams, and lambs.

¹⁹ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin in addition to the daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

²⁰ "On the third day bring 11 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

²¹ Along with them bring the proper amount of grain offerings and wine offerings for each of the bulls, rams, and lambs.

²² Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin in addition to the daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

²³ "On the fourth day bring 10 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

²⁴ Along with them bring the proper amount of grain offerings and wine offerings for each of the bulls, rams, and lambs.

²⁵ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin in addition to the daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

²⁶ "On the fifth day bring 9 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

²⁷ Along with them bring the proper amount of grain offerings and wine offerings for each of the bulls, rams, and lambs.

²⁸ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin in addition to the daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

²⁹ "On the sixth day bring 8 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

³⁰ Along with them bring the proper amount of grain offerings and wine offerings for each of the bulls, rams, and lambs.

³¹ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin in addition to the daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

³² "On the seventh day bring 7 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

³³ Along with them bring the proper amount of grain offerings and wine offerings for each of the bulls, rams, and lambs.

³⁴ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin in addition to the daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

³⁵ "On the eighth day you must hold a religious assembly. You must not do any daily work.

³⁶ As a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD, bring one bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old lambs that have no defects.

³⁷ Along with them bring the proper amount of grain offerings and wine offerings for the bull, the ram, and the lambs.

³⁸ Also bring one male goat as an offering for sin in addition to the daily

burnt offerings with their grain offerings and wine offerings.

³⁹ "These are the offerings you must bring to the LORD at your festivals. They are the offerings you must bring in addition to the offerings for anything you vowed to give to the LORD, your freewill offerings, your burnt offerings, your grain offerings, your wine offerings, and your fellowship offerings."

⁴⁰ Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD had commanded him.

30 ¹ Moses said to the heads of the tribes of Israel, "This is what the LORD has commanded about vows:

² If a man makes a vow to the LORD that he will do something or swears an oath that he won't do something, he must not break his word. He must do everything he said he would do.

³ "A young girl, who still lives in her father's house, might make a vow to

the LORD that she will do something or swear an oath that she won't do something.

⁴ If her father says nothing to her when he hears about it, her vow or oath must be kept.

⁵ But if her father objects when he hears about it, her vow or oath doesn't have to be kept. The LORD will free her from this vow or oath because her father objected.

⁶ "An unmarried woman might make a vow that she will do something or carelessly promise that she won't do something. When she marries,

⁷ her husband may hear about it but say nothing to her. Then her vow or oath must be kept.

⁸ But if her husband objects when he hears about it, he can cancel the vow or promise she made. The LORD will free her from this vow or promise.

⁹ "But a widow or a divorced woman must keep her vow or her promise.

¹⁰ "A married woman might make a vow that she will do something or swear an oath that she won't do something.

¹¹ Her husband may hear about it but may say nothing and not object. Then her vow or oath must be kept.

¹² But if her husband cancels it when he hears about it, nothing she said in her vow or oath has to be kept. Her husband has canceled it, and the LORD will free her from this vow or oath.

¹³ "A husband decides whether or not his wife has to keep any vow to do something or any oath to do without something.

¹⁴ If he says nothing to her about it day after day, this means he's decided that she must keep her vow or oath. She must keep it because he said nothing to her when he heard about it.

¹⁵ But if he cancels it later, he will suffer the consequences."

¹⁶ These are the laws the LORD gave Moses for husbands and wives, and for fathers with young daughters still living at home.

31 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Get even with the Midianites for what they did to the Israelites. After that you will join your ancestors in death."

³ Moses said to the people, "Some of your men must get ready to go to war against the Midianites. The LORD will use them to get even with Midian.

⁴ Send 1,000 men from each of the tribes of Israel."

⁵ So 1,000 men from each tribe were supplied from the divisions of Israel—12,000 men ready for war.

⁶ Then Moses sent them off to war, 1,000 men from each tribe along with

Phinehas, son of the priest Eleazar.

Phinehas took with him the holy articles and the trumpets for the fanfare.

⁷ They went to war against Midian, as the LORD commanded Moses, and killed every man.

⁸ Among those killed were the five kings of Midian—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba. They also killed Balaam, son of Beor, in battle.

⁹ The Israelites took the Midianite women and children as prisoners of war. They also took all their animals, their livestock, and their valuables as loot.

¹⁰ They burned all the cities where the Midianites lived and all their settlements.

¹¹ Then they took everything as loot, including all the people and animals,

¹² and brought the prisoners of war, the loot, and everything to Moses, the priest Eleazar, and the community of Israel at

the camp on the plains of Moab near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

¹³ Moses, the priest Eleazar, and all the leaders of the community went outside the camp to meet them.

¹⁴ Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the commanders of the companies and battalions, who were returning from battle.

¹⁵ "Why did you let all the women live?" he asked them.

¹⁶ "Remember, they were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and caused the Israelites to be unfaithful to the LORD in the incident that took place at Peor. The LORD'S community experienced a plague at that time.

¹⁷ So kill all the Midianite boys and every Midianite woman who has gone to bed with a man.

¹⁸ But save for yourselves every girl who has never gone to bed with a man.

¹⁹ "Everyone who killed a person or touched a dead body must stay outside the camp seven days. You and your prisoners of war must use the ritual water on the third and seventh days in order to take away your sin.

²⁰ Do the same for all the clothes and everything made of leather, goats' hair, or wood."

²¹ Then the priest Eleazar said to the soldiers who had gone into battle, "This is what the LORD'S teachings told Moses to do:

²² Any gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, or lead—

²³ anything that won't burn—must be put through fire in order to make it clean. Then it must also be put through the ritual water in order to take away its sin. Whatever might burn must only be put through the ritual water.

²⁴ On the seventh day wash your clothes, and you will be clean. Then you may come into the camp."

²⁵ The LORD said to Moses,

²⁶ "You, the priest Eleazar, and the heads of the families of the community need to count all the loot, including the people and animals you captured.

²⁷ Divide the loot between the soldiers who served in the war and the rest of the community.

²⁸ Collect a tax for the LORD. From the soldiers who served in the war collect one out of every 500 things. This includes people, cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats.

²⁹ Collect all these things from the soldiers' half of the loot, and give them to the priest Eleazar as a contribution to the LORD.

³⁰ From the Israelites' half of the loot, collect one out of every 50 things. This

includes people, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and every other kind of animal. Give them to the Levites who are in charge of the work done at the LORD'S tent."

³¹ Moses and the priest Eleazar did as the LORD commanded Moses.

³² This is the loot that was left from everything that the troops took: 675,000 sheep and goats,

³³ 72,000 cattle,

³⁴ 61,000 donkeys, and

³⁵ 32,000 women who had never gone to bed with a man.

³⁶ Half of it went to the soldiers who served in the war. Of the 337,500 sheep and goats they received,

³⁷ 675 went to the LORD as taxes.

³⁸ Of the 36,000 cattle they received, 72 went to the LORD as taxes.

³⁹ Of the 30,500 donkeys they received, 61 went to the LORD as taxes.

⁴⁰ Of the 16,000 people they received, 32 went to the LORD as taxes.

⁴¹ Moses gave the LORD'S taxes to the priest Eleazar, as the LORD had commanded him.

⁴² Moses took the Israelites' half of the loot from the soldiers.

⁴³ The community received 337,500 sheep and goats,

⁴⁴ 36,000 cattle,

⁴⁵ 30,500 donkeys,

⁴⁶ and 16,000 people.

⁴⁷ From the Israelites' half Moses collected one out of every 50 things, including people and animals, as the LORD commanded him. Then he gave all this to the Levites who were in charge of the work done at the LORD'S tent.

⁴⁸ Then the officers from the military divisions, the commanders of the companies and battalions of men, came to Moses.

⁴⁹ They said to him, "Sir, we have counted all the soldiers under our command, and not one of them is missing.

⁵⁰ So we have brought as gifts to the LORD the gold jewelry that each of us found—arm bands, bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and pendants. We offer them to make peace with the LORD."

⁵¹ Moses and the priest Eleazar took all the hand-crafted gold articles from them.

⁵² All the gold contributed to the LORD by the commanders weighed about 420 pounds.

⁵³ Each soldier kept his own loot.

⁵⁴ Moses and the priest Eleazar took the gold from the commanders and brought it into the LORD'S presence at the tent of meeting as a reminder to the Israelites.

32 ¹ The tribes of Reuben and Gad had a large number of livestock. They saw that the regions of Jazer and Gilead were a good place for livestock.

² So they came to Moses, the priest Eleazar, and the leaders of the community, and said to them,

³ "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon,

⁴ the land that the LORD won for the community of Israel, is a good place for livestock. Gentlemen, we have livestock.

⁵ Please give us this land as our property. Don't make us cross the Jordan River."

⁶ Moses asked the tribes of Gad and Reuben, "Are you going to stay here while the rest of the Israelites go to war?

⁷ That might discourage them from entering the land the LORD has given them.

⁸ That's what your ancestors did when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to take a look at the land.

⁹ They went as far as the Eshcol Valley and saw the land. But then they discouraged the rest of the Israelites from entering the land that the LORD had given them.

¹⁰ That day the LORD became angry and swore this oath,

¹¹ 'None of the people 20 years old or older, who came from Egypt, will see the land I promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with an oath. This is because they didn't wholeheartedly follow me.'

¹² Only Caleb (son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite) and Joshua (son of Nun) will get to see the land. This is because they wholeheartedly followed the LORD.

¹³ Since the LORD was angry with the Israelites, he made them wander in the desert for 40 years until the whole

generation of those who had done evil in the LORD'S presence was gone.

¹⁴ "You're just like your parents! You're a bunch of sinners trying to make the LORD angry with Israel again.

¹⁵ If you turn away from him, he will abandon all these people in the desert. You would be responsible for their destruction."

¹⁶ Then the tribes of Gad and Reuben came up to Moses and said, "Allow us to build stone fences for our livestock and cities for our families here.

¹⁷ Then we'll be ready to march in battle formation ahead of the other Israelites until we have brought them to their land. Meanwhile our families will live in walled cities, safe from the other people who live here.

¹⁸ We will not return to our homes until every Israelite has received his own land.

¹⁹ We won't take possession of any land on the other side of the Jordan River, to the west and beyond. We already have our land here, east of the Jordan."

²⁰ Moses answered, "Do what you have said. In the LORD'S presence have all your armed men get ready for battle.

²¹ Have them cross the Jordan, and fight until the LORD forces out his enemies

²² and the land is conquered. Then you may come back. You will have fulfilled your military duty to the LORD and Israel. This land will be your own property in the LORD'S presence.

²³ "If you don't do all these things, you will be sinning against the LORD. You can be sure that you will be punished for your sin.

²⁴ Build cities for your families and stone fences for your flocks, but do what you have promised."

²⁵ Then the tribes of Gad and Reuben said to Moses, "Sir, we will do as you command.

²⁶ Our children, our wives, our livestock, and all our other animals will stay here in the cities of Gilead.

²⁷ But in the LORD'S presence we will all get ready for battle and go with you, as you have said."

²⁸ So Moses gave orders about them to the priest Eleazar, Joshua (son of Nun), and the family heads of the tribes of Israel.

²⁹ Moses told them, "If the tribes of Gad and Reuben get ready for battle in the LORD'S presence and cross the Jordan River with you and you conquer the land, give them Gilead as their own property.

³⁰ If they don't get ready for battle and go with you, the land they will take

possession of must be in Canaan with yours."

³¹ The tribes of Gad and Reuben answered, "Sir, we will do as the LORD has said.

³² We will enter Canaan as armed troops in the LORD'S presence, but the land we will take possession of is here, east of the Jordan."

³³ So Moses gave the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and half of the tribe of Manasseh, son of Joseph, the kingdoms of King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan—the whole land with its cities and its surrounding territory.

³⁴ The tribe of Gad rebuilt the cities of Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer,

³⁵ Atroth Shopan, Jazer, Jogbehah,

³⁶ Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran as walled cities. They also built stone fences for their flocks.

³⁷ The tribe of Reuben rebuilt the cities of Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim,

³⁸ Nebo, Baal Meon (whose names were changed), and Sibmah. These are the names they gave the cities they rebuilt.

³⁹ The descendants of Machir, son of Manasseh, went to Gilead, captured it, and forced out the Amorites who were there.

⁴⁰ So Moses gave Gilead to the people of Machir (the descendants of Manasseh), and they lived there.

⁴¹ Then Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, captured the settlements in Gilead. He called them Havvoth Jair [Settlements of Jair].

⁴² Nobah captured Kenath and its villages. He named it Nobah after himself.

33 ¹ This is a list of all the places where the Israelites set up camp

after they left Egypt in organized groups under the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

² At the LORD'S command Moses wrote down the places where they went as they traveled. This is the list:

³ They moved from Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover. The Israelites boldly left in full view of all the Egyptians.

⁴ The Egyptians were burying all their firstborn sons, whom the LORD had killed in a mighty act of judgment on their gods.

⁵ The Israelites moved from Rameses and set up camp at Succoth.

⁶ They moved from Succoth and set up camp at Etham, on the edge of the desert.

⁷ They moved from Etham and turned back to Pi Hahiroth, east of Baal Zephon, and set up camp near Migdol.

⁸ They moved from Pi Hahiroth and went through the middle of the sea into the desert. After they traveled for three days in the Desert of Etham, they set up camp at Marah.

⁹ They moved from Marah and came to Elim. Elim had 12 springs and 70 palm trees, so they set up camp there.

¹⁰ They moved from Elim and set up camp by the Red Sea.

¹¹ They moved from the Red Sea and set up camp in the Desert of Sin.

¹² They moved from the Desert of Sin and set up camp at Dophkah.

¹³ They moved from Dophkah and set up camp at Alush.

¹⁴ They moved from Alush and set up camp at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

¹⁵ They moved from Rephidim and set up camp in the Desert of Sinai.

¹⁶ They moved from the Desert of Sinai and set up camp at Kibroth Hattaavah.

¹⁷ They moved from Kibroth Hattaavah and set up camp at Hazeroth.

¹⁸ They moved from Hazeroth and set up camp at Rithmah.

¹⁹ They moved from Rithmah and set up camp at Rimmon Perez.

²⁰ They moved from Rimmon Perez and set up camp at Libnah.

²¹ They moved from Libnah and set up camp at Rissah.

²² They moved from Rissah and set up camp at Kehelathah.

²³ They moved from Kehelathah and set up camp at Mount Shepher.

²⁴ They moved from Mount Shepher and set up camp at Haradah.

²⁵ They moved from Haradah and set up camp at Makheloth.

²⁶ They moved from Makheloth and set up camp at Tahath.

²⁷ They moved from Tahath and set up camp at Terah.

²⁸ They moved from Terah and set up camp at Mithcah.

²⁹ They moved from Mithcah and set up camp at Hashmonah.

³⁰ They moved from Hashmonah and set up camp at Moseroth.

³¹ They moved from Moseroth and set up camp at Bene Jaakan.

³² They moved from Bene Jaakan and set up camp at Hor Haggidgad.

³³ They moved from Hor Haggidgad and set up camp at Jotbathah.

³⁴ They moved from Jotbathah and set up camp at Abronah.

³⁵ They moved from Abronah and set up camp at Ezion Geber.

³⁶ They moved from Ezion Geber and set up camp at Kadesh in the Desert of Zin.

³⁷ They moved from Kadesh and set up camp at Mount Hor on the border of Edom.

³⁸ At the LORD'S command the priest Aaron went up on Mount Hor. He died there on the first day of the fifth month in the fortieth year after the Israelites had left Egypt.

³⁹ Aaron was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor.

⁴⁰ (The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, which was in Canaan, heard that the Israelites were coming.)

⁴¹ They moved from Mount Hor and set up camp at Zalmonah.

⁴² They moved from Zalmonah and set up camp at Punon.

⁴³ They moved from Punon and set up camp at Oboth.

⁴⁴ They moved from Oboth and set up camp at Iye Abarim on the border of Moab.

⁴⁵ They moved from Iyim and set up camp at Dibon Gad.

⁴⁶ They moved from Dibon Gad and set up camp at Almon Diblathaim.

⁴⁷ They moved from Almon Diblathaim and set up camp in the Abarim Mountains east of Nebo.

⁴⁸ They moved from the Abarim Mountains and set up camp on the plains of Moab near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

⁴⁹ They set up camp on the plains of Moab along the Jordan. Their camp extended from Beth Jeshimoth to Abel Shittim.

⁵⁰ The LORD said to Moses on the plains of Moab near the Jordan River across from Jericho,

⁵¹ "Tell the Israelites, 'You will be crossing the Jordan River and entering Canaan.

⁵² As you advance, force out all the people who live there. Get rid of all their stone and metal idols, and destroy all their places of worship.

⁵³ Take possession of the land and live there, because I will give it to you for your own.

⁵⁴ Divide the land among your families by drawing lots. Give more land to larger families and less land to smaller ones. The land must be given to each family by drawing lots. Divide it among your ancestors' tribes.

⁵⁵ "But if you do not force out those who live in the land, they will be like splinters in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will constantly fight with you over the land you live in.

⁵⁶ Then I will do to you what I planned to do to them."

34 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² "Give the Israelites these instructions. When you enter Canaan, the land that will be given to you as your inheritance has these borders:

³ "The southern side includes part of the Desert of Zin along the border of Edom. In the east the southern border starts from the end of the Dead Sea

⁴ and turns south of the Akrabbim Pass. It then goes past Zin and ends at Kadesh Barnea. From there it goes to Hazar Addar and on to Azmon.

⁵ From Azmon it turns toward the River of Egypt so that the border ends at the Mediterranean Sea.

⁶ "The western border is the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

⁷ "The northern border extends from the Mediterranean Sea to Mount Hor,

⁸ and from Mount Hor to the border of Hamath so that it ends at Zedad.

⁹ From there the border goes to Ziphron and ends at Hazar Enan.

¹⁰ "The eastern border extends from Hazar Enan to Shepham.

¹¹ From Shepham the border goes down to Riblah, east of Ain, and continues along the eastern slope of the Sea of Galilee.

¹² Then the border goes along the Jordan River so that it ends at the Dead Sea. "This will be your land and the borders around it."

¹³ Moses commanded the Israelites, "This is the land you will divide by drawing lots. The LORD has commanded that this land will be given to the nine-and-a-half tribes.

¹⁴ The households from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh have already received their land.

¹⁵ Those two—and-a-half tribes received land east of the Jordan River across from Jericho."

¹⁶ The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁷ "These are the names of the men who will divide the land for you: the priest Eleazar and Joshua, son of Nun.

¹⁸ You must also take one leader from each tribe to divide the land.

¹⁹ These are their names: Caleb, son of Jephunneh, from the tribe of Judah;

²⁰ Shemuel, son of Ammihud, from the tribe of Simeon;

²¹ Elidad, son of Kislou, from the tribe of Benjamin;

²² Bukki, son of Jogli, the leader of the tribe of Dan;

²³ Hanniel, son of Ephod, the leader of the tribe of Manasseh;

²⁴ Kemuel, son of Shiphtan, the leader of the tribe of Ephraim; (Manasseh and Ephraim are Joseph's descendants.)

²⁵ Elizaphan, son of Parnach, the leader of the tribe of Zebulun;

²⁶ Paltiel, son of Azzan, the leader of the tribe of Issachar;

²⁷ Ahihud, son of Shelomi, the leader of the tribe of Asher;

²⁸ Pedahel, son of Ammihud, the leader of the tribe of Naphtali."

²⁹ These are the men the LORD commanded to divide Canaan for the Israelites.

35 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moses on the plains of Moab near the Jordan River across from Jericho. He said,

² "Tell the Israelites to give the Levites some cities from their own property. They must also give the Levites the pastureland around those cities.

³ Then the Levites will have cities to live in and pastureland for their cattle, the

flocks they own, and any other animals they have.

⁴ "The land around the cities that you give the Levites will extend 1,500 feet from the city wall.

⁵ Outside the city measure off 3,000 feet on the east side, 3,000 feet on the south side, 3,000 feet on the west side, and 3,000 feet on the north side, with the city in the center. This will be their pastureland around the city.

⁶ "Six of the cities you give the Levites will be cities of refuge. You must allow murderers to escape to these cities. In addition, you must also give the Levites 42 other cities.

⁷ So you will give a total of 48 cities with pastureland to the Levites.

⁸ The cities you give the Levites from the property of the other Israelites must be given based on the amount of land each tribe owns. Take more cities from

larger tribes and fewer from smaller tribes."

⁹ The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁰ "Tell the Israelites: When you cross the Jordan River and enter Canaan,

¹¹ select certain cities to be places of refuge. Anyone who unintentionally kills another person may run to them.

¹² These cities will be places of refuge from any relative who can avenge the death. So anyone accused of murder will not have to die until he has had a trial in front of the community.

¹³ There will be six cities you select as places of refuge,

¹⁴ three on the east side of the Jordan River and three in Canaan.

¹⁵ These six cities will be places of refuge for Israelites, foreigners, and strangers among you. Anyone who unintentionally kills another person may flee to these cities.

¹⁶ "But if any of you uses an iron weapon to kill another person, you are a murderer. Murderers must be put to death.

¹⁷ If any of you picks up a stone as a weapon and uses it to kill another person, you are a murderer. Murderers must be put to death.

¹⁸ Or if any of you picks up a piece of wood as a weapon and uses it to kill another person, you are a murderer. Murderers must be put to death.

¹⁹ The relative who can avenge the death must make sure a murderer is put to death. When he catches up with the murderer, he must kill him.

²⁰ If any of you kills someone you hate by shoving him or by deliberately throwing something at him,

²¹ or if you beat your enemy to death with your bare hands, you must be put to death. You are a murderer. The

relative who can avenge the death must kill you when he catches up with you, because you are a murderer.

²² "But suppose you accidentally kill someone who wasn't your enemy. Maybe you shoved him or threw something at him but didn't mean to kill him.

²³ Or suppose you drop a big stone, and someone is killed. However, you didn't know the person was there, he wasn't your enemy, and you weren't trying to harm him.

²⁴ Then the community must use these rules in order to decide if you are innocent or if the dead person's relative can avenge the death.

²⁵ If you are innocent, the community must protect you from that relative. They must take you back to the city of refuge you fled to. You must live there

until the death of the chief priest who was anointed with the holy oil.

²⁶ "But don't go outside the city of refuge you fled to.

²⁷ If the relative who can avenge the death finds you outside the city of refuge and kills you, the relative is not guilty of murder.

²⁸ Accused murderers must stay in their city of refuge until the death of the chief priest. They may go back to their own property only after his death.

²⁹ "These will be the rules for future generations wherever you live.

³⁰ "Whoever kills another person will be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of more than one witness. No one can be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

³¹ "Never accept a cash payment in exchange for the life of a convicted murderer who has been given the death

penalty. Murderers must be put to death.

³² "An accused murderer who has fled to a city of refuge must never go back and live on his own land before the death of the chief priest. Don't accept a cash payment to allow him to do this.

³³ "You must not pollute the land where you live. Murder is what pollutes the land. The land where a murder was committed can never make peace with the LORD except through the death of the murderer.

³⁴ Never make the land where you and I live unclean. I, the LORD, live among the Israelites."

36 ¹ The heads of the households whose families were descended from Gilead, son of Machir and grandson of Manasseh (families of Joseph's descendants), came and spoke to Moses

and the leaders of the other Israelite households.

² They said, "Sir, the LORD commanded you to give the Israelites their land by drawing lots. The LORD also commanded you to give the land of our relative Zelophehad to his daughters.

³ Suppose they marry men from the other tribes of Israel. Their land will be taken away from that of our ancestors and added to the land of the tribe they marry into. Then we will have lost part of our land.

⁴ When the Israelites' jubilee year comes, their land will be added to that of the tribe they married into. Then part of the land of our ancestors' tribe will be gone."

⁵ So Moses gave the Israelites a command from the LORD. "The tribe of Joseph's descendants is right.

⁶ This is what the LORD commands for Zelophehad's daughters: They may marry anyone they want to, but only within a family of their ancestor's tribe.

⁷ In this way no land of the Israelites will pass from one tribe to another. Every Israelite must keep the tribal land inherited from his ancestors.

⁸ A woman who inherits land in any of the tribes of Israel may marry a man from any family in her ancestor's tribe. In this way every Israelite keeps the land inherited from his ancestors.

⁹ No land may pass from one tribe to another. Each Israelite tribe must keep the land it inherits."

¹⁰ Zelophehad's daughters did as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹¹ Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah married their cousins on their father's side of the family.

¹² They married within the families of the descendants of Manasseh, son of Joseph. So their land stayed in the tribe of their father's family.

¹³ These are the commands and rules the LORD gave the Israelites through Moses on the plains of Moab near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

Deuteronomy

1 ¹ This is the speech Moses gave in the desert east of the Jordan River, on the plains, near Suph, between Paran and Tophel, and near Laban, Hazeroth, and Di Zahab. He spoke to all the Israelites.

² (It takes 11 days to go from Mount Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by way of Mount Seir.)

³ On the first day of the eleventh month in the fortieth year after they had left Egypt, Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD had commanded him to tell them.

⁴ This was after he had defeated King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who ruled in Ashtaroth and in Edrei.

⁵ The Israelites were east of the Jordan River in Moab when Moses began to review God's teachings. This is what he said:

⁶ At Mount Horeb the LORD our God said to us, "You have stayed at this mountain long enough.

⁷ Break camp, and get ready! Go to the mountain region of the Amorites, and go to everyone living on the plains, in the mountains, in the foothills, in the Negev, on the whole Mediterranean coast (the land of the Canaanites), and into Lebanon as far as the Euphrates River.

⁸ I'm giving you this land. Enter, and take possession of the land the LORD swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to you, their descendants."

⁹ At that time I said to you, "I'm not able to take care of you by myself.

¹⁰ The LORD your God has made your population increase so that you are now as numerous as the stars in the sky.

¹¹ May the LORD God of your ancestors make you a thousand times more numerous, and may he bless you as he has promised.

¹² How can I take care of your problems, your troubles, and your disagreements all by myself?

¹³ From each of your tribes, choose some men who are wise, intelligent, and experienced, and I'll appoint them to be your leaders."

¹⁴ You agreed that this was a good idea.

¹⁵ So I took the heads of your tribes who were wise and experienced men and made them officers for each of your tribes. I put them in charge of groups of 1,000, or 100, or 50, or 10 people.

¹⁶ Also at that time I gave these instructions to your judges: "Hear the

cases that your people bring. Judge each case fairly, no matter whether it is a dispute between two Israelites or a dispute between an Israelite and a non-Israelite.

¹⁷ Be impartial in your decisions. Listen to the least important people the same way you listen to the most important people. Never be afraid of anyone, since your decisions come from God. You may bring me any case that's too hard for you, and I will hear it."

¹⁸ So I told you how to handle these situations.

¹⁹ So we left Mount Horeb, as the LORD our God had commanded. We traveled through all that vast and dangerous desert you saw on the way to the mountain region of the Amorites. At last we came to Kadesh Barnea.

²⁰ Then I said to you, "We have come to the mountain region of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us.

²¹ The LORD your God is giving you this land. Go ahead! Take possession of it, as the LORD God of your ancestors told you. Don't be afraid or terrified."

²² All of you came to me and said, "Let's send men ahead of us to gather information about the land for us. Have them report to us about the route we should take and the cities we'll come to."

²³ It seemed like a good idea to me. So I chose 12 of your men, one from each tribe.

²⁴ They left and went into the mountains. When they came to the Eshcol Valley, they explored it.

²⁵ They took some of the region's fruit with them and brought it back to us. They reported, "The land that the LORD our God is giving us is good."

²⁶ But you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God and refused to go.

²⁷ You complained in your tents and said, "The LORD hates us! That's why he brought us out of Egypt. He wanted to hand us over to the Amorites so that they could destroy us!

²⁸ Where are we going anyway? Our own men have discouraged us by saying, 'The people there are taller and stronger than we are. The cities are big with sky-high walls! We even saw the people of Anak there.'

²⁹ Then I said to you, "Don't tremble. Don't be afraid of them.

³⁰ The LORD your God, who is going ahead of you, will fight for you as you saw him fight for you in Egypt

³¹ and in the desert." There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as parents carry their children. He carried

you wherever you went until you came to this place.

³² In spite of this, you didn't trust the LORD your God,

³³ who went ahead of you to find places for you to camp. He appeared in a column of fire at night and in a column of smoke during the day to show you which route to take.

³⁴ When the LORD heard what you said, he was angry and took this oath:

³⁵ "Not one of these evil people will ever see the good land that I swore to give to your ancestors,

³⁶ except Caleb, son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give the land that he set his feet on to him and his descendants, because he wholeheartedly followed the LORD."

³⁷ The LORD became angry with me because of you. He said, "You won't go there either."

³⁸ But your assistant Joshua, son of Nun, will go there. Encourage him, because he will help Israel take possession of the land.

³⁹ Although you thought the little children would be captured in war, your children, who are still too young to know the difference between good and evil, will enter that land. I will give it to them, and they will take possession of it.

⁴⁰ Turn around, go back into the desert, and follow the road that goes to the Red Sea."

⁴¹ You responded, "We have sinned against the LORD. We'll go and fight, as the LORD our God commanded us to do." Each of you armed yourself for war, thinking you could easily invade the mountain region.

⁴² But the LORD said to me, "Tell them, 'Don't go and fight, because I won't be

with you. You will be defeated by your enemies.’”

⁴³ I told you, but you wouldn’t listen. You defied the LORD’S command and invaded the mountain region.

⁴⁴ The Amorites who lived there came out and attacked you and chased you like a swarm of bees. They defeated you, chasing you from Seir all the way to Hormah.

⁴⁵ When you came back, you cried to the LORD, but the LORD didn’t listen to you or hear you.

⁴⁶ That’s why you stayed in Kadesh as long as you did.

2¹ We went back into the desert, following the road that goes to the Red Sea as the LORD had told me. For a long time we traveled around the region of Mount Seir.

² The LORD said to me,

³ "You've traveled around this region long enough. Now go north.

⁴ Give the people these instructions: 'You're going to pass through the territory of your relatives, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They'll be afraid of you, but be very careful.

⁵ Don't start a fight with them, because I'm not giving you any of their land—not even enough to stand on. I've given Esau's descendants the region of Mount Seir as their property.

⁶ You must pay them in silver for the food you eat and the water you drink.'"

⁷ The LORD your God has blessed you in everything you have done. He has watched over you as you traveled through this vast desert. For 40 years now the LORD your God has been with you, and you haven't needed a thing.

⁸ So we passed by our relatives, the descendants of Esau, who lived in Seir. We turned off the road that goes through the plains to Elath and Ezion Geber and took the road that goes through the desert of Moab.

⁹ The LORD said to me, "Don't bother the people of Moab or start a war with them. I'm not giving you any of Ar as your property. I have given it to the descendants of Lot."

¹⁰ The Emites used to live there. These people were as strong, as numerous, and as tall as the people of Anak.

¹¹ They were thought to be Rephaim, like the people of Anak, but the Moabites called them Emites.

¹² The Horites used to live in Seir, but the descendants of Esau claimed their land, wiped them out, and took their place, as Israel did in the land that the LORD gave them.

¹³ Then the LORD said, "Now cross the Zered River." So we crossed the Zered River.

¹⁴ Thirty–eight years passed from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until we crossed the Zered River. During that time all our soldiers from that generation died, as the LORD had sworn they would.

¹⁵ In fact, it was the LORD himself who got rid of all of them until none were left in the camp.

¹⁶ When the last of these soldiers had died,

¹⁷ the LORD said to me,

¹⁸ "Today you are going to pass by the border of Moab at Ar.

¹⁹ When you come near the Ammonites, don't bother them or start a fight with them. I'm not giving you any of the land that I have already given to the descendants of Lot as their property."

²⁰ This land was thought of as the land of the Rephaim who used to live there, but the Ammonites called them Zamzummim.

²¹ These people were as strong, as numerous, and as tall as the people of Anak. But the LORD wiped them out before the Ammonites came so that the Ammonites claimed their land and took their place.

²² The LORD did the same thing for the descendants of Esau, who lived in Seir. Before the descendants of Esau came, he wiped out the Horites so that Esau's descendants claimed their land and took their place. Esau's descendants are still there today.

²³ The same thing happened to the Avvites who lived in villages as far away as Gaza. The Caphtorites, who came from Crete, wiped them out and took their place.

²⁴ The LORD continued, "Now break camp. Cross the Arnon Valley. I'm going to hand King Sihon of Heshbon, the Amorite, over to you. Fight him, and take possession of his country.

²⁵ Today I will start to make all the people under heaven terrified of you. When they hear about you, they will tremble and shake because of you."

²⁶ From the desert of Kedemoth, I sent messengers to King Sihon of Heshbon with the following offer of peace:

²⁷ "If you allow us to travel through your country, we'll go straight through and won't ever leave the road.

²⁸ We'll pay you in silver for the food we eat and the water we drink. Please let us go through,

²⁹ as the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, and the Moabites, who live in Ar, did for us. We'll keep going until we

cross the Jordan River into the land the LORD our God is giving us."

³⁰ But King Sihon of Heshbon wouldn't allow us to pass through. The LORD your God made him stubborn and overconfident in order to hand him over to you, as he has now done.

³¹ The LORD said to me, "I have begun to give you Sihon and his country. Go ahead! Take possession of his land."

³² Sihon and all his troops came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz.

³³ The LORD our God gave Sihon to us, and we defeated him, his sons, and all his troops.

³⁴ At that time we captured all his cities and claimed them for God by destroying men, women, and children. There were no survivors.

³⁵ However, we did loot the cities that we captured, taking the cattle and goods.

³⁶ From Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley and the city in that valley as far as Gilead, no city had walls that could keep us out. The LORD our God gave us all of them.

³⁷ But the LORD our God had forbidden you to go anywhere near the land of the Ammonites. So you didn't enter the land along the bank of the Jabbok River or capture the cities in the mountains.

3¹ Next we turned and followed the road that goes to Bashan. King Og of Bashan and all his troops came to fight us at Edrei.

² The LORD said to me, "Don't be afraid of him. I'll hand him, all his troops, and his land over to you. Do to him what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon."

³ So the LORD our God also handed King Og of Bashan and all his troops

over to us. We defeated him, leaving no survivors.

⁴ At that time we captured all of his cities. There wasn't a city we didn't take. We captured a total of 60 cities—the whole territory of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

⁵ All of these cities were fortified with high walls and double-door gates with bars across the gates. We also captured a large number of unwalled villages.

⁶ We claimed them all for God, destroying every city, including men, women, and children—as we did to King Sihon of Heshbon.

⁷ However, we did loot the cities, taking all of the cattle and goods.

⁸ We took the land of the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, from the Arnon Valley to Mount Hermon.

⁹ (The Sidonians call Mount Hermon by the name Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir.)

¹⁰ We took all of the cities of the plateau, all of Gilead, and all of Bashan as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of Og's kingdom in Bashan.

¹¹ (Of the Rephaim only King Og of Bashan was left. His bed was made of iron and was more than 13 feet long and 6 feet wide. It is still in the Ammonite city of Rabbah.)

¹² At that time we took possession of this land. I gave the tribes of Reuben and Gad the land north of Aroer near the Arnon Valley and half of the mountain region of Gilead with its cities.

¹³ I gave the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan ruled by Og to half of the tribe of Manasseh. (The whole territory of Argob in Bashan used to be called the land of the Rephaim.)

¹⁴ Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, took the whole territory of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites. The settlements in Bashan he named Havvoth Jair after himself. This is still their name today.)

¹⁵ I gave Gilead to Machir.

¹⁶ I gave the tribes of Reuben and Gad some of Gilead from the Arnon Valley (the middle of the valley is the border) to the Jabbok River, which is the border of Ammon.

¹⁷ Their land included the plains around the Jordan River. The western border was the river, from the Sea of Galilee to the Sea of the Plains (the Dead Sea), which is near Mount Pisgah on the east.

¹⁸ I gave the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh this command: "The LORD your God has given you this land so that you can take possession of it. All your soldiers must

be ready for battle when they cross the Jordan River ahead of the other Israelites.

¹⁹ I know you have a lot of livestock. Your wives, children, and livestock must stay here in the cities that I gave you.

²⁰ Your soldiers will go with the other Israelites until they take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving them on the other side of the Jordan River. Then they will have a place to rest as you have. After that each of you may go back to the land I gave you."

²¹ I also gave Joshua this command: "You have seen with your own eyes everything that the LORD your God has done to these two kings. The LORD will do the same to all of the kingdoms on the other side of the Jordan River where you're going.

²² Don't be afraid of them, because the LORD your God himself will fight for you."

²³ Then I pleaded with the LORD:

²⁴ "Almighty LORD, you have only begun to show me how great and powerful you are. What kind of god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and the mighty acts you have done?"

²⁵ Please let me go over and see the beautiful land on the other side of the Jordan River—those beautiful mountains in Lebanon."

²⁶ The LORD was angry with me because of you, so he wouldn't listen to me. He said, "That's enough out of you! Don't talk to me anymore about this."

²⁷ Go to the top of Mount Pisgah, and look west, north, south, and east. You may look at the land, but you will never cross the Jordan River.

²⁸ Give instructions to Joshua.

Encourage and strengthen him, because he will lead these people across the Jordan River, and he will help them take possession of the land you see."

²⁹ So we stayed in the valley near Beth Peor.

4 ¹ Israel, listen to the laws and rules I am about to teach you. Obey them so that you will live and be able to enter and take possession of the land that the LORD God of your ancestors is giving you.

² Never add anything to what I command you, or take anything away from it. Then you will be able to obey the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

³ With your own eyes you saw what the LORD did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed everyone among you

who worshiped the god Baal while you were at Peor.

⁴ But you were loyal to the LORD your God and are still alive today.

⁵ I have taught you laws and rules as the LORD my God commanded me. You must obey them when you've entered the land and taken possession of it.

⁶ Faithfully obey these laws. This will show the people of the world your wisdom and insight. When they hear about all these laws, they will say, "What wise and insightful people there are in this great nation!"

⁷ What great nation ever had their gods as near to them as the LORD our God is near to us whenever we pray to him?

⁸ Or what other great nation has such fair laws and rules as all these teachings I am giving you today?

⁹ However, be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you don't

forget the things which you have seen with your own eyes. Don't let them fade from your memory as long as you live. Teach them to your children and grandchildren.

¹⁰ Never forget the day you stood in front of the LORD your God at Mount Horeb. The LORD had said to me, "Assemble the people in front of me, and I will let them hear my words. Then they will learn to fear me as long as they live on earth, and they will teach their children the same thing."

¹¹ So you came and stood at the foot of the mountain, which was on fire with flames shooting into the sky. It was dark, cloudy, and gloomy.

¹² The LORD spoke to you from the fire. You heard a voice speaking but saw no one. There was only a voice.

¹³ The LORD told you about the terms of his promise, the ten commandments,

which he commanded you to do. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets.

¹⁴ The LORD also commanded me to teach you the laws and rules you must obey after you cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land.

¹⁵ You didn't see the LORD the day he spoke to you from the fire at Mount Horeb. So be very careful

¹⁶ that you don't become corrupt and make your own carved idols. Don't make statues that represent men or women,

¹⁷ any animal on earth, any creature with wings that flies,

¹⁸ any creature that crawls on the ground, or any fish in the water.

¹⁹ Don't let yourselves be tempted to worship and serve what you see in the sky—the sun, the moon, the stars, or anything else. The LORD your God has given them to all people everywhere.

²⁰ But you are the people the LORD brought out of Egypt, the iron smelter, in order to make you his own people as you still are today.

²¹ The LORD was angry with me because of you. So the LORD your God took an oath that I wouldn't cross the Jordan River and enter the good land he is giving you as your property.

²² I'm going to die in this land and not cross the Jordan River, but you're going to go across and take possession of that good land.

²³ Be careful that you don't forget the promise that the LORD your God made to you. Don't make your own carved idols or statues that represent anything the LORD your God has forbidden.

²⁴ The LORD your God is a raging fire, a God who does not tolerate rivals.

²⁵ Even when you have children and grandchildren and have grown old in that

land, don't become corrupt and make carved idols or statues that represent anything. I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today: If you do this thing that the LORD your God considers evil, making him furious, ²⁶ you will quickly disappear from the land you're going to possess on the other side of the Jordan River. You won't live very long there. You'll be completely wiped out.

²⁷ The LORD will scatter you among the people of the world, and only a few of you will be left among the nations where the LORD will force you to live.

²⁸ There you will worship wooden and stone gods made by human hands. These gods can't see, hear, eat, or smell.

²⁹ But if you look for the LORD your God when you are among those nations, you will find him whenever you search for

him with all your heart and with all your soul.

³⁰ When you're in distress and all these things happen to you, then you will finally come back to the LORD your God and obey him.

³¹ The LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not abandon you, destroy you, or forget the promise to your ancestors that he swore he would keep.

³² Search the distant past, long before your time. Start from the very day God created people on earth. Search from one end of heaven to the other. Has anything as great as this ever happened before, or has anything like it ever been heard of?

³³ Have any other people ever heard God speak from a fire and lived? You did!

³⁴ Or has any god ever tried to come and take one nation away from another for himself? The LORD your God used

his mighty hand and powerful arm to do this for you in Egypt. He did this using plagues, miraculous signs, amazing things, and war. He did his great and awe–inspiring deeds in front of you.

³⁵ You were shown these things so that you would know that the LORD is God. There is no other god.

³⁶ He let you hear his voice from heaven so that he could instruct you. He showed you his great fire on earth, and you heard him speak from the column of fire.

³⁷ Because he loved your ancestors and chose their descendants, he was with you as he brought you out of Egypt by his great power.

³⁸ He forced nations greater and stronger than you out of your way to bring you into their land and give it to you. This land is your own possession today.

³⁹ Remember today, and never forget that the LORD is God in heaven above and here on earth. There is no other god.

⁴⁰ Obey his laws and commands which I'm giving you today. Then things will go well for you and your descendants. You will live for a long time in the land. The LORD your God is giving you the land for as long as you live.

⁴¹ Then Moses set aside three cities on the east side of the Jordan River.

⁴² Those who unintentionally killed someone whom they had never hated could flee to one of these cities and save their lives.

⁴³ The cities were Bezer on the desert plateau for the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead for the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan for the tribe of Manasseh.

⁴⁴ This is what Moses taught the people of Israel.

⁴⁵ These are the commandments, laws, and rules Moses gave the Israelites after they had left Egypt.

⁴⁶ He gave these to the people when they were east of the Jordan River in the valley near Beth Peor, in the land of King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon. Moses and Israel defeated him after they left Egypt.

⁴⁷ They took possession of his land and the land of King Og of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites who were east of the Jordan River.

⁴⁸ This land went from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley to Mount Siyon (that is, Mount Hermon).

⁴⁹ It included all the plains on the east side of the Jordan River as far as the Dead Sea at the foot of the slopes of Mount Pisgah.

5 ¹ Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: Israel, listen to the laws

and rules I'm telling you today. Learn them and faithfully obey them.

² The LORD our God made a promise to us at Mount Horeb.

³ He didn't make this promise to our ancestors, but to all of us who are alive here today.

⁴ The LORD spoke to you face to face from the fire on the mountain.

⁵ I stood between the LORD and you to tell you the word of the LORD, because you were afraid of the fire and didn't go up on the mountain. The LORD said:

⁶ "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of slavery in Egypt.

⁷ "Never have any other gods.

⁸ Never make your own carved idols or statues that represent any creature in the sky, on the earth, or in the water.

⁹ Never worship them or serve them, because I, the LORD your God, am a God who does not tolerate rivals. I punish

children for their parents' sins to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

¹⁰ But I show mercy to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my commandments.

¹¹ "Never use the name of the LORD your God carelessly. The LORD will make sure that anyone who uses his name carelessly will be punished.

¹² "Observe the day of worship as a holy day. This is what the LORD your God has commanded you.

¹³ You have six days to do all your work.

¹⁴ The seventh day is the day of worship dedicated to the LORD your God. You, your sons, your daughters, your male and female slaves, your oxen, your donkeys—all of your animals—even the foreigners living in your city must never do any work on that day. In this way your

male and female slaves can rest as you do.

¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God used his mighty hand and powerful arm to bring you out of there. This is why the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the day of worship.

¹⁶ "Honor your father and your mother as the LORD your God has commanded you. Then you will live for a long time, and things will go well for you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁷ "Never murder.

¹⁸ "Never commit adultery.

¹⁹ "Never steal.

²⁰ "Never avoid the truth when you testify about your neighbor.

²¹ "Never desire to take your neighbor's wife away from him. "Never long for your neighbor's household, his field, his

male or female slave, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to him."

²² These are the commandments the LORD spoke to your whole assembly on the mountain. He spoke in a loud voice from the fire, the cloud, and the gloomy darkness. Then he stopped speaking. He wrote the commandments on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

²³ But when you heard the voice coming from the darkness and saw the mountain blazing with fire, all the leaders and heads of your tribes came to me.

²⁴ You said, "The LORD our God has let us see how great and glorious he is. We've heard his voice come from the fire. Today we've seen that people can live even if God speaks to them.

²⁵ Why should we die? This great fire will consume us! If we continue to hear the voice of the LORD our God, we'll die!

²⁶ Who has ever heard the voice of the living God speak from a fire, as we did, and lived?

²⁷ Moses, go and listen to everything that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We'll listen and obey."

²⁸ When the LORD heard the words that you spoke to me, he said, "I have heard what these people said to you. Everything they said was good.

²⁹ If only they would fear me and obey all my commandments as long as they live! Then things would go well for them and their children forever.

³⁰ "Tell the people to go back to their tents.

³¹ But you stay here with me. I will give you all the commands, laws, and rules that you must teach them to obey in the land which I'm giving them to possess."

³² So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you. Never stop living this way.

³³ Follow all the directions the LORD your God has given you. Then you will continue to live, life will go well for you, and you will live for a long time in the land that you are going to possess.

6 ¹ These are the commands, laws, and rules the LORD your God commanded me to teach you. Obey them after you enter the land and take possession of it.

² As long as you live, you, your children, and your grandchildren must fear the LORD your God. All of you must obey all his laws and commands that I'm giving you, and you will live a long time.

³ Listen, Israel, and be careful to obey these laws. Then things will go well for you and your population will increase in a land flowing with milk and honey,

as the LORD God of your ancestors promised you.

⁴ Listen, Israel: The LORD is our God. The LORD is the only God.

⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ Take to heart these words that I give you today.

⁷ Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you're at home or away, when you lie down or get up.

⁸ Write them down, and tie them around your wrist, and wear them as headbands as a reminder.

⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

¹⁰ The LORD your God will bring you into the land and give it to you, as he swore to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This land will have large, prosperous cities that you didn't build.

¹¹ Your houses will be filled with all kinds of things that you didn't put there. You will have cisterns that you didn't dig and vineyards and olive trees that you didn't plant. After you have eaten all that you want,

¹² be careful that you don't forget the LORD, who brought you out of slavery in Egypt.

¹³ You must fear the LORD your God, serve him, and take your oaths only in his name.

¹⁴ Never worship any of the gods worshiped by the people around you.

¹⁵ If you do, the LORD your God will become very angry with you and will wipe you off the face of the earth, because the LORD your God, who is with you, is a God who does not tolerate rivals.

¹⁶ Never test the LORD your God as you did at Massah.

¹⁷ Be sure to obey the commands of the LORD your God and the regulations and laws he has given you.

¹⁸ Do what the LORD considers right and good. Then things will go well for you, and you will enter and take possession of that good land which the LORD promised to your ancestors with an oath.

¹⁹ You will see the LORD expel your enemies as he said he would.

²⁰ In the future your children will ask you, "What do these regulations, laws, and rules which the LORD our God commanded you mean to you?"

²¹ Tell them, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the LORD used his mighty hand to bring us out of there.

²² Right before our eyes the LORD did miraculous signs and amazing things that were spectacular but terrible for Egypt, Pharaoh, and his whole family.

²³ The LORD led us out of there to bring us here and give us this land he promised to our ancestors with an oath.

²⁴ The LORD our God commanded us to obey all these laws and to fear him. These laws are for our own good as long as we live so that he will preserve our lives. It's still true today.

²⁵ This is how we'll have the LORD'S approval: If we faithfully obey all these laws in the presence of the LORD our God, as he has commanded us."

7 ¹ The LORD your God will bring you to the land you're about to enter and take possession of. He will force many nations out of your way: the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites—seven nations larger and more powerful than you.

² When the LORD your God gives them to you and you defeat them, destroy

every one of them because they have been claimed by the LORD. Don't make any treaties with them or show them any mercy.

³ Never marry any of them. Never let your daughters marry their sons or your sons marry their daughters.

⁴ These people will turn your children away from me to worship other gods. Then the LORD will get very angry with you and will quickly destroy you.

⁵ But this is what you must do to these people: Tear down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah, and burn their idols.

⁶ You are a holy people, who belong to the LORD your God. He chose you to be his own special possession out of all the nations on earth.

⁷ The LORD set his heart on you and chose you, even though you didn't

outnumber all the other people. You were the smallest of all nations.

⁸ You were chosen because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors. So he used his mighty hand to bring you out. He freed you from slavery under Pharaoh (the king of Egypt).

⁹ Keep in mind that the LORD your God is the only God. He is a faithful God, who keeps his promise and is merciful to thousands of generations of those who love him and obey his commands.

¹⁰ But he sends destruction to pay back everyone who hates him. He never takes long to pay back anyone who hates him.

¹¹ So obey the commands, laws, and rules I'm giving you today.

¹² If you listen to these rules and faithfully obey them, the LORD your God will keep his promise to you and

be merciful to you, as he swore to your ancestors.

¹³ He will love you, bless you, and increase the number of your descendants. He will bless you with children. He will bless your land with produce: grain, new wine, and olive oil. He will bless your herds with calves, and your flocks with lambs and kids. This will all happen in the land the LORD will give you, as he swore to your ancestors.

¹⁴ You will be blessed more than any other people. Your men and women will be able to have children, and your animals will be able to have offspring.

¹⁵ The LORD will keep you from having any kind of illness. He will not strike you with any of the terrible diseases you experienced in Egypt. Instead, he will strike all those who hate you.

¹⁶ You must destroy all the people the LORD your God hands over to you. Have

no pity on them, and never worship their gods, because they will be a trap for you.

¹⁷ You may say to yourselves, "These nations outnumber us. How can we force them out?"

¹⁸ Don't be afraid of them. Remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all of Egypt.

¹⁹ You saw with your own eyes the terrible plagues, the miraculous signs, and the amazing things the LORD did. He used his mighty hand and powerful arm to bring you out. He will do the same thing to all the people you're afraid of.

²⁰ The LORD your God will spread panic among them until they all die. There will be no one left—not even those who were hiding from you.

²¹ Don't be afraid of them, because the LORD your God is with you. He is a great and awe-inspiring God.

²² Little by little he will force these nations out of your way. You won't be able to wipe them out quickly. Otherwise, you would be overrun with wild animals.

²³ The LORD your God will hand these people over to you and will throw them into a great panic until they're destroyed.

²⁴ He will hand their kings over to you, and no one on earth will even remember their names. No one will be able to stop you. You will destroy them all.

²⁵ Burn their idols. Don't ever long for the silver and gold on these idols or take any of it for yourselves. It might be a trap for you. Besides, these idols are disgusting to the LORD your God.

²⁶ Never bring a disgusting idol into your house. If you do, you and the idol will be destroyed. Consider it detestable and disgusting. It must be destroyed."

8 ¹ Be careful to obey every command I give you today. Then you will live, and your population will increase. You will enter and take possession of the land that the LORD promised to your ancestors with an oath.

² Remember that for 40 years the LORD your God led you on your journey in the desert. He did this in order to humble you and test you. He wanted to know whether or not you would wholeheartedly obey his commands.

³ So he made you suffer from hunger and then fed you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had seen before. He did this to teach you that a person cannot live on bread alone but on every word that the LORD speaks.

⁴ Your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't swell these past 40 years.

⁵ Learn this lesson by heart: The LORD your God was disciplining you as parents discipline their children.

⁶ Obey the commands of the LORD your God. Follow his directions, and fear him.

⁷ The LORD your God is bringing you into a good land. It is a land with rivers that don't dry up. There are springs and underground streams flowing through the valleys and hills.

⁸ The land has wheat and barley, grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates. The land has honey and olive trees for olive oil.

⁹ The land will have enough food for you, and you will have everything you need. The land has rocks with iron ore, and you will be able to mine copper ore in the hills.

¹⁰ When you have eaten all you want, thank the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

¹¹ Be careful that you don't forget the LORD your God. Don't fail to obey his commands, rules, and laws that I'm giving you today.

¹² You will eat all you want. You will build nice houses and live in them.

¹³ Your herds and flocks, silver and gold, and everything else you have will increase.

¹⁴ When this happens, be careful that you don't become arrogant and forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of slavery in Egypt.

¹⁵ He was the one who led you through that vast and dangerous desert—a thirsty and arid land, with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He was the one who made water come out of solid rock for you.

¹⁶ He was the one who fed you in the desert with manna, which your ancestors had never seen. He did this in

order to humble you and test you. But he also did this so that things would go well for you in the end.

¹⁷ You may say to yourselves, "I became wealthy because of my own ability and strength."

¹⁸ But remember the LORD your God is the one who makes you wealthy. He's confirming the promise which he swore to your ancestors. It's still in effect today.

¹⁹ I warn you today that if you forget the LORD your God and follow other gods, and if you serve them and bow down to them, you will certainly be destroyed.

²⁰ The LORD is going to destroy other nations as you enter the land. You will be destroyed like them if you don't obey the LORD your God.

9¹ Listen, Israel, you're about to cross the Jordan River. You'll be forcing out nations that are larger and stronger than

you, with big cities that have sky-high walls.

² Their people are tall and strong. They're descendants of Anak. You know all about them. You've also heard it said, "Who can oppose the descendants of Anak?"

³ Realize today that the LORD your God is the one who is going ahead of you like a raging fire. He will wipe them out and will use you to crush their power. You will take possession of their land and will quickly destroy them as the LORD promised you.

⁴ When the LORD your God expels these people in front of you, don't say to yourselves, "Because we've been living right, the LORD brought us here to take possession of this land." No, it's because these nations are so wicked that the LORD is forcing them out of your way.

⁵ It's not because you've been living right or because you're so honest that you're entering to take possession of their land. It's because these people are so wicked that the LORD your God is forcing them out of your way. It's also because the LORD wants to confirm the promise he swore to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

⁶ So understand this: It's not because you've been living right that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess. You are impossible to deal with!

⁷ Never forget how you made the LORD your God angry in the desert. You've rebelled against the LORD from the day you left Egypt until you came here.

⁸ Even at Mount Horeb you made the LORD so angry that he wanted to destroy you.

⁹ When I went up on the mountain to get the stone tablets, the tablets of the

promise that the LORD made to you, I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights without food or water.

¹⁰ Then the LORD gave me the two stone tablets inscribed by God himself. On them were written all the words that the LORD spoke to you from the fire on the mountain on the day of the assembly.

¹¹ At the end of the 40 days and 40 nights, the LORD gave me the two stone tablets with his promise on them.

¹² He told me, "Leave right away. Your people whom you brought out of Egypt have ruined everything. They've quickly turned from the way I commanded them to live. They've made an idol for themselves."

¹³ The LORD also said to me, "I've seen these people, and they are impossible to deal with.

¹⁴ Leave me alone! I'll destroy them and wipe their name off the earth. Then I'll make you into a nation larger and stronger than they are."

¹⁵ So I turned and went down the mountain while it was still burning with fire. I was carrying the two tablets with the promise on them.

¹⁶ Then I saw that you had sinned against the LORD your God. You had made a statue of a calf for yourselves. You had quickly turned from the way the LORD commanded you to live.

¹⁷ I took the two tablets, threw them down, and smashed them in front of you.

¹⁸ Once again I threw myself down in front of the LORD. I went without food and water for 40 days and 40 nights because of the sin you committed. You did what the LORD considered evil and made him furious.

¹⁹ I was terrified of the LORD'S anger and fury. He was so angry he wanted to destroy you. But once more the LORD listened to me.

²⁰ The LORD also became very angry with Aaron and wanted to destroy him. But at that time I prayed for Aaron, too.

²¹ I took that sinful calf you made and burned it. I crushed it, grinding it thoroughly until it was as fine as powder. Then I threw the powder into the river that flowed down the mountain.

²² You also made the LORD angry at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth Hattaavah.

²³ When the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, he said, "Go and take possession of the land I'm giving you." But you rebelled against the word of the LORD your God. You didn't believe him or obey him.

²⁴ You've rebelled against the LORD as long as I've known you.

²⁵ I threw myself down in front of the LORD for 40 days and 40 nights because the LORD said he would destroy you.

²⁶ I prayed to the LORD and said, "Almighty LORD, don't destroy your people. They belong to you. You saved them by your great power and used your mighty hand to bring them out of Egypt.

²⁷ Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Disregard the stubbornness, wickedness, and sin of these people.

²⁸ Otherwise, the country we left will say, "The LORD wasn't able to bring them to the land he promised them. He hated them. That's why he brought them out—to let them die in the desert."

²⁹ They are your people. They belong to you. You used your great strength and powerful arm to bring them out of Egypt.

10 ¹ At that time the LORD said to me, "Cut two more stone tablets like the first ones, and come up to me on the mountain. Also make an ark out of wood.

² I will write on the tablets the same words that were on the first tablets, which you smashed. Then you will put them in the ark."

³ I made an ark out of acacia wood. I cut two more stone tablets like the first ones. I carried the two tablets up the mountain.

⁴ The LORD wrote on these tablets the same words as before, the ten commandments. He had spoken these words to you from the fire on the mountain on the day of the assembly. Then the LORD gave them to me.

⁵ I came back down the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I had made.

They are still there, where the LORD commanded me to put them.

⁶ The Israelites moved from the wells of the Jaakanites to Moserah. Aaron died there and was buried, and his son Eleazar succeeded him as priest.

⁷ They moved from there to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land with rivers that don't dry up.

⁸ At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the LORD'S promise, to stand in the LORD'S presence when they serve him as priests, and to praise his name, as they still do today.

⁹ This is why the tribe of Levi has no land of their own as the other tribes have. The LORD your God is their only possession, as he promised them.

¹⁰ I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights as I did the first time.

Once again the LORD listened to me and agreed not to destroy you.

¹¹ The LORD said to me, "Lead the people on their journey. They will enter and take possession of the land I will give them, as I swore to their ancestors."

¹² Israel, what does the LORD your God want you to do? He wants you to fear him, follow all his directions, love him, and worship him with all your heart and with all your soul.

¹³ The LORD wants you to obey his commands and laws that I'm giving you today for your own good.

¹⁴ Remember that the sky, the highest heaven, the earth and everything it contains belong to the LORD your God.

¹⁵ The LORD set his heart on your ancestors and loved them. Because of this, today he chooses you, their descendants, out of all the people of the world.

¹⁶ So circumcise your uncircumcised hearts, and don't be impossible to deal with any longer.

¹⁷ The LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, powerful, and awe-inspiring God. He never plays favorites and never takes a bribe.

¹⁸ He makes sure orphans and widows receive justice. He loves foreigners and gives them food and clothes.

¹⁹ So you should love foreigners, because you were foreigners living in Egypt.

²⁰ Fear the LORD your God, worship him, be loyal to him, and take your oaths in his name.

²¹ He is your glory. He is your God, who did for you these spectacular and awe-inspiring deeds you saw with your own eyes.

²² When your ancestors went to Egypt, there were 70 of them. Now the LORD

your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

11 ¹ Love the LORD your God, and do what he wants you to do. Always obey his laws, rules, and commands.

² Remember today the discipline you learned from the LORD your God. (I'm not talking to your children. They didn't see or experience any of this.) You saw and experienced his great power—his mighty hand and powerful arm.

³ You saw the miraculous signs and deeds he did in Egypt to Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) and to his whole country.

⁴ You saw what he did to the Egyptian army, its horses and chariots. He drowned them in the Red Sea when they pursued you. So the LORD destroyed them forever.

⁵ You saw what he did for you in the desert until you came here.

⁶ You also saw what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, from the tribe of Reuben. In the middle of all the Israelites the ground opened up and swallowed them, their families, their tents, and every living creature with them.

⁷ You saw with your own eyes all these spectacular things that the LORD did.

⁸ Obey all the commands I'm giving you today. Then you will have the strength to enter and take possession of the land once you've crossed the Jordan River.

⁹ Then you will also live for a long time in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors and their descendants—a land flowing with milk and honey.

¹⁰ The land you're about to enter and take possession of isn't like the land you left in Egypt. There you used to plant your seed, and you had to water it like a vegetable garden.

¹¹ The land you're about to enter is a land with hills and valleys, watered by rain from the sky.

¹² It is a land the LORD your God cares about. He watches over it all year long.

¹³ If you faithfully obey the commands that I'm giving you today, love the LORD your God, and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

¹⁴ I will send rain on your land at the right time, both in the fall and in the spring. Then you will gather your own grain, new wine, and olive oil.

¹⁵ I will provide grass in the fields for your animals, and you will be able to eat all you want.

¹⁶ Be careful, or you'll be tempted to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.

¹⁷ The LORD will become angry with you. He'll shut the sky so that there'll be no rain. Then the ground won't grow any

crops, and you'll quickly disappear from this good land the LORD is giving you.

¹⁸ Take these words of mine to heart and keep them in mind. Write them down, tie them around your wrist, and wear them as headbands as a reminder.

¹⁹ Teach them to your children, and talk about them when you're at home or away, when you lie down or get up.

²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

²¹ Then you and your children will live for a long time in this land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors—as long as there's a sky above the earth.

²² Faithfully obey all these commands I'm giving you. Love the LORD your God, follow all his directions, and be loyal to him.

²³ Then the LORD will force all these people out of your way. Then you will

take possession of the land belonging to people taller and stronger than you.

²⁴ I will give you every place on which you set foot. Your borders will be from the desert to Lebanon, from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea.

²⁵ No one will be able to stop you. As the LORD your God promised, he will make people terrified of you wherever you go in this land.

²⁶ Today I'm giving you the choice of a blessing or a curse.

²⁷ You'll be blessed if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I'm giving you today.

²⁸ You'll be cursed if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God, if you turn from the way I'm commanding you to live today, and if you worship other gods you never knew.

²⁹ When the LORD your God brings you into the land you're about to enter, recite the blessing from Mount Gerizim and the curse from Mount Ebal.

³⁰ (These mountains are on the west side of the Jordan, beyond the road that goes west, in the region of the Canaanites who live on the plains facing Gilgal, next to the oak trees of Moreh.)

³¹ You're about to cross the Jordan River to enter and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you take possession of it and live there,

³² be careful to obey all the laws and rules I'm giving you today.

12 ¹ Here are the laws and rules you must faithfully obey in the land that the LORD God of your ancestors is giving you as your own. You must obey them as long as you live in the land.

² Completely destroy all the worship sites on the high mountains, on the hills, and under every large tree. The people you're forcing out worship their gods in these places.

³ Tear down their altars, crush their sacred stones, burn their poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah, cut down their idols, and wipe out the names of their gods from those places.

⁴ Never worship the LORD your God in the way they worship their gods.

⁵ The LORD your God will choose a place out of all your tribes to live and put his name. Go there and worship him.

⁶ Bring him your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, one-tenth of your income, your contributions, the offerings you vow to bring, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your cattle, sheep, and goats.

⁷ There, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families will eat and enjoy everything you've worked for, because the LORD your God has blessed you.

⁸ Never worship in the way that it's being done here today, where everyone does whatever he considers right.

⁹ Up until now you haven't come to your place of rest, the property the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁰ But you will cross the Jordan River and settle in the land the LORD your God is giving you as your own property. He will give you peace from all your enemies around you so that you will live securely.

¹¹ Then the LORD your God will choose a place where his name will live. You must bring everything I command you to that place. Bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, one-tenth of your income, your contributions, and all the

best offerings you vow to bring to the LORD.

¹² Enjoy yourselves in the presence of the LORD your God along with your sons, daughters, male and female slaves, and the Levites. (The Levites live in your cities because they have no land of their own as you have.)

¹³ Be careful that you don't sacrifice your burnt offerings wherever you want.

¹⁴ Instead, sacrifice them only at the place that the LORD will choose in one of your tribes. There you must do everything I command you.

¹⁵ In whatever city you live, you may slaughter and eat as much meat as you want from what the LORD your God has blessed you with. Clean and unclean people may eat it as if they were eating a gazelle or a deer.

¹⁶ But never eat the blood. Pour it on the ground like water.

¹⁷ You may not eat the LORD'S offerings in your cities. Those offerings are: one-tenth of your grain, new wine, and olive oil; the firstborn of your cattle, sheep, or goats; the offerings you vow to bring; your freewill offerings; and your contributions.

¹⁸ Instead, you, your sons and daughters, male and female slaves, and the Levites who live in your cities must eat these in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose. There in the presence of the LORD your God enjoy everything you've worked for.

¹⁹ Don't forget to take care of the Levites as long as you live in your land.

²⁰ The LORD your God will expand your country's borders as he promised. You will say, "I'm hungry for meat." Then eat as much meat as you want.

²¹ If the place the LORD your God chooses to put his name is too far away

from you, you may slaughter an animal from the herds or flocks that the LORD has given you. Eat as much as you want in your city. I have commanded you to do this.

²² Eat it as you would eat a gazelle or a deer: Clean and unclean people may eat it together.

²³ However, be sure you never eat blood, because blood contains life. Never eat the life with the meat.

²⁴ Never eat blood. Pour it on the ground like water.

²⁵ If you don't eat blood, things will go well for you and your descendants. You will be doing what the LORD considers right.

²⁶ Take the holy things and the offerings you have vowed to bring, and go to the place the LORD will choose.

²⁷ Sacrifice the meat and the blood of your burnt offerings on the altar of

the LORD your God. The blood of your sacrifices is to be poured out beside the altar of the LORD your God, but you may eat the meat.

²⁸ Be sure you obey all these instructions I'm giving you. Then things will always go well for you and your descendants because you will be doing what the LORD your God considers good and right.

²⁹ The LORD your God will destroy the nations where you're going and force them out of your way. You will take possession of their land and live there.

³⁰ After they've been destroyed, be careful you aren't tempted to follow their customs. Don't even ask about their gods and say, "How did these people worship their gods? We want to do what they did."

³¹ Never worship the LORD your God in the way they worship their gods,

because everything they do for their gods is disgusting to the LORD. He hates it! They even burn their sons and daughters as sacrifices to their gods.

³² Be sure to do everything I command you. Never add anything to it or take anything away from it.

13 ¹ One of your people, claiming to be a prophet or to have prophetic dreams, may predict a miraculous sign or an amazing thing.

² What he predicts may even take place. But don't listen to that prophet or dreamer if he says, "Let's worship and serve other gods." (Those gods may be gods you've never heard of.)

³ The LORD your God is testing you to find out if you really love him with all your heart and with all your soul.

⁴ Worship the LORD your God, fear him, obey his commands, listen to what he says, serve him, and be loyal to him.

⁵ That prophet or dreamer must be put to death because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and freed you from slavery. He was trying to lead you away from following the directions the LORD your God gave you. You must get rid of this evil.

⁶ Your own brother, son, or daughter, the wife you love, or your best friend may secretly tempt you, saying, "Let's go worship other gods." (Those gods may be gods that you and your ancestors never knew.

⁷ They may be the gods of the people around you, who live near or far, from one end of the land to the other.)

⁸ Don't be influenced by any of these people or listen to them. Have no pity on them. Don't feel sorry for them or protect them.

⁹ You must put them to death. You must start the execution. Then all the other people will join you in putting them to death.

¹⁰ Stone them to death because they were trying to lead you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of slavery in Egypt.

¹¹ All Israel will hear about it and be afraid. Then no one among you will ever do such a wicked thing again.

¹² You may hear that the residents in one of the cities which the LORD your God is giving you to live in

¹³ have been led away from the LORD your God by worthless people. You may hear that these people have been saying, "Let's worship other gods." (Those gods may be gods you've never heard of.)

¹⁴ Then make a thorough investigation. If it is true, and you can prove that this

disgusting thing has been done among you,

¹⁵ you must kill the residents of that city with swords and destroy that city and everyone in it, including the animals, because they are claimed by God.

¹⁶ Gather their goods into the middle of the city square. Then burn their city and all their goods as a burnt offering to the LORD your God. It must remain a mound of ruins and never be rebuilt.

¹⁷ Don't ever take any of the things claimed for destruction. Then the LORD will stop being angry and will show you mercy. In his mercy he will make your population increase, as he swore to your ancestors.

¹⁸ The LORD your God will do this if you listen to him, obey all the commands that I'm giving you today, and do what he considers right.

14 ¹ You are the children of the LORD your God. So when someone dies, don't mourn by cutting yourselves or shaving bald spots on your head.

² You are people who are holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the people who live on earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his own special possession.

³ Never eat anything that is disgusting to the LORD.

⁴ Here are the kinds of animals you may eat: oxen, sheep, goats,

⁵ deer, gazelles, fallow deer, wild goats, mountain goats, antelope, and mountain sheep.

⁶ You may eat all animals that have completely divided hoofs and that also chew their cud.

⁷ But some animals chew their cud, while others have completely divided hoofs. You may not eat these kinds of animals. They include camels, rabbits,

and rock badgers. (Although they chew their cud, they don't have divided hoofs. They are unclean for you.)

⁸ Also, you may not eat pigs. (Although their hoofs are divided, they don't chew their cud.) Never eat their meat or touch their dead bodies.

⁹ Here's what you may eat of every creature that lives in the water: You may eat any creature that has fins and scales.

¹⁰ But never eat anything that doesn't have fins and scales. It is unclean for you.

¹¹ You may eat any clean bird.

¹² But here are the birds that you should never eat: eagles, bearded vultures, black vultures,

¹³ buzzards, all types of kites,

¹⁴ all types of crows,

¹⁵ ostriches, nighthawks, seagulls, all types of falcons,

¹⁶ little owls, great owls, barn owls,

¹⁷ pelicans, ospreys, cormorants,

¹⁸ storks, all types of herons, hoopoes, and bats.

¹⁹ Every swarming, winged insect is also unclean for you. They must never be eaten.

²⁰ However, you may eat any other kind of flying creature that is clean.

²¹ Never eat any creature that dies naturally. You may give it to the foreigners who live in your cities, and they may eat it. You may also sell it to foreigners who are visiting. But you are people who are holy to the LORD your God. Never cook a young goat in its mother's milk.

²² Every year be sure to save a tenth of the crops harvested from whatever you plant in your fields.

²³ Eat the tenth of your grain, new wine, and olive oil, and eat the firstborn of your cattle, sheep, and goats in the presence of the LORD your God in the

place he will choose to put his name. Then you will learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live.

²⁴ But the place the LORD your God will choose to put his name may be too far away. He may bless you with so much that you can't carry a tenth of your income that far.

²⁵ If so, exchange the tenth part of your income for silver. Take the silver with you, and go to the place the LORD your God will choose.

²⁶ Use the silver to buy whatever you want: cattle, sheep, goats, wine, liquor—whatever you choose. Then you and your family will eat and enjoy yourselves there in the presence of the LORD your God.

²⁷ Never forget to take care of the Levites who live in your cities. They have no land of their own as you have.

²⁸ At the end of every third year bring a tenth of that year's crop, and store it in your cities.

²⁹ Foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your cities may come to eat all they want. The Levites may also come because they have no land of their own as you have. Then the LORD your God will bless you in whatever work you do.

15 ¹ At the end of every seven years, you must cancel debts.

² This is what you will do: If you've made a loan, don't collect payment on the debt your neighbor still owes you. Don't demand that your neighbor or relative pay you, because the time for suspending payments on debts has been proclaimed in the LORD'S honor.

³ You may demand that a foreigner pay, but don't collect payment on the debt another Israelite still owes you.

⁴ In any case, there shouldn't be any poor people among you, because the LORD your God will certainly bless you in the land he is giving you as your own possession.

⁵ He will bless you only if you listen carefully to the LORD your God and faithfully obey all these commands I'm giving you today.

⁶ The LORD your God will bless you, as he promised. You will make loans to many nations, but you will not have to borrow from any of them. You will rule many nations, but no nation will ever rule you.

⁷ This is what you must do whenever there are poor Israelites in one of your cities in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

⁸ Be generous to these poor people, and freely lend them as much as they

need. Never be hard–hearted and tight–fisted with them.

⁹ When the seventh year—the year when payments on debts are canceled—is near, you might be stingy toward poor Israelites and give them nothing. Be careful not to think these worthless thoughts. The poor will complain to the LORD about you, and you will be condemned for your sin.

¹⁰ Be sure to give to them without any hesitation. When you do this, the LORD your God will bless you in everything you work for and set out to do.

¹¹ There will always be poor people in the land. That’s why I command you to be generous to other Israelites who are poor and needy.

¹² Whenever Hebrew men or women are sold to you as slaves, they will be your slaves for six years. In the seventh year you must let them go free.

¹³ But when you let them go, don't send them away empty-handed.

¹⁴ Generously give them provisions—sheep from your flocks, grain from your threshing floor, and wine from your winepress. Be as generous to them as the LORD your God has been to you.

¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God freed you. That's why I'm giving you this command today.

¹⁶ But suppose a male slave says to you, "I don't want to leave you," because he loves you and your family and is happy with you.

¹⁷ Then take an awl and pierce it through his ear lobe into a door, and he will be your slave for life. Do the same to a female slave if she doesn't want to leave.

¹⁸ If you have to let your slave go free, it won't be a hardship for you. It would

have cost you twice as much to hire someone to do the same work for those six years. Besides, the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

¹⁹ You must dedicate every firstborn male from your herds and flocks to the LORD your God. Never use a firstborn ox for work, and never shear a firstborn sheep.

²⁰ Every year you and your family must eat these animals in the presence of the LORD your God in the place the LORD will choose.

²¹ But if an animal is lame or blind or has any other serious defect—never sacrifice it to the LORD your God.

²² Eat it in your city. Clean and unclean people may eat them together as if they were eating a gazelle or a deer.

²³ But never eat the blood. Pour it on the ground like water.

16 ¹ Honor the LORD your God by celebrating Passover in the month of Abib. In the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt at night.

² Slaughter an animal from your flock or herd as the Passover sacrifice to the LORD your God. Do this at the place where the LORD will choose for his name to live.

³ Never eat leavened bread with the meat from this sacrifice. Instead, for seven days you must eat unleavened bread at this festival. (It is the bread of misery because you left Egypt in a hurry.) Eat this bread so that, as long as you live, you will remember the day you left Egypt.

⁴ There should be no yeast anywhere in your land for seven days. Never leave until morning any of the meat you slaughter on the evening of the first day.

⁵ You're not allowed to slaughter the animals for Passover in any of the cities the LORD your God is giving you.

⁶ Instead, slaughter your animals for Passover in the place where the LORD your God will choose for his name to live. Do this in the evening as the sun goes down. This is the same time you did it when you left Egypt.

⁷ Cook the meat, and eat it at the place the LORD your God will choose. In the morning you may go back to your tents.

⁸ For six days eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day hold a religious assembly dedicated to the LORD your God. Don't do any work that day.

⁹ Count seven weeks from the time you start harvesting grain.

¹⁰ Then celebrate the Festival of Weeks to the LORD your God. Bring a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you.

¹¹ Enjoy yourselves in the presence of the LORD your God along with your sons, daughters, male and female slaves, the Levites who live in your cities, the foreigners, orphans, and widows who live among you. Enjoy yourselves at the place the LORD your God will choose for his name to live.

¹² Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and obey these laws carefully.

¹³ After you have gathered the grain from your threshing floor and made your wine, celebrate the Festival of Booths for seven days.

¹⁴ Enjoy yourselves at the festival along with your sons, daughters, male and female slaves, the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your cities.

¹⁵ For seven days you will celebrate this festival dedicated to the LORD your God in the place he will choose. You

will enjoy yourselves, because the LORD your God will bless all your harvest and all your work.

¹⁶ Three times a year all your men must come into the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Booths. But no one may come into the presence of the LORD without an offering.

¹⁷ Each man must bring a gift in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given him.

¹⁸ Appoint judges and officers for your tribes in every city that the LORD your God is giving you. They are to judge the people fairly.

¹⁹ Never pervert justice. Instead, be impartial. Never take a bribe, because bribes blind wise people and deny justice to those who are in the right.

²⁰ Strive for nothing but justice so that you will live and take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

²¹ When you build the altar for the LORD your God, never plant beside it any tree dedicated to the goddess Asherah.

²² Never set up a sacred stone. These are things the LORD your God hates.

17 ¹ Never offer an ox or a sheep that has a defect or anything seriously wrong with it as a sacrifice to the LORD your God. That would be disgusting to him.

² In one of the cities the LORD your God is giving you, there may be a man or woman among you who is doing what the LORD considers evil. This person may be disregarding the conditions of the LORD'S promise

³ by worshiping and bowing down to other gods, the sun, the moon, or the

whole army of heaven. I have forbidden this.

⁴ When you are told about it, investigate it thoroughly. If it's true and it can be proven that this disgusting thing has been done in Israel,

⁵ then bring the man or woman who did this evil thing to the gates of your city, and stone that person to death.

⁶ The person can only be sentenced to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses, but no one should ever be sentenced to death on the testimony of only one witness.

⁷ The witnesses must start the execution, then all the other people will join them in putting the person to death. You must get rid of this evil.

⁸ There may be a case that is too hard for you to decide. It may involve murder, assault, or a dispute—any case which may be brought to court in your cities.

Take this case to the place that the LORD your God will choose.

⁹ Go to the Levitical priests and the judge who is serving at that time. Ask for their opinion, and they will give you their verdict

¹⁰ at the place that the LORD will choose. Do what they tell you. Follow all their instructions carefully,

¹¹ and do what they tell you to do in their verdict. Do exactly what they tell you to do in their decision.

¹² If anyone deliberately disobeys the priest (who serves the LORD your God) or the judge, that person must die. You must get rid of this evil in Israel.

¹³ When all the people hear about it, they will be afraid and will never defy God's law again.

¹⁴ You will enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You will take possession of it and live there. You will

say, "Let's have our own king like all the other nations around us."

¹⁵ Be sure to appoint the king the LORD your God will choose. He must be one of your own people. Never let a foreigner be king, because he's not one of your own people.

¹⁶ The king must never own a large number of horses or make the people return to Egypt to get more horses. The LORD has told you, "You will never go back there again."

¹⁷ The king must never have a large number of wives, or he will turn away from God. And he must never own a lot of gold and silver.

¹⁸ When he becomes king, he should have the Levitical priests make him a copy of these teachings on a scroll.

¹⁹ He must keep it with him and read it his entire life. He will learn to fear the LORD his God and faithfully obey

everything found in these teachings and laws.

²⁰ Then he won't think he's better than the rest of his people, and he won't disobey these commands in any way. So he and his sons will rule for a long time in Israel.

18 ¹ The Levitical priests—in fact, the whole tribe of Levi—will receive no land or property of their own like the rest of the Israelites. They will eat what has been sacrificed to the LORD. These sacrifices will be what they receive.

² So the Levites will have no land of their own like the other Israelites. The LORD will be their inheritance, as he promised them.

³ This is what the people owe the priests whenever they sacrifice an ox, a sheep, or a goat: the shoulder, jaws, and stomach.

⁴ Also, give them the first produce harvested: grain, new wine, olive oil, and the first wool you shear from your sheep.

⁵ Out of all your tribes, the LORD your God has chosen the Levites and their descendants to do the work of serving in the name of the LORD forever.

⁶ A Levite from any of your cities in Israel may come from where he has been living to the place the LORD will choose. He may come as often as he wants

⁷ and may serve in the name of the LORD his God like all the other Levites who do their work in the LORD'S presence.

⁸ If he does, he'll get the same amount of food as they do, in addition to what he gets from selling his family's goods.

⁹ When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, never learn the disgusting practices of those nations.

¹⁰ You must never sacrifice your sons or daughters by burning them alive, practice black magic, be a fortuneteller, witch, or sorcerer,

¹¹ cast spells, ask ghosts or spirits for help, or consult the dead.

¹² Whoever does these things is disgusting to the LORD. The LORD your God is forcing these nations out of your way because of their disgusting practices.

¹³ You must have integrity in dealing with the LORD your God.

¹⁴ These nations you are forcing out listen to fortunetellers and to those who practice black magic. But the LORD your God won't let you do anything like that.

¹⁵ The LORD your God will send you a prophet, an Israelite like me. You must listen to him.

¹⁶ This is what you asked the LORD your God to give you on the day of the

assembly at Mount Horeb. You said, "We never want to hear the voice of the LORD our God or see this raging fire again. If we do, we'll die!"

¹⁷ The LORD told me, "What they've said is good.

¹⁸ So I will send them a prophet, an Israelite like you. I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.

¹⁹ Whoever refuses to listen to the words that prophet speaks in my name will answer to me.

²⁰ But any prophet who dares to say something in my name that I didn't command him to say or who speaks in the name of other gods must die."

²¹ You may be wondering, "How can we recognize that the LORD didn't speak this message?"

²² If a prophet speaks in the LORD'S name and what he says doesn't happen

or come true, then it didn't come from the LORD. That prophet has spoken on his own authority. Never be afraid of him.

19 ¹ The LORD your God will destroy all the nations that are living in the land that he's giving you. You will force them out and live in their cities and houses.

² When all this is done, set aside three cities in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

³ Provide a route to each of these cities and divide the land that the LORD your God is giving you into three regions. Whoever kills someone may run to one of these cities.

⁴ A person who unintentionally kills someone he never hated in the past may run to one of these cities to save his life.

⁵ Suppose two people go into the woods to cut wood. As one of them

swings the ax to cut down a tree, the head flies off the handle, hits, and kills the other person. The one who accidentally killed the other person may run to one of these cities and save his life.

⁶ Otherwise, in a rage the relative who has the authority to avenge the death will pursue him. If the place is too far away, the relative may catch up with him and take his life even though he didn't deserve the death penalty, because in the past he never hated the person he killed.

⁷ This is why I'm commanding you to set aside three cities for yourselves.

⁸ The LORD your God may expand your country's borders as he promised your ancestors with an oath. He may give you the whole land he promised to give them.

⁹ He may do this because you faithfully obey all these commands I am now giving you—to love the LORD your God and follow his directions as long as you live. If this happens, you may add three more cities of refuge to these three.

¹⁰ That way, innocent people won't be killed in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you won't be guilty of murder.

¹¹ Suppose someone hates another person, waits in ambush for him, attacks him, takes his life, and runs to one of these cities.

¹² If someone does this, the leaders of your city must send for that person. They must take him from that city and hand him over to the relative who has the authority to avenge the death. He must die.

¹³ They must have no pity on him. The guilt of murdering an innocent person

must be removed from Israel. Then things will go well for Israel.

¹⁴ Never move your neighbor's original boundary marker on any property in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁵ One witness is never enough to convict someone of a crime, offense, or sin he may have committed. Cases must be settled based on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

¹⁶ This is what you must do whenever a witness takes the stand to accuse a person falsely of a crime.

¹⁷ The two people involved must stand in the LORD'S presence, in front of the priests and judges who are serving at that time.

¹⁸ The judges must make a thorough investigation. If it is found that the witness lied when he testified against the other Israelite,

¹⁹ then do to him what he planned to do to the other person. You must get rid of this evil.

²⁰ When the rest of the people hear about this, they will be afraid. Never again will such an evil thing be done among you.

²¹ Have no pity on him: Take a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot.

20 ¹ When you go to war against your enemies, you may see horses, chariots, and armies larger than yours. Don't be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, will be with you.

² Before the battle starts, a priest must come and speak to the troops.

³ He should tell them, "Listen, Israel, today you're going into battle against your enemies. Don't lose your courage!

Don't be afraid or alarmed or tremble because of them.

⁴ The LORD your God is going with you. He will fight for you against your enemies and give you victory."

⁵ The officers should tell the troops, "If you have built a new house but not dedicated it, you may go home. Otherwise, you might die in battle, and someone else will dedicate it.

⁶ If you have planted a vineyard and not enjoyed the grapes, you may go home. Otherwise, you might die in battle, and someone else will enjoy the grapes.

⁷ If you are engaged to a woman but have not married her, you may go home. Otherwise, you might die in battle, and someone else will marry her."

⁸ The officers should also tell the troops, "If you are afraid or have lost your courage, you may go home. Then

you won't ruin the morale of the other Israelites."

⁹ When the officers finish speaking to the troops, they should appoint commanders to lead them.

¹⁰ When you approach a city to attack it, offer its people a peaceful way to surrender.

¹¹ If they accept it and open their gates to you, then all the people there will be made to do forced labor and serve you.

¹² If they won't accept your offer of peace but declare war on you, set up a blockade around the city.

¹³ When the LORD your God hands the city over to you, kill every man in that city with your swords.

¹⁴ But take the women and children, the cattle and everything else in the city, including all its goods, as your loot. You may enjoy your enemies' goods that the LORD your God has given you.

¹⁵ This is what you must do to all the cities that are far away which don't belong to the nations nearby.

¹⁶ However, you must not spare anyone's life in the cities of these nations that the LORD your God is giving you as your property.

¹⁷ You must claim the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites for the LORD and completely destroy them, as the LORD your God has commanded you.

¹⁸ Otherwise, they will teach you to do all the disgusting things they do for their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God.

¹⁹ This is what you must do whenever you blockade a city for a long time in order to capture it in war. Don't harm any of its fruit trees with an ax. You can eat the fruit. Never cut those trees

down, because the trees of the field are not people you have come to blockade.

²⁰ You may destroy trees that you know are not fruit trees. You may cut them down and use them in your blockade until you capture the city.

21 ¹ This is what you must do if you find a murder victim lying in a field in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. If no one knows who committed the murder,

² your leaders and judges must go and measure the distance from the body to each of the neighboring cities.

³ When it has been determined which city is nearest the body, the leaders from that city must choose a heifer that has never been put to work and never worn a yoke.

⁴ The leaders of that city will bring the heifer down to a river, to a location where the land hasn't been plowed or

planted. At the river they must break the heifer's neck.

⁵ The priests, the descendants of Levi, must come forward. The LORD your God has chosen them to serve him as priests and to bless people in the LORD'S name. Their decision is final in all cases involving a disagreement or an assault.

⁶ All the leaders from the city which was nearest the murder victim must wash their hands over the dead heifer.

⁷ Then they must make this formal statement: "We didn't commit this murder, and we didn't witness it.

⁸ LORD, make peace with your people Israel, whom you freed. Don't let the guilt of this unsolved murder remain among your people Israel." Then there will be peace with the LORD despite the murder.

⁹ This is how you will get rid of the guilt of an unsolved murder by doing what the LORD considers right.

¹⁰ When you go to war with your enemies and the LORD your God hands them over to you, you may take them captive.

¹¹ If you see a beautiful woman among the captives and have your heart set on her, you may marry her.

¹² Bring her into your home. She must shave her head, cut her nails,

¹³ and no longer wear the clothes she was wearing when you captured her. Then she may live in your house and mourn the loss of her father and mother for one month. After that, you may sleep with her. Then you will become husband and wife.

¹⁴ But if it happens that you are no longer pleased with her, let her go wherever she wants. You must never sell

her or mistreat her as if she were a slave, since you've already had sex with her.

¹⁵ A man might have two wives and love one but not the other. Both wives might have children, and the firstborn son might belong to the wife that the man doesn't love.

¹⁶ When the day comes for the father to give his sons their inheritance, he can't treat the son of the wife he loves as if that son were the firstborn. This would show a total disregard for the real firstborn (the son of the wife he doesn't love).

¹⁷ Instead, he must recognize the son of the wife he doesn't love as the firstborn. He must give that son a double portion of whatever he owns. That son is the very first son he had. The rights of the firstborn son are his.

¹⁸ Parents might have a stubborn and rebellious son who doesn't obey them.

Even though they punish him, he still won't listen to them.

¹⁹ His father and mother must take him to the leaders of the city at the city gate.

²⁰ They will say to the leaders of the city, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He won't obey us. He eats too much and is a drunk."

²¹ All the men of the city should stone him to death. You must get rid of this evil. When all Israel hears about it, they will be afraid.

²² When a convicted person is put to death,

²³ never leave his dead body hung on a pole overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone whose body is hung on a pole is cursed by God. The land that the LORD your God is giving you must never become unclean.

22 ¹ If you see another Israelite's ox or sheep out where it doesn't

belong, don't pretend that you don't see it. Make sure you take it back.

² If the owner doesn't live near you or you don't know who owns it, take the animal home with you. Keep it until the owner comes looking for it. Then give it back.

³ Do the same if you find a donkey, some clothes, or anything else that another Israelite may have lost. Don't pretend that you don't know what to do.

⁴ If you see another Israelite's donkey or ox lying on the road, don't pretend that you don't see it. Make sure you help him get it back on its feet.

⁵ A woman must never wear anything men would wear, and a man must never wear women's clothes. Whoever does this is disgusting to the LORD your God.

⁶ Whenever you're traveling and find a nest containing chicks or eggs, this is what you must do. If the mother bird is

sitting on the nest, never take her with the chicks.

⁷ You may take the chicks, but make sure you let the mother go. Then things will go well for you, and you will live for a long time.

⁸ Whenever you build a new house, put a railing around the edge of the roof. Then you won't be responsible for a death at your home if someone falls off the roof.

⁹ Never plant anything between the rows in your vineyard. Otherwise, you will have to give everything that grows there to the holy place. This includes the crop you planted and the grapes from the vineyard.

¹⁰ Never plow with an ox and a donkey harnessed together.

¹¹ Never wear clothes made of wool and linen woven together.

¹² Make tassels on the four corners of the shawl you wear over your clothes.

¹³ A man might marry a woman, sleep with her, and decide he doesn't like her.

¹⁴ Then he might make up charges against her and ruin her reputation by saying, "I married this woman. But when I slept with her, I found out she wasn't a virgin."

¹⁵ The girl's father and mother must go to the city gate where the leaders of the city are and submit the evidence that their daughter was a virgin.

¹⁶ The girl's father will tell the leaders, "I gave my daughter in marriage to this man, but he doesn't like her.

¹⁷ Now he has made up charges against her. He says he found out that my daughter wasn't a virgin. But here's the evidence!" Then the girl's parents must spread out the cloth in front of the leaders of the city.

¹⁸ The leaders of that city must take the man and punish him.

¹⁹ They will fine him 2½ pounds of silver and give it to the girl's father. The husband ruined the reputation of an Israelite virgin. She will continue to be his wife, and he can never divorce her as long as he lives.

²⁰ But if the charge is true, and no evidence that the girl was a virgin can be found,

²¹ they must take the girl to the entrance of her father's house. The men of her city must stone her to death because she has committed such a godless act in Israel: She had sex before marriage, while she was still living in her father's house. You must get rid of this evil.

²² If a man is caught having sexual intercourse with a married woman, both

that man and the woman must die. You must get rid of this evil in Israel.

²³ This is what you must do when a man has sexual intercourse with a virgin who is engaged to another man. If this happens in a city,

²⁴ take them to the gate of the city and stone them to death. The girl must die because she was in a city and didn't scream for help. The man must die because he had sex with another man's wife. You must get rid of this evil.

²⁵ But if a man rapes an engaged girl out in the country, then only the man must die.

²⁶ Don't do anything to the girl. She has not committed a sin for which she deserves to die. This is like the case of someone who attacks and murders another person.

²⁷ The man found the girl out in the country. She may have screamed for help, but no one was there to rescue her.

²⁸ This is what you must do when a man rapes a virgin who isn't engaged. When the crime is discovered,

²⁹ the man who had sexual intercourse with her must give the girl's father $1\frac{1}{4}$ pounds of silver, and she will become his wife. Since he raped her, he can never divorce her as long as he lives.

³⁰ A man must never marry his father's wife because this would disgrace his father.

23 ¹ A man whose testicles are crushed or whose penis is cut off may never join the assembly of the LORD.

² A man born from an illicit union may not join the assembly of the LORD. No descendant of his may join the assembly of the LORD for ten generations.

³ Ammonites or Moabites may not join the assembly of the LORD. Not one descendant of theirs may join the assembly of the LORD for ten generations.

⁴ They cannot join because they didn't greet you with food and water on your trip from Egypt. They even hired Balaam, son of Beor, from Pethor in Aram Naharaim, to curse you.

⁵ But the LORD your God refused to listen to Balaam. Instead, he turned Balaam's curse into a blessing for you because the LORD your God loves you.

⁶ Never offer them peace or friendship as long as you live.

⁷ Never consider the Edomites disgusting. They're your relatives. Never consider the Egyptians disgusting. You once were foreigners living in their country.

⁸ Their grandchildren may join the assembly of the LORD.

⁹ When you're at war and have set up camp to fight your enemies, stay away from anything that will make you unclean.

¹⁰ If one of your men becomes unclean from a nocturnal emission, he must go outside the camp and stay there.

¹¹ Toward evening he must wash, and at sunset he may come back to camp.

¹² Choose a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself.

¹³ You must carry a pointed stick as part of your equipment. When you go outside to squat, dig a hole with it. When you're done, cover up your excrement.

¹⁴ The LORD your God moves around in your camp to protect you and hand your enemies over to you. So your camp must always be holy. This way, the LORD will

never see anything offensive among you and turn away from you.

¹⁵ If a slave escapes from his master and comes to you, don't return him to his master.

¹⁶ Let him stay with you and live among your people wherever he chooses, in any of your cities that seems best to him. Never mistreat him.

¹⁷ No Israelite man or woman should ever become a temple prostitute.

¹⁸ Never bring gifts or money earned by prostitution into the house of the LORD your God as an offering you vowed to give. These earnings are disgusting to the LORD your God.

¹⁹ Never charge another Israelite any interest on money, food, or anything else that is borrowed.

²⁰ You may charge a foreigner interest, but not an Israelite. Then the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do

once you've entered the land and taken possession of it.

²¹ If you make a vow to the LORD your God, don't avoid keeping it. The LORD your God expects you to keep it. You would be guilty of a sin if you didn't.

²² If you didn't make a vow, you would not be guilty.

²³ Make sure you do what you said you would do in your vow. You freely chose to make your vow to the LORD your God.

²⁴ If you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat as many grapes as you like until you're full. But never put any in your basket.

²⁵ If you go into your neighbor's grain field, you may pick grain by hand. But never use a sickle to cut your neighbor's grain.

24 ¹ This is what you must do if a husband writes out a certificate of divorce, gives it to his wife, and

makes her leave his house. (He divorced her because he found out something indecent about her and she no longer pleased him.)

² She might marry another man after she leaves his house.

³ If her second husband doesn't love her and divorces her, or if he dies,

⁴ her first husband is not allowed to marry her again. She has become unclean. This would be disgusting in the LORD'S presence. Don't pollute with sin the land that the LORD your God is giving you as your property.

⁵ A man who has recently been married will be free from military duty or any other public service. For one year he is free to stay at home and make his new wife happy.

⁶ Never let a family's handmill for grinding flour—or even part of a handmill—be taken to guarantee a loan.

The family wouldn't be able to prepare food in order to stay alive.

⁷ Whoever kidnaps another Israelite must die. The kidnapper must die, whether he treated the other person like a slave or sold him. You must get rid of this evil.

⁸ Guard against outbreaks of serious skin diseases. Be very careful to do exactly as the Levitical priests instruct you. Make sure you do what I commanded them.

⁹ Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on your trip from Egypt.

¹⁰ When you make a loan to your neighbor, don't go into his house to take a security deposit.

¹¹ Wait outside, and the person to whom you're making the loan will bring the deposit out to you.

¹² If the person is poor, don't keep the coat you took as a deposit overnight.

¹³ Make sure you bring it back to him at sunset. When he wears his coat to bed that night, he'll bless you. You will have done the right thing in the presence of the LORD your God.

¹⁴ Don't withhold pay from hired workers who are poor and needy, whether they are Israelites or foreigners living in one of your cities.

¹⁵ Pay them each day before sunset because they are poor and need their pay. Otherwise, they will complain to the LORD about you, and you will be condemned for your sin.

¹⁶ Parents must never be put to death for the crimes of their children, and children must never be put to death for the crimes of their parents. Each person must be put to death for his own crime.

¹⁷ Never deprive foreigners and orphans of justice. And never take widows' clothes to guarantee a loan.

¹⁸ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God freed you from slavery. So I'm commanding you to do this.

¹⁹ This is what you must do when you're harvesting wheat in your field. If you forget to bring in one of the bundles of wheat, don't go back to get it. Leave it there for foreigners, orphans, and widows. Then the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

²⁰ When you harvest olives from your trees, never knock down all of them. Leave some for foreigners, orphans, and widows.

²¹ When you pick the grapes in your vineyard, don't pick all of them. Leave some for foreigners, orphans, and widows.

²² Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. So I'm commanding you to do this.

25 ¹This is what you must do whenever two people have a disagreement that is brought into court. The judges will hear the case and decide who's right and who's wrong.

²If the person who's in the wrong deserves to be beaten, the judge will order him to lie down. Then the judge will have him beaten with as many lashes as the crime deserves.

³Forty lashes may be given, but no more. If an Israelite were given more than that, he would be publicly humiliated.

⁴Never muzzle an ox when it's threshing grain.

⁵When brothers live together and one of them dies without having a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother must marry her and sleep with her. He must do his duty as her brother-in-law.

⁶ Then the first son she has will carry the dead brother's name so that his name won't die out in Israel.

⁷ But if the man doesn't want to marry his brother's widow, she must go to the leaders of the city at the city gate. She must say, "My brother-in-law refuses to let his brother's name continue in Israel. He doesn't want to do his duty as my brother-in-law."

⁸ Then the leaders of the city must summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying that he doesn't want to marry her,

⁹ his brother's widow must go up to him in the presence of the leaders. She must take off one of his sandals and spit in his face. She must make this formal statement: "This is what happens to a man who refuses to continue his brother's family line."

¹⁰ Then in Israel his family will be called the Family of the Man Without a Sandal.

¹¹ This is what you must do when two men are fighting and the wife of one of them comes to rescue her husband from the man who is beating him. If she tries to stop the fight by grabbing the other man's genitals,

¹² cut off her hand. Have no pity on her.

¹³ Never carry two sets of weights, a heavier one and a lighter one.

¹⁴ Never have two kinds of measures in your house, a larger one and a smaller one.

¹⁵ Use accurate and honest weights and measures. Then you will live for a long time in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁶ Everyone who uses dishonest weights and measures is disgusting to the LORD.

¹⁷ Remember what the Amalekites did to you on your trip from Egypt.

¹⁸ They attacked you when you were tired and exhausted and killed all those who were lagging behind. They weren't afraid of God.

¹⁹ So when the LORD your God gives you peace from all your enemies around you in the land that he is giving you as your own property, don't forget to erase every memory of the Amalekites from the earth.

26 ¹ Soon you will enter and take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you as your property. When you have settled there,

² take some of the first produce harvested from the fields in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and put it in a basket. Then go to the place where the LORD your God will choose for his name to live.

³ Go to the priest who is serving at that time, and tell him, "I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land that the LORD is giving us, as he swore to our ancestors."

⁴ Then the priest will take the basket from you and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵ You will make this formal statement in the presence of the LORD your God: "My ancestors were wandering Arameans. There were only a few of them when they went to Egypt and lived as foreigners. But then they became a great, powerful, and large nation.

⁶ So the Egyptians treated us cruelly, oppressed us, and made us do back-breaking work for them.

⁷ We cried out to the LORD God of our ancestors, and he heard us. He saw our misery, suffering, and oppression.

⁸ Then the LORD used his mighty hand and powerful arm to bring us out of Egypt. He used spectacular and awe–inspiring deeds, miraculous signs, and amazing things.

⁹ He brought us to this place and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey.

¹⁰ So now I've brought the first produce harvested from the fields you gave me, LORD." You will place the basket in the presence of the LORD your God and bow down in front of him.

¹¹ Then you, the Levites, and the foreigners who live among you can enjoy all the good things which the LORD your God has given you and your family.

¹² Every third year is the year when you will store a tenth of that year's crops in your houses. During that year distribute what you have stored to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows in your cities, and they may eat all they want.

¹³ When you have distributed all that was stored, say to the LORD your God, "Nothing is left of the holy offering stored in my house. I distributed it to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows as you commanded me. I disobeyed none of your commands, and I didn't forget to do what you commanded.

¹⁴ I didn't eat any of this holy offering while I was in mourning. I didn't distribute any of it while I was unclean. I didn't offer any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the LORD my God. I have done everything you commanded me.

¹⁵ Look down from your holy place in heaven. Bless your people Israel and the land flowing with milk and honey that you have given us, as you promised with an oath to our ancestors."

¹⁶ Today the LORD your God is commanding you to obey these laws

and rules. You must faithfully obey them with all your heart and with all your soul.

¹⁷ Today you have declared that the LORD is your God and that you will follow his directions, obey his laws, commands, and rules, and listen to him.

¹⁸ Today the LORD has declared that you are his people, his own special possession, as he told you. But you must be sure to obey his commands.

¹⁹ Then he will place you high above all the other nations he has made. He will give you praise, fame, and honor, and you will be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.

27 ¹ Moses and the leaders of Israel told the people, "Obey every command I'm giving you today.

² "The day you cross the Jordan River and enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you, set up some large stones and cover them with plaster.

³ The LORD God of your ancestors is giving you a land flowing with milk and honey, as he promised you. After you're in that land, write all the words of these teachings on the stones.

⁴ After you cross the Jordan River, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, and cover them with plaster, following the command I'm giving you today.

⁵ Build an altar of stones there dedicated to the LORD your God. Don't use an iron chisel on the stones.

⁶ You must use uncut stones to build the altar of the LORD your God. Sacrifice burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God.

⁷ Sacrifice fellowship offerings, eat them there, and enjoy yourselves in the presence of the LORD your God.

⁸ Write clearly and carefully all the words of these teachings on the stones you set up."

⁹ Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, "Be quiet and listen, Israel. Today you have become the people of the LORD your God.

¹⁰ Obey the LORD your God and follow his commands and laws which I'm giving you today."

¹¹ That same day Moses gave the people this command:

¹² After you cross the Jordan River, these are the tribes that will stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin.

¹³ These are the tribes that will stand on Mount Ebal to announce the curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

¹⁴ The Levites will declare to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:

¹⁵ "Whoever has a carved or metal statue, anything disgusting to the LORD

that was made by a craftsman, and sets it up in secret will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

¹⁶ "Whoever curses his father or mother will himself be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

¹⁷ "Whoever moves his neighbor's boundary marker will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

¹⁸ "Whoever leads blind people in the wrong direction will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

¹⁹ "Whoever deprives foreigners, orphans, or widows of justice will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

²⁰ "Whoever has sexual intercourse with his father's wife will be cursed. He has disgraced his father." Then all the people will say amen.

²¹ "Whoever has sexual intercourse with any animal will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

²² "Whoever has sexual intercourse with his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

²³ "Whoever has sexual intercourse with his mother-in-law will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

²⁴ "Whoever kills another person secretly will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

²⁵ "Whoever accepts money to kill an innocent person will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

²⁶ "Whoever doesn't obey every word of these teachings will be cursed." Then all the people will say amen.

28 ¹ Carefully obey the LORD your God, and faithfully follow all his commands that I'm giving you today. If

you do, the LORD your God will place you high above all the other nations in the world.

² These are all the blessings that will come to you and stay close to you because you obey the LORD your God:

³ You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

⁴ You will be blessed. You will have children. Your land will have crops. Your animals will have offspring. Your cattle will have calves, and your flocks will have lambs and kids.

⁵ The grain you harvest and the bread you bake will be blessed.

⁶ You will be blessed when you come and blessed when you go.

⁷ The LORD will defeat your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction but run away from you in seven directions.

⁸ The LORD will bless your barns and everything you do. The LORD your God will bless you in the land that he is giving you.

⁹ You will be the LORD'S holy people, as he promised you with an oath. He will do this if you obey the commands of the LORD your God and follow his directions.

¹⁰ Then all the people in the world will see that you are the LORD'S people, and they will be afraid of you.

¹¹ The LORD will give you plenty of blessings: You will have many children. Your animals will have many offspring. Your soil will produce many crops in the land the LORD will give you, as he swore to your ancestors.

¹² The LORD will open the heavens, his rich storehouse, for you. He will send rain on your land at the right time and bless everything you do. You will be able

to make loans to many nations but won't need to borrow from any.

¹³ The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. You will always be at the top, never at the bottom, if you faithfully obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today.

¹⁴ Do everything I'm commanding you today. Never worship other gods or serve them.

¹⁵ Obey the LORD your God, and faithfully follow all his commands and laws that I am giving you today. If you don't, all these curses will come to you and stay close to you:

¹⁶ You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.

¹⁷ The grain you harvest and the bread you bake will be cursed.

¹⁸ You will be cursed. You will have few children. Your land will have few crops. Your cattle will be cursed with

few calves, and your flocks will have few lambs and kids.

¹⁹ You will be cursed when you come and cursed when you go.

²⁰ The LORD will send you curses, panic, and frustration in everything you do until you're destroyed and quickly disappear for the evil you will do by abandoning the LORD.

²¹ The LORD will send one plague after another on you until he wipes you out of the land you're about to enter and take possession of.

²² The LORD will strike you with disease, fever, and inflammation; heat waves, drought, scorching winds, and ruined crops. They will pursue you until you die.

²³ The sky above will look like bronze, and the ground below will be as hard as iron.

²⁴ The LORD will send dust storms and sandstorms on you from the sky until you're destroyed.

²⁵ The LORD will let your enemies defeat you. You will attack them from one direction but run away from them in seven directions. You will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms in the world.

²⁶ Your dead bodies will be food for all the birds and wild animals. There will be no one to scare them away.

²⁷ The LORD will strike you with the same boils that plagued the Egyptians. He will strike you with hemorrhoids, sores, and itching that won't go away.

²⁸ The LORD will strike you with madness, blindness, and panic.

²⁹ You will grope in broad daylight as blind people grope in their blindness. You won't be successful in anything you do. As long as you live, you will be

oppressed and robbed with no one to rescue you.

³⁰ You will be engaged to a woman, but another man will have sex with her. You will build a house, but you won't live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but you won't enjoy the grapes.

³¹ Your ox will be butchered as you watch, but you won't eat any of its meat. You will watch as your donkey is stolen from you, but you'll never get it back. Your flock will be given to your enemies, and no one will rescue it.

³² You will watch with your own eyes as your sons and daughters are given to another nation. You will strain your eyes looking for them all day long, but there will be nothing you can do.

³³ People you never knew will eat what your land and your hard work have produced. As long as you live, you will know nothing but oppression and abuse.

³⁴ The things you see will drive you mad.

³⁵ The LORD will afflict your knees and legs with severe boils that can't be cured. The boils will cover your whole body from the soles of your feet to the top of your head.

³⁶ The LORD will lead you and the king you choose to a nation that you and your ancestors never knew. There you will worship gods made of wood and stone.

³⁷ You will become a thing of horror. All the nations where the LORD will send you will make an example of you and ridicule you.

³⁸ You will plant many crops in your fields, but harvest little because locusts will destroy your crops.

³⁹ You will plant vineyards and take care of them, but you won't drink any wine or gather any grapes, because worms will eat them.

⁴⁰ You will have olive trees everywhere in your country but no olive oil to rub on your skin, because the olives will fall off the trees.

⁴¹ You will have sons and daughters, but you won't be able to keep them because they will be taken as prisoners of war.

⁴² Crickets will swarm all over your trees and the crops in your fields.

⁴³ The standard of living for the foreigners who live among you will rise higher and higher, while your standard of living will sink lower and lower.

⁴⁴ They will be able to make loans to you, but you won't be able to make loans to them. They will be the head, and you will be the tail.

⁴⁵ All these curses will come to you. They will pursue you and stay close to you until you're destroyed, because you didn't obey the LORD your God or follow

his commands and laws, which I'm giving you.

⁴⁶ These curses will be a sign and an amazing thing to warn you and your descendants forever.

⁴⁷ You didn't serve the LORD your God with a joyful and happy heart when you had so much.

⁴⁸ So you will serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you. You will serve them even though you are already hungry, thirsty, naked, and in need of everything. The LORD will put a heavy burden of hard work on you until he destroys you.

⁴⁹ The LORD will bring against you a nation from far away, from the ends of the earth. The nation will swoop down on you like an eagle. It will be a nation whose language you won't understand.

⁵⁰ Its people will be fierce-looking. They will show no respect for the old and no pity for the young.

⁵¹ They'll eat the offspring of your animals and the crops from your fields until you're destroyed. They'll leave you no grain, no new wine, no olive oil, no calves from your herds, and no lambs or kids from your flocks. They'll continue to do this until they've completely ruined you.

⁵² They will blockade all your cities until the high, fortified walls in which you trust come down everywhere in your land. They'll blockade all the cities everywhere in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

⁵³ Because of the hardships your enemies will make you suffer during the blockade, you will eat the flesh of your own children, the sons and daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you.

⁵⁴ Even the most tender and sensitive man among you will become stingy toward his brother, the wife he loves, and the children he still has left.

⁵⁵ He will give none of them any of the flesh of his children that he is eating. It will be all that he has left, because of the hardships your enemies will make you suffer during the blockade of all your cities.

⁵⁶ The most tender and sensitive woman among you—so sensitive and tender that she wouldn't even step on an ant—will become stingy toward the husband she loves or toward her own son or daughter.

⁵⁷ She won't share with them the afterbirth from her body and the children she gives birth to. She will secretly eat them out of dire necessity, because of the hardships your enemies

will make you suffer during the blockade of your cities.

⁵⁸ You might not faithfully obey every word of the teachings that are written in this book. You might not fear this glorious and awe–inspiring name: the LORD your God.

⁵⁹ If so, the LORD will strike you and your descendants with unimaginable plagues. They will be terrible and continuing plagues and severe and lingering diseases.

⁶⁰ He will again bring all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you.

⁶¹ The LORD will also bring you every kind of sickness and plague not written in this Book of Teachings. They will continue until you're dead.

⁶² At one time you were as numerous as the stars in the sky. But only a few of

you will be left, because you didn't obey the LORD your God.

⁶³ At one time the LORD was more than glad to make you prosperous and numerous. Now the LORD will be more than glad to destroy you and wipe you out. You will be torn out of the land you're about to enter and take possession of.

⁶⁴ Then the LORD will scatter you among all the people of the world, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will serve gods made of wood and stone that neither you nor your ancestors ever knew.

⁶⁵ Among those nations you will find no peace, no place to call your own. There the LORD will give you an unsettled mind, failing eyesight, and despair.

⁶⁶ Your life will always be hanging by a thread. You will live in terror day and

night. You will never feel sure of your life.

⁶⁷ In the morning you'll say, "If only it were evening!" And in the evening you'll say, "If only it were morning!" You'll talk this way because of the things that will terrify you and because of the things you'll see.

⁶⁸ The LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships on a journey that I said you would never take again. There you will try to sell yourselves as slaves to your enemies, but no one will buy you.

29 ¹ These are the terms of the promise that the LORD commanded Moses to give to the Israelites in Moab. This was in addition to the promise the LORD gave them at Mount Horeb.

² Moses summoned all the people of Israel and said to them: You've seen with your own eyes everything that the

LORD did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials, and to his whole country.

³ You also saw those terrible plagues, those miraculous signs, and those spectacular, amazing things.

⁴ But to this day the LORD hasn't given you a mind that understands, eyes that see, or ears that hear.

⁵ For 40 years I led you through the desert. During that time your clothes and shoes never wore out.

⁶ You ate no bread and drank no wine or liquor. I did this so that you would know that I am the LORD your God.

⁷ When you came to this place, King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan came out to fight us, but we defeated them.

⁸ We took their land and gave it to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh as their property.

⁹ Faithfully obey the terms of this promise. Then you will be successful in everything you do.

¹⁰ All of you are standing here today in the presence of the LORD your God. The heads of your tribes, your leaders, your officers, and all the men of Israel are here.

¹¹ Your children, your wives, and the foreigners who cut wood and carry water in your camp are also here.

¹² You are ready to accept the terms and conditions of the promise that the LORD your God is giving you today.

¹³ With this promise the LORD will confirm today that you are his people and that he is your God. This is what he told you, and this is what he promised your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with an oath.

¹⁴ You aren't the only people to receive this promise and its conditions.

¹⁵ It is for those of you who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God and also for those who are not here today.

¹⁶ You know how we lived in Egypt and how we passed through other countries on our way here.

¹⁷ You saw their disgusting gods and idols made of wood, stone, silver, and gold.

¹⁸ Make sure there is no man, woman, family, or tribe among you today who turns from the LORD our God to worship the gods of those nations. Make sure that no one among you is the source of this kind of bitter poison.

¹⁹ Someone may hear the conditions of this promise. He may think that he is so blessed that he can say, "I'll be safe even if I go my own stubborn way. After all, the LORD would never sweep away

well-watered ground along with dry ground."

²⁰ The LORD will never be willing to forgive that person, because the LORD'S burning anger will smolder against him. All the curses described in this book will happen to him. The LORD will erase every memory of that person's name from the earth.

²¹ And the LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for disaster based on all the conditions of the promise written in this Book of the Teachings.

²² Then the next generation of your children and foreigners who come from distant countries will see the plagues that have happened in this land and the diseases the LORD sent here.

²³ They will see all the soil poisoned with sulfur and salt. Nothing will be planted. Nothing will be growing. There

will be no plants in sight. It will be as desolate as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, cities the LORD destroyed in fierce anger.

²⁴ Then all the other nations in the world will ask, "Why has the LORD done this to their land? Why is he so angry?"

²⁵ The answer will be, "Because they abandoned the promise of the LORD God of their ancestors. He made this promise to them when he brought them out of Egypt.

²⁶ They worshiped other gods and bowed down to them. These were gods they never heard of, gods the LORD didn't permit them to have.

²⁷ So the LORD became angry with this land and brought on it all the curses described in this book.

²⁸ In his fierce anger and fury the LORD uprooted these people from their land

and deported them to another country, where they still are today."

²⁹ Some things are hidden. They belong to the LORD our God. But the things that have been revealed in these teachings belong to us and to our children forever. We must obey every word of these teachings.

30 ¹ All these blessings and curses I have spoken about will happen to you. Take them to heart when you are among all the nations where the LORD your God will scatter you.

² If you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul, doing everything I command you today,

³ he will restore your fortunes. He will have mercy on you and gather you from all the nations of the world where he will scatter you.

⁴ Even if you are scattered to the most distant country in the world, the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back from there.

⁵ The LORD your God will bring you to the land your ancestors owned. You will take possession of it, and the LORD will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors were.

⁶ The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants. You will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and you will live.

⁷ Then the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies, those who hate you and persecute you.

⁸ You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands that I'm giving you today.

⁹ The LORD your God will give you many blessings in everything you do: You

will have many children. Your animals will have many offspring. Your soil will produce many crops. The LORD will again delight in making you as prosperous as he made your ancestors.

¹⁰ He will do this if you obey him and follow his commands and laws that are written in this Book of Teachings and return to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

¹¹ This command I'm giving you today isn't too hard for you or beyond your reach.

¹² It's not in heaven. You don't have to ask, "Who will go to heaven to get this command for us so that we can hear it and obey it?"

¹³ This command isn't on the other side of the sea. You don't have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it for us so that we can hear it and obey it?"

¹⁴ No, these words are very near you. They're in your mouth and in your heart so that you will obey them.

¹⁵ Today I offer you life and prosperity or death and destruction.

¹⁶ This is what I'm commanding you today: Love the LORD your God, follow his directions, and obey his commands, laws, and rules. Then you will live, your population will increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you're about to enter and take possession of.

¹⁷ But your hearts might turn away, and you might not listen. You might be tempted to bow down to other gods and worship them.

¹⁸ If you do, I tell you today that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live for a long time in the land that you're going to take possession of when you cross the Jordan River.

¹⁹ I call on heaven and earth as witnesses today that I have offered you life or death, blessings or curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants will live.

²⁰ Love the LORD your God, obey him, and be loyal to him. This will be your way of life, and it will mean a long life for you in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

31 ¹ Moses continued to speak to all the Israelites:

² "I'm 120 years old now, and I'm not able to lead you anymore. Besides, the LORD has told me that I cannot cross the Jordan River.

³ The LORD your God is the one who will cross the river ahead of you. He will destroy those nations as you arrive, and you will take possession of their land.

Joshua will also cross the river ahead of you, as the LORD told you.

⁴ The LORD will do to those nations what he did to King Sihon and King Og of the Amorites and to their lands when he destroyed them.

⁵ The LORD will hand them over to you, and you must do to them everything that I commanded you.

⁶ Be strong and courageous. Don't tremble! Don't be afraid of them! The LORD your God is the one who is going with you. He won't abandon you or leave you."

⁷ Then Moses called for Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous. You will go with these people into the land that the LORD will give them, as he swore to their ancestors. You will help them take possession of the land.

⁸ The LORD is the one who is going ahead of you. He will be with you. He won't abandon you or leave you. So don't be afraid or terrified."

⁹ Moses wrote down these teachings and gave them to the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the LORD'S promise and to all the leaders of Israel.

¹⁰ Then Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seventh year you must cancel debts. At that time, during the Festival of Booths,

¹¹ all the Israelites will come into the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose. Read these teachings so that they can hear them.

¹² Assemble the men, women, and children, as well as the foreigners who live in your cities. Have them listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and faithfully obey every word of these teachings.

¹³ Their children, who don't know these teachings, must hear them and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land that you are going to take possession of when you cross the Jordan River."

¹⁴ The LORD said to Moses, "The time of your death is coming soon. Call for Joshua. Both of you come to the tent of meeting, and I will give him his instructions." Moses and Joshua came to the tent of meeting.

¹⁵ Then the LORD appeared in a column of smoke at the entrance to the tent.

¹⁶ The LORD said to Moses, "Soon you are going to lie down in death with your ancestors. When these people enter the land and are living among the foreigners there, they will chase after foreign gods as though they were prostitutes. They will abandon me and reject the promise I made to them.

¹⁷ On that day I will become angry with them. I will abandon them and turn away from them. They will be destroyed, and many terrible disasters will happen to them. On that day they will ask, 'Haven't these disasters happened to us because our God isn't with us?'

¹⁸ On that day I will certainly turn away from them because of all the evil they've done in turning to other gods.

¹⁹ "Write down this song, teach it to the Israelites, and have them sing it. This song will be a witness for me against the Israelites.

²⁰ I will bring them into the land that I swore to give to their ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey. When they have eaten all they want and have become fat, they will turn to other gods and worship them. They will despise me and reject my promise.

²¹ When many terrible disasters happen to them, this song will testify against them, because it will never be forgotten by their descendants. I know what their hearts are set on doing, even now before I bring them into the land that I swore to give them."

²² That day Moses wrote down this song and taught it to the Israelites.

²³ The LORD gave this command to Joshua, son of Nun: "Be strong and courageous, because you will bring the Israelites into the land that I swore to give them, and I will be with you."

²⁴ Finally, Moses finished writing all the words of these teachings in a book.

²⁵ He gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the LORD'S promise:

²⁶ "Take this Book of Teachings, and put it next to the ark of the promise of

the LORD your God, where it will be a witness against you.

²⁷ I know how rebellious you are. You are impossible to deal with. While I am alive and still with you, you are rebelling against the LORD. How much more rebellious will you be after I die?

²⁸ Assemble all the leaders of your tribes and your officers in front of me. As they listen, I will speak these words and call on heaven and earth to testify against them.

²⁹ I know that after I die you will become thoroughly corrupt and turn from the way I have commanded you to live. In the days to come disasters will happen to you because you will make the LORD furious by doing what he considers evil."

³⁰ Then, as the whole congregation of Israel listened, Moses recited all the words of this song:

32 ¹ Listen, heaven, and I will speak.
Earth, hear the words from my mouth.

² Let my teachings come down like raindrops. Let my words drip like dew, like gentle rain on grass, like showers on green plants.

³ I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Give our God the greatness he deserves!

⁴ He is a rock. What he does is perfect. All his ways are fair. He is a faithful God, who does no wrong. He is honorable and reliable.

⁵ He recognizes that his people are corrupt. To their shame they are no longer his children. They are devious and scheming.

⁶ Is this how you repay the LORD, you foolish and silly people? Isn't he your Father and Owner, who made you and formed you?

⁷ Remember a time long ago. Think about all the past generations. Ask your fathers to remind you, and your leaders to tell you.

⁸ When the Most High gave nations their land, when he divided the descendants of Adam, he set up borders for the tribes corresponding to the number of the sons of Israel.

⁹ But the LORD'S people were his property. Jacob was his own possession.

¹⁰ He found his people in a desert land, in a barren place where animals howl. He guarded them, took care of them, and protected them because they were helpless.

¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreads its wings to catch them, and carries them on its feathers,

¹² so the LORD alone led his people. No foreign god was with him.

¹³ He made them ride on the heights of the earth and fed them with the produce of the fields. He gave them honey from rocks and olive oil from solid rock.

¹⁴ They ate cheese from cows and drank milk from sheep and goats. He gave them fat from lambs, rams from the stock of Bashan, male goats, and the best wheat. They drank the blood–red wine of grapes.

¹⁵ Jeshurun got fat and disrespectful. (You got fat! You were stuffed! You were gorged!) They abandoned the God who made them and treated the rock of their salvation like a fool.

¹⁶ They made him furious because they worshiped foreign gods and angered him because they worshiped worthless idols.

¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons that are not God, to gods they never heard of. These were new gods, who came

from nearby, gods your ancestors never worshiped.

¹⁸ (You ignored the rock who fathered you and forgot the God who gave you life.)

¹⁹ The LORD saw this and rejected them, because his own sons and daughters had made him angry.

²⁰ He said, "I will turn away from them and find out what will happen to them. They are devious people, children who can't be trusted.

²¹ They made him furious because they worshiped foreign gods and angered him because they worshiped worthless idols. So I will use those who are not my people to make them jealous and a nation of godless fools to make them angry.

²² My anger has started a fire that will burn to the depths of hell. It will consume the earth and its crops and set

the foundations of the mountains on fire.

²³ I will bring one disaster after another on them. I will use up all my arrows on them.

²⁴ They will be starved by famines and ravaged by pestilence and deadly epidemics. I will send vicious animals against them along with poisonous animals that crawl on the ground.

²⁵ Foreign wars will kill off their children, and even at home there will be horrors. Young men and young women alike will die as well as nursing babies and gray-haired men.

²⁶ I said that I would cut them in pieces and erase everyone's memory of them.

²⁷ But I didn't want their enemies to make me angry. I didn't want their opponents to misunderstand and say, 'We won this victory! It wasn't the LORD who did all this!'"

²⁸ My people have lost their good sense. They are not able to understand.

²⁹ If only they were wise enough to understand this and realize what will happen to them!

³⁰ How could one person chase a thousand or two people make ten thousand flee? Their rock used these people to defeat them and the LORD gave them no help.

³¹ Their rock isn't like our rock. Even our enemies will agree with this.

³² Their grapevines come from the vineyards of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are poisonous, and their clusters are bitter.

³³ Their wine is snake venom, the deadly poison of cobras.

³⁴ Isn't this what I've stored under lock and key in my storehouses?

³⁵ I will take revenge and be satisfied. In due time their foot will slip, because

their day of disaster is near. Their doom is coming quickly.

³⁶ The LORD will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees that their strength is gone and that no one is left, neither slaves nor free people.

³⁷ Then he will ask, "Where are their gods? Where is the rock they took refuge in?"

³⁸ Where are the gods who ate the fat from their sacrifices and drank the wine from their wine offerings? Let them come to help you! Let them be your refuge!"

³⁹ See, I am the only God. There are no others. I kill, and I make alive. I wound, and I heal, and no one can rescue you from my power.

⁴⁰ I raise my hand toward heaven and solemnly swear: As surely as I live forever,

⁴¹ I will sharpen my flashing sword and take justice into my own hands. Then I will take revenge on my enemies and pay back those who hate me.

⁴² My arrows will drip with blood from those who were killed and taken captive. My sword will cut off the heads of the enemy who vowed to fight.

⁴³ Joyfully sing with the LORD'S people, you nations, because he will take revenge for the death of his servants. He will get even with his enemies and make peace for his people's land.

⁴⁴ Moses came with Hoshea, son of Nun, and recited all the words of this song as the people listened.

⁴⁵ When Moses had finished reciting all these words to Israel,

⁴⁶ he said to them, "Pay attention to all these warnings I've given you today. Then you will command your children

to faithfully obey every word of these teachings.

⁴⁷ Don't think these words are idle talk. They are your life! By these words you will be able to live for a long time in the land that you are going to take possession of when you cross the Jordan River."

⁴⁸ That same day the LORD said to Moses,

⁴⁹ "Go into the Abarim Mountains, to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho. Take a look at the land of Canaan that I'm giving the Israelites as their own property.

⁵⁰ On this mountain where you're going, you will die and join your ancestors in death, as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor.

⁵¹ This is because both of you were unfaithful to me at the oasis of Meribah

at Kadesh in the Desert of Zin. You didn't show the Israelites how holy I am.

⁵² You may see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land I'm giving the Israelites."

33 ¹ Moses, the man of God, blessed the Israelites with this blessing before he died.

² He said, "The LORD came from Sinai. For his people he rose from Seir like the sun. He appeared like sunshine from Mount Paran. He came with tens of thousands of holy ones. On his right was a raging fire for them.

³ You certainly love your people. All your holy ones are in your hands. They bow at your feet to receive your instructions.

⁴ Moses gave us these teachings. They belong to the assembly of Jacob.

⁵ The LORD was king of Jeshurun when the leaders of the people assembled together with all the tribes of Israel.

⁶ "May the tribe of Reuben live and not die out, though their people are few in number."

⁷ This is what he said about the tribe of Judah: "Hear the cry of Judah, O LORD, and bring them to their people. They must defend themselves. Help them against their enemies."

⁸ About the tribe of Levi he said, "Your Thummim and Urim belong to your faithful people. You tested your people at Massah. You quarreled with them at the oasis of Meribah.

⁹ They said that they didn't know their father and mother. They didn't recognize their own brothers. They didn't acknowledge their own children. But they obeyed your word and were faithful to the terms of your promise.

¹⁰ They teach Jacob your rules and give Israel your teachings. They burn incense for you to smell and sacrifice burnt offerings on your altar.

¹¹ LORD, bless them with strength and be pleased with the work they do. Break the backs of those who attack them and hate them so that they can never get up again."

¹² About the tribe of Benjamin he said, "The LORD'S beloved people will live securely with him. The LORD will shelter them all day long, since he, too, lives on the mountain slopes."

¹³ About the tribes of Joseph he said, "May the LORD bless their land with water, the best gift heaven can send, with dew and deep springs below the ground.

¹⁴ May the LORD bless their land with crops, the best gift the sun can give, the best produce of each month,

¹⁵ the finest fruits from the oldest mountains, the best from the ancient hills,

¹⁶ and the most plentiful crops of the earth. May the LORD bless their land with the favor of the one who was in the burning bush. May these blessings come to the tribes of Joseph. May they crown the people who are like princes in Israel.

¹⁷ They will be as majestic as a firstborn bull. Their horns will be like the horns of a wild ox. They will use them to push away nations including those at the ends of the earth. The tens of thousands from the tribe of Ephraim and the thousands from the tribe of Manasseh will be like this."

¹⁸ About the tribe of Zebulun he said, "People of Zebulun, enjoy yourselves when you go to war, and you people of Issachar, enjoy yourselves when you stay at home.

¹⁹ They will invite nations to their mountain, and there they will offer the proper sacrifices. They will be nourished by the abundance from the seas and the treasures hidden in the sand."

²⁰ About the tribe of Gad he said, "Blessed is the one who gives the people of Gad more land. They wait there like a lion. They can tear off an arm or a head.

²¹ They chose the best land for themselves. Indeed, a commander's piece of land was reserved for them. They were leaders of the people and did for Israel what the LORD considers fair and honorable."

²² About the tribe of Dan he said, "The people of Dan are a lion cub. Out of Bashan they pounce on their enemies."

²³ About the tribe of Naphtali he said, "The people of Naphtali enjoy the LORD'S favor and are filled with the LORD'S blessings. They will take

possession of the lake and the land south of it."

²⁴ About the tribe of Asher he said, "The people of Asher are the most blessed of the sons of Israel. May they be the Israelites' favorite tribe and wash their feet in olive oil.

²⁵ May the locks and bolts of your gates be made of iron and copper. May your strength last as long as you live.

²⁶ "There's no one like your God, Jeshurun! He rides through the heavens to help you. In majesty he rides through the clouds.

²⁷ The eternal God is your shelter, and his everlasting arms support you. He will force your enemies out of your way and tell you to destroy them.

²⁸ So Israel will live securely. Jacob's spring will be left alone in a land of grain and new wine. Dew will drip from Israel's skies.

²⁹ You are blessed, Israel! Who is like you, a nation saved by the LORD? He is a shield that helps you and a sword that wins your victories. Your enemies will come crawling to you, and you will stomp on their backs."

34 ¹ Then Moses went up on Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab. He went to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. The LORD showed him the whole land. He could see Gilead as far as Dan,

² all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the territory of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea,

³ the Negev, and the Jordan Plain—the valley of Jericho (the City of Palms)—as far as Zoar.

⁴ Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised with an oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I said I would give it to their descendants. I have let

you see it with your own eyes, but you may not go there."

⁵ As the LORD had predicted, the LORD'S servant Moses died in Moab.

⁶ He was buried in a valley in Moab, near Beth Peor. Even today no one knows where his grave is.

⁷ Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyesight never became poor, and he never lost his physical strength.

⁸ The Israelites mourned for Moses in the plains of Moab for 30 days. Then the time of mourning for him was over.

⁹ Joshua, son of Nun, was filled with the Spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him. The Israelites obeyed him and did what the LORD had commanded through Moses.

¹⁰ There has never been another prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD dealt with face to face.

¹¹ He was the one the LORD sent to do all the miraculous signs and amazing things in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials, and to his whole country.

¹² Moses used his mighty hand to do all the spectacular and awe–inspiring deeds that were seen by all the Israelites.

Joshua

1 ¹ After the death of the LORD'S servant Moses, the LORD said to Moses' assistant Joshua, son of Nun,

² "My servant Moses is dead. Now you and all these people must cross the Jordan River into the land that I am going to give the people of Israel.

³ I will give you every place on which you set foot, as I promised Moses.

⁴ Your borders will be the desert on the south, nearby Lebanon to the Euphrates River (the country of the Hittites) on the north, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west.

⁵ No one will be able to oppose you successfully as long as you live. I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will never neglect you or abandon you.

⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will help these people take possession of the land I swore to give their ancestors.

⁷ "Only be strong and very courageous, faithfully doing everything in the teachings that my servant Moses commanded you. Don't turn away from them. Then you will succeed wherever you go.

⁸ Never stop reciting these teachings. You must think about them night and day so that you will faithfully do everything written in them. Only then will you prosper and succeed.

⁹ "I have commanded you, 'Be strong and courageous! Don't tremble or be terrified, because the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.'"

¹⁰ Then Joshua ordered the officers of the people,

¹¹ "Go through the camp. Tell the people, 'Get your supplies ready. In three days you will cross the Jordan River to take possession of the land the LORD your God is going to give you.'"

¹² Next, Joshua said to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh,

¹³ "Remember what the LORD'S servant Moses commanded you. Moses said, 'The LORD your God will give you this land—a place to rest.'

¹⁴ Your wives, children, and livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan River. However, all your best soldiers must march in battle formation ahead of your relatives. You must help your relatives

¹⁵ take possession of the land the LORD your God is going to give them. Then they will have a place to rest like you do. After that, you may go back and take

possession of the land east of the Jordan River which the LORD'S servant Moses gave you."

¹⁶ The people responded to Joshua, "We'll do everything you tell us and go wherever you send us.

¹⁷ We will obey you as we obeyed Moses. May the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses.

¹⁸ Whoever rebels against your authority or does not obey your orders will be put to death. Just be strong and courageous!"

2 ¹ From Shittim Joshua, son of Nun, secretly sent out two men as spies. He told them, "Go, look at that country, especially the city of Jericho." So they went to Jericho and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab to spend the night there.

² The king of Jericho was told, "Some Israelites have entered the city tonight.

They came to gather information about our land."

³ So the king of Jericho sent messengers to Rahab, who told her, "Bring out the men who came to your house. They came here to gather information about the entire land."

⁴ But the woman had already taken the two men inside and hidden them. So she said, "Yes, the men did come here. But I didn't know where they had come from."

⁵ When it was dark and the gate was just about to close, they left. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you'll catch up with them."

⁶ (She had taken them up to the roof and covered them with the flax which she had laid up there.)

⁷ The king's men pursued them on the road leading to a shallow place to cross the Jordan River. As soon as the king's men had left, the gate was closed.

⁸ Before the spies fell asleep, Rahab went up to them on the roof.

⁹ She said to them, "I know the LORD will give you this land. Your presence terrifies us. All the people in this country are deathly afraid of you.

¹⁰ We've heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea in front of you when you left Egypt. We've also heard what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites, who ruled east of the Jordan River. We've heard how you destroyed them for the LORD.

¹¹ When we heard about it, we lost heart. There was no courage left in any of us because of you. The LORD your God is the God of heaven and earth.

¹² Please swear by the LORD that you'll be as kind to my father's family as I've been to you. Also give me some proof

¹³ that you'll protect my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and their households, and that you'll save us from death."

¹⁴ The men promised her, "We pledge our lives for your lives. If you don't tell anyone what we're doing here, we'll treat you kindly and honestly when the LORD gives us this land."

¹⁵ So she let them down by a rope from her window since her house was built into the city wall. (She lived in the city wall.)

¹⁶ She told them, "Go to the mountains so that the men who are pursuing you will not find you. Hide there for three days until they return to Jericho. Then you can go on your way."

¹⁷ The men told her, "We will be free from the oath which you made us swear, if you tell anyone what we're doing here.

¹⁸ When we invade your land, tie this red cord in the window through which

you let us down. Also, gather your father, mother, brothers, and all your father's family into your house.

¹⁹ Whoever leaves your house will be responsible for his own life. We will be free from that responsibility. But we will take responsibility if anyone inside your house is harmed.

²⁰ If you tell anyone what we're doing here, we will be free from the oath which you made us swear."

²¹ "I agree," she said. So she let them go and tied the red cord in the window.

²² The men went to the mountains and stayed there for three days until the king's men returned to Jericho. The king's men had searched for them all along the road but had not found them.

²³ Then the two spies came down out of the mountains, crossed the Jordan River, and returned to Joshua, son of

Nun. They told him everything that had happened to them.

²⁴ They told Joshua, "The LORD has given us the whole country. The people who live there are deathly afraid of us."

3 ¹ Joshua got up early the next morning. He and all the Israelites left Shittim. They came to the Jordan River, where they camped before crossing.

² Three days later the officers went through the camp.

³ They told the people, "As soon as you see the ark of the promise of the LORD your God and the Levitical priests who carry it, break camp and follow them.

⁴ However, stay about half a mile behind them. Don't come any closer to them so that you will know which way to go because you have not gone this way before."

⁵ Joshua told the people, "Perform the ceremonies to make yourselves holy

because tomorrow the LORD will do miracles among you."

⁶ Joshua also told the priests, "Take the ark of the promise, and go ahead of the people." They did as they were told.

⁷ Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to honor you in front of all the people of Israel. I will do this to let them know that I am with you just as I was with Moses.

⁸ Order the priests who carry the ark of the promise, 'When you step into the water of the Jordan River, stand there.'"

⁹ So Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here, and listen to the words of the LORD your God."

¹⁰ Joshua continued, "This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly force the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Gergashites, Amorites, and Jebusites out of your way.

¹¹ Watch the ark of the promise of the Lord of the whole earth as it goes ahead of you into the Jordan River.

¹² Choose one man from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

¹³ The priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of the whole earth, will stand in the water of the Jordan. Then the water flowing from upstream will stop and stand up like a dam."

¹⁴ So they broke camp to cross the Jordan River. The priests who carried the ark of the promise went ahead of the people.

¹⁵ (The Jordan overflows all its banks during the harvest season.) When the priests who were carrying the ark came to the edge of the Jordan River and set foot in

¹⁶ the water, the water stopped flowing from upstream. The water rose up like a dam as far away as the city of Adam

near Zarethan. The water flowing down toward the Sea of the Plains (the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. Then the people crossed from the east side of the Jordan River directly opposite Jericho.

¹⁷ The priests who carried the ark of the LORD'S promise stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan until the whole nation of Israel had crossed the Jordan River on dry ground.

4 ¹ The whole nation finished crossing the Jordan River. The LORD had told Joshua,

² "Choose one man from each of the 12 tribes.

³ Order them to pick up 12 stones from the middle of the Jordan, where the priests' feet stood firmly. Take the stones along with you, and set them down where you will camp tonight."

⁴ Joshua called the 12 men whom he had selected (one from each tribe).

⁵ He said to them, "Go to the middle of the Jordan River in front of the ark of the LORD your God. Each man must take a stone on his shoulder, one for each tribe of Israel.

⁶ This will be a sign for you. In the future your children will ask, 'What do these stones mean to you?'

⁷ You should answer, 'The water of the Jordan River was cut off in front of the ark of the LORD'S promise. When the ark crossed the Jordan, the river stopped flowing. These stones are a permanent reminder for the people of Israel.'"

⁸ The people of Israel did as Joshua had ordered. They took 12 stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel. They took them from the middle of the Jordan as the LORD had told Joshua. They carried them to the camp and set them down there.

⁹ Joshua also set 12 stones in the middle of the Jordan River, where the priests who carried the ark of the promise had stood. The stones are still there today.

¹⁰ The priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan. They stood there until everything the LORD had ordered Joshua to tell the people had been carried out. This was as Moses had told Joshua. The people hurried to the other side.

¹¹ As soon as everyone had crossed, the priests with the LORD'S ark crossed and went ahead of them.

¹² The men of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh did as Moses had told them. They marched across in battle formation ahead of the people of Israel.

¹³ About 40,000 armed men crossed the river in front of the LORD to the plains of Jericho for battle.

¹⁴ On that day the LORD honored Joshua in the presence of all the Israelites. As long as Joshua lived, the Israelites respected him in the same way they had respected Moses.

¹⁵ The LORD said to Joshua,

¹⁶ "Order the priests who carry the ark of the testimony to come out of the Jordan River."

¹⁷ So Joshua ordered the priests, "Come out of the Jordan."

¹⁸ The priests who carried the ark of the LORD'S promise came out of the middle of the Jordan. When their feet stepped onto dry land, the water of the Jordan returned to its seasonal flood level.

¹⁹ On the tenth day of the first month, the people came out of the Jordan River. They made their camp at Gilgal, just east of Jericho.

²⁰ At Gilgal Joshua set up the 12 stones they had taken from the Jordan.

²¹ He said to the people of Israel, "In the future when children ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?'

²² the children should be told that Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry ground.

²³ The LORD your God dried up the Jordan ahead of you until you had crossed, as he did to the Red Sea until we had crossed.

²⁴ The LORD did this so that everyone in the world would know his mighty power and that you would fear the LORD your God every day of your life."

5 ¹ All the Amorite kings west of the Jordan River and all the Canaanite kings along the Mediterranean Sea heard that the LORD had dried up the Jordan River so that the Israelites could cross. So they lost heart and had no courage left to face the people of Israel.

² At that time the LORD spoke to Joshua, "Make flint knives, and circumcise the men of Israel."

³ So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the men of Israel at the Hill of Circumcision.

⁴ This is the reason Joshua circumcised them: All the soldiers had died on the way through the desert after they left Egypt.

⁵ The men who left Egypt had been circumcised. However, the men born later, on the way through the desert, were not circumcised.

⁶ For 40 years the Israelites wandered through the desert until all their soldiers who left Egypt died. They died because they disobeyed the LORD. The LORD swore that he would not let them see this land flowing with milk and honey which he had sworn to give our ancestors.

⁷ The sons who took their place had not been circumcised on the way. So Joshua circumcised them.

⁸ When all the men had been circumcised, they remained in the camp until they recovered.

⁹ The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have removed the disgrace of Egypt from you." So Joshua named the place Gilgal, the name it still has today.

¹⁰ The people of Israel camped at Gilgal in the Jericho plain. There they celebrated the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month.

¹¹ On the day after the Passover, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened bread and roasted grain.

¹² The day after that, the manna stopped. The people of Israel never had manna again. That year they began to eat the crops that grew in Canaan.

¹³ When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you one of us or one of our enemies?"

¹⁴ He answered, "Neither one! I am here as the commander of the LORD'S army." Immediately, Joshua bowed with his face touching the ground and worshiped. He asked, "Sir, what do you want to tell me?"

¹⁵ The commander of the LORD'S army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals because this place where you are standing is holy." So Joshua did as he was told.

6 ¹ Jericho was bolted and barred shut because the people were afraid of the Israelites. No one could enter or leave.

² The LORD said to Joshua, "I am about to hand Jericho, its king, and its warriors over to you.

³ All the soldiers will march around the city once a day for six days.

⁴ Seven priests will carry rams' horns ahead of the ark. But on the seventh day you must march around the city seven times while the priests blow their horns.

⁵ When you hear a long blast on the horn, all the troops must shout very loudly. The wall around the city will collapse. Then the troops must charge straight ahead into the city."

⁶ Joshua, son of Nun, summoned the priests. He said to them, "Pick up the ark of the promise, and have seven priests carry seven rams' horns ahead of the LORD'S ark."

⁷ He told the troops, "March around the city. Let the armed men march ahead of the LORD'S ark."

⁸ After Joshua had given orders to the troops, the seven priests carrying the seven rams' horns ahead of the LORD marched off as they blew their horns. The ark of the LORD'S promise followed them.

⁹ The armed men went ahead of the priests, who blew their horns. The rear guard followed the ark while the priests continued to blow their horns.

¹⁰ Joshua ordered the troops, "Don't shout, make any noise, or let one word come out of your mouth until I tell you to shout. Then shout!"

¹¹ So the LORD'S ark went around the city once. Then they went back to the camp and stayed there for the night.

¹² Joshua got up early in the morning. The priests carried the LORD'S ark.

¹³ The seven priests carrying the seven rams' horns were ahead of it. The priests blew their horns as they went. The

armed men were ahead of them, and the rear guard followed the LORD'S ark while the horns blew continually.

¹⁴ They went around the city once on the second day and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

¹⁵ On the seventh day they got up at dawn. They marched around the city seven times the same way they had done it before. That was the only day they marched around it seven times.

¹⁶ When they went around the seventh time, the priests blew their rams' horns. Joshua said to the troops, "Shout, because the LORD has given you the city!

¹⁷ The city has been claimed by the LORD. Everything in it belongs to the LORD. Only the prostitute Rahab and all who are in the house with her will live because she hid the messengers we sent.

¹⁸ But stay away from what has been claimed by the LORD for destruction, or you, too, will be destroyed by the LORD. If you take anything that is claimed by the LORD, you will bring destruction and disaster on the camp of Israel.

¹⁹ All the silver and gold and everything made of bronze and iron are holy and belong to the LORD. They must go into the LORD'S treasury."

²⁰ So the troops shouted very loudly when they heard the blast of the rams' horns, and the wall collapsed. The troops charged straight ahead and captured the city.

²¹ They claimed everything in it for the LORD. With their swords they killed men and women, young and old, as well as cattle, sheep, and donkeys.

²² But Joshua said to the two spies, "Go to the prostitute's house. Bring the

woman out, along with everything she has, as you swore you would do for her."

²³ The spies went and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, everything she had, and even all of her relatives. They gave them a place outside the camp of Israel.

²⁴ Then Israel burned the city and everything in it. But they put the silver and gold and everything made of bronze and iron into the LORD'S treasury.

²⁵ Joshua spared the prostitute Rahab, her father's family, and everything she had. She still lives in Israel today because she hid the messengers Joshua had sent to look at Jericho.

²⁶ At that time Joshua pronounced this curse: "The LORD will curse whoever comes to rebuild the city of Jericho. It will cost him his firstborn son to lay the foundation. It will cost him his youngest son to set up the city doors."

²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

7 ¹ The people of Israel proved to be disloyal about the things claimed by the LORD. Achan, son of Carmi, grandson of Zabdi, great-grandson of Zerah, and a member of the tribe of Judah, took something that had been claimed by the LORD. So the LORD became angry with the people of Israel.

² Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai. Ai is near Beth Aven, east of Bethel. He said to them, "Go, look at that country." So the men went and looked at Ai.

³ They came back to Joshua and told him, "You don't need to send all the troops. Only about two or three thousand men are needed to destroy Ai. Don't tire the troops out by sending all of them. There are only a few troops in Ai."

⁴ So about three thousand men were sent. However, they fled from the men of Ai.

⁵ The men of Ai killed about thirty–six of them, chasing them from the city gate to the slope of the stone quarries. Israel's troops lost heart and were scared stiff.

⁶ Joshua and the leaders of Israel tore their clothes in grief. They put dust on their heads and bowed down to the ground in front of the LORD'S ark. They stayed there until evening.

⁷ Joshua said, "Almighty LORD, why did you bring these people across the Jordan River? Was it to hand us over to the Amorites so that they could destroy us? I wish we had been content to live on the other side of the Jordan!

⁸ Lord, what else can I say after Israel ran away from its enemy?

⁹ When the Canaanites and everyone who lives in the land hears about it, they will surround us and remove every memory of us from the earth. What will you do then so that your great name will be remembered?"

¹⁰ The LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! What are you doing bowing on the ground?"

¹¹ Israel has sinned. They have ignored the requirements that I have placed on them. They have taken what I claimed for myself and put it among their own goods. They have not only stolen, but they have also lied.

¹² "The people of Israel will not be able to defend themselves against their enemies. They will run away from their enemies because the people of Israel are now claimed for destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy what I have claimed for myself.

¹³ "Get up! Tell the people, 'Get ready for tomorrow by performing the ceremonies to make yourselves holy. This is what the LORD God of Israel says: You have what I claimed for myself, Israel. You will not be able to defend yourselves against your enemies until you get rid of what I have claimed.

¹⁴ In the morning come forward by tribes to the tent of meeting. The tribe the LORD selects will come forward by families. Then the family the LORD selects will come forward by households, and the household the LORD selects will come forward man by man.

¹⁵ The man who is selected, along with everything he has, must be burned because he has stolen what the LORD has claimed. He has ignored the LORD'S requirements and done a godless thing in Israel.'"

¹⁶ Joshua got up early in the morning. He had Israel come forward by tribes. The tribe of Judah was selected.

¹⁷ Then he had the families of Judah come forward, and the family of Zerah was selected. Then he had the family of Zerah come forward man by man, and Zabdi was selected.

¹⁸ Then he had Zabdi's household come forward man by man, and Achan was selected. Achan from the tribe of Judah was the son of Carmi, grandson of Zabdi, and great-grandson of Zerah.

¹⁹ Joshua said to Achan, "Son, give honor and praise to the LORD God of Israel! Tell me what you have done. Don't hide anything from me."

²⁰ Then Achan answered Joshua, "It's true. I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel. This is what I did:

²¹ I saw a fine robe from Babylonia, five pounds of silver, and a bar of gold

weighing about one pound among the loot. I wanted them, so I took them. You will find them buried inside my tent with the silver beneath them."

²² Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent. The loot was buried inside with the silver beneath it.

²³ They took the loot from the tent and brought it to Joshua and all the people of Israel. Then they laid it out in the presence of the LORD.

²⁴ Joshua and all Israel took Achan (son of Zerah), the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons and daughters, his cattle, his donkeys, his sheep, and his tent—everything he had—and brought them to the valley of Achor [Disaster].

²⁵ Then Joshua said, "Why did you bring this disaster on us? The LORD will bring disaster on you today!" And all Israel stoned Achan and his family to death.

Then they burned the bodies and piled stones over them.

²⁶ They made such a large pile of stones over Achan that it is still there today. Then the LORD withdrew his burning anger. For this reason that place is still called the valley of Achor today.

8 ¹ The LORD said to Joshua, "Don't be terrified or afraid. Take all the troops with you, and march against Ai. I am about to hand the king of Ai, his people, city, and land over to you.

² You will do the same thing to Ai and its king that you did to Jericho and its king. However, you may take its loot and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city."

³ So Joshua and all the soldiers started to march against Ai. Joshua picked 30,000 of his best soldiers and sent them out at night

⁴ with these orders: "Set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far away from the city. Everyone must be ready.

⁵ I'll approach the city with the rest of the troops. When they come out to attack us as they did the first time, we will run away from them.

⁶ They'll come out after us, and we will lure them away from the city. They'll say, 'They're running away from us just like the first time.' As we run away from them,

⁷ you come out of hiding and capture the city. The LORD your God will hand it over to you.

⁸ When you have captured the city, set it on fire. Do what the LORD says. These are your orders."

⁹ So Joshua sent them out, and they hid. They took their position west of Ai, between Bethel and Ai. Joshua spent the night with the troops.

¹⁰ Joshua got up early in the morning and assembled the troops. Then he and the leaders of Israel led the army to Ai.

¹¹ All the troops with him marched until they were near the city. They camped north of Ai with the ravine between them and Ai.

¹² Joshua had taken about five thousand men and had them hide between Bethel and Ai, west of the city.

¹³ All the troops were positioned. The main camp was north of the city, and the other troops were hiding west of the city. That night Joshua went down into the middle of the valley.

¹⁴ When the king of Ai saw the main camp, he and all his troops got up early in the morning. They rushed out toward the plains to meet Israel for battle, just where Joshua expected. However, the king didn't know there were troops behind the city waiting to attack him.

¹⁵ Joshua and all Israel pretended to be defeated. They ran away toward the desert.

¹⁶ All the troops in the city were called out to chase them. As they chased Joshua, they were lured away from the city.

¹⁷ Not one man was left in Ai or Bethel; they all went after Israel. So the city was left unprotected as they chased Israel.

¹⁸ Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Hold out the spear in your hand toward the city, because I am handing Ai over to you." So Joshua held out his spear.

¹⁹ The men who were hiding got up as soon as he stretched out his hand. They entered the city, captured it, and quickly set it on fire.

²⁰ When the men of Ai looked back, they could see the city going up in smoke. They had no place to go, since the Israelites, who had been running

toward the desert, had now turned back on them.

²¹ When Joshua and all Israel saw that the men who had been hiding had captured the city and that it was going up in smoke, they turned and attacked the men of Ai.

²² The men who had captured the city also came out and attacked them. The men of Ai were caught between the battle lines of Israel. So Israel attacked them on both sides. None of them survived or escaped.

²³ But they captured the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.

²⁴ Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the fields and in the desert where they had been pursued. They put them all to death; not one person survived. Then the Israelites went back to Ai and killed everyone left there.

²⁵ Twelve thousand men and women from Ai died that day.

²⁶ Joshua did not lower his hand holding the spear until he had completely destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

²⁷ Israel took the loot and the livestock of that city for themselves, as the LORD had commanded Joshua.

²⁸ So Joshua burned Ai and made it a deserted mound of ruins. It is still in ruins today.

²⁹ Joshua hung the king of Ai's dead body on a pole and left him there until evening. When the sun went down, Joshua gave the order to take his body down. They threw it in the entrance of the city and made a large pile of stones over it. That pile is still there today.

³⁰ At that time Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal to the LORD God of Israel.

³¹ He built an altar with uncut stones on which no iron chisels had been used. This was as the LORD'S servant Moses had commanded the people of Israel in the Book of Moses' Teachings. They made burnt offerings to the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings on the altar.

³² There in front of the people of Israel he wrote on stone slabs a copy of the Teachings which Moses had written down.

³³ All the people of Israel, whether foreigners or native Israelites, the leaders, officers, and judges were standing on opposite sides of the ark. They faced the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the LORD'S promise. Half of the people were in front of Mount Gerizim and the other half in front of Mount Ebal. Right from the beginning, the LORD'S servant Moses

had commanded the priests to bless the people of Israel this way.

³⁴ Afterwards, Joshua read all the Teachings—the blessings and curses—
—as they had all been written down by Moses.

³⁵ Joshua read Moses' Teachings in front of the whole assembly of Israel, including women, children, and foreigners living among them. He did not leave out one word from everything Moses had commanded.

9 ¹ When all the kings west of the Jordan River heard about these events,

² they joined together to fight Joshua and Israel. (They were the kings in the mountains, the foothills, and along the whole Mediterranean coast as far as Lebanon, the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.)

³ When the people living in Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,

⁴ they devised a scheme. They posed as messengers. They took worn-out sacks on their donkeys. Their wineskins were old, split, and patched.

⁵ Their sandals were worn-out and repaired, and their clothes were tattered. All their bread was dried out and crumbling.

⁶ They came to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal. They told Joshua and the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country. Make a treaty with us right now."

⁷ The men of Israel said to the Hivites, "What if you're living in this area? We wouldn't be able to make a treaty with you."

⁸ They responded to Joshua, "We're at your mercy." Joshua asked them, "Who are you, and where did you come from?"

⁹ They answered him, "We came from a country very far away because the LORD your God has become famous. We heard stories about him and everything he did in Egypt.

¹⁰ We also heard everything he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan in Ashtaroth.

¹¹ Our leaders and everyone who lives in our country told us, 'Take what you need for the trip, and go meet them. Tell them, "We're at your mercy. Make a treaty with us right now."'"

¹² Our bread was warm when we left home to meet with you. Look at it now! It's dry and crumbling.

¹³ These were new wineskins when we filled them. Look at them now! See

how they are splitting! Our clothes and sandals are also worn-out because we have come such a long way."

¹⁴ The men believed the evidence they were shown, but they did not ask the LORD about it.

¹⁵ So Joshua made peace with them by making a treaty which allowed them to live. The leaders of the congregation swore to it with an oath.

¹⁶ But three days after the treaty was made, the Israelites heard that these people were their neighbors and lived with them.

¹⁷ The Israelites broke camp. They came to the cities of Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim two days later.

¹⁸ The Israelites didn't destroy these other people, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn an oath about them to the LORD God of Israel. The

whole congregation complained about the leaders.

¹⁹ But all the leaders said to them, "We have sworn an oath about them to the LORD God of Israel, so we cannot touch them now.

²⁰ We must let them live to avoid the LORD'S anger because of the oath we swore."

²¹ The leaders said that they should be allowed to live. So they became woodcutters and water carriers for the whole congregation, as the leaders had said.

²² Joshua sent for the people of Gibeon and asked, "Why did you deceive us by saying, 'We live very far away from you,' when you live here with us?"

²³ You are under a curse now. You will always be servants. You will be woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

²⁴ They answered Joshua, "We were told that the LORD your God commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and destroy all who live there. We deceived you because we feared for our lives.

²⁵ Now we're at your mercy. Do to us what you think is good and right."

²⁶ So Joshua rescued them and did not let the people of Israel kill them.

²⁷ But that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation. They served the LORD'S altar, wherever he chose to put it. They still serve today.

10 ¹ King Adoni Zedek of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai and claimed it for the LORD the same way he had destroyed Jericho and its king. He also heard that the people of Gibeon had made peace with the people of Israel and were living with them.

² He and his people were terribly afraid because Gibeon was a large city. It was like one of the royal cities, larger than Ai. All its men were warriors.

³ So King Adoni Zedek of Jerusalem sent this message to King Hoham of Hebron, King Piram of Jarmuth, King Japhia of Lachish, and King Debir of Eglon:

⁴ "Come, help me destroy Gibeon because it has made peace with Joshua and the people of Israel."

⁵ So the five Amorite kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon combined their armies. They marched to Gibeon, camped there, and attacked it.

⁶ The men of Gibeon sent this message to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal: "Don't abandon us! Come quickly, and save us. Help us because all the Amorite kings who live in the mountains have united against us."

⁷ So Joshua, with all his soldiers and best warriors, set out from Gilgal.

⁸ The LORD told Joshua, "Don't be afraid of them. I have handed them over to you. None of them can stand up to you."

⁹ So Joshua marched all night from Gilgal and took them by surprise.

¹⁰ The LORD threw the enemy into disorder in front of Israel and defeated them decisively at Gibeon. He chased them along the road that goes to the slope of Beth Horon and continued to defeat them all the way to Azekah and Makkedah.

¹¹ As they fled from the Israelites down the slope of Beth Horon toward Azekah, the LORD threw huge hailstones on them. More died from the hailstones than from Israelite swords.

¹² The day the LORD handed the Amorites over to the people of Israel,

Joshua spoke to the LORD while Israel was watching, "Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and moon, stand still over the valley of Aijalon!"

¹³ The sun stood still, and the moon stopped until a nation got revenge on its enemies. Isn't this recorded in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and for nearly a day the sun was in no hurry to set.

¹⁴ Never before or after this day was there anything like it. The LORD did what a man told him to do, because the LORD fought for Israel.

¹⁵ Then Joshua and all Israel returned to the camp at Gilgal.

¹⁶ The five kings ran away and hid in the cave at Makkedah.

¹⁷ Someone told Joshua, "The five kings have been found. They are hiding in the cave at Makkedah."

¹⁸ Joshua replied, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and post a guard there.

¹⁹ But don't stop. Chase your enemies! Cut off their rear guard. Don't let them get back into their own cities, because the LORD your God has handed them over to you."

²⁰ Joshua and the Israelites defeated them decisively, almost destroying them. But some who survived got back into the fortified cities.

²¹ Then the whole army returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah. Not a single person dared to speak against any of the Israelites.

²² Joshua said, "Open the cave, and bring me the five kings!"

²³ So they brought him the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon.

²⁴ When they brought them to Joshua, he called for all the men of Israel. He told the officers who had gone with him, "Come forward and put your feet on the necks of these kings." So that's what they did.

²⁵ Joshua told them, "Don't be afraid or terrified! Be strong and courageous, because this is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you're fighting against."

²⁶ After this, Joshua put them to death and hung their bodies on five poles until evening.

²⁷ When the sun went down, Joshua gave the order to take them down from the poles. Then they threw them into the cave where they had been hiding and put large stones over the mouth of the cave. These stones are still there today.

²⁸ That same day Joshua captured Makkedah, and the Israelites killed its

people and king with swords. He claimed them for the LORD by destroying them. There were no survivors. He did the same thing to the king of Makkedah that he had done to the king of Jericho.

²⁹ Joshua and all Israel marched from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it.

³⁰ The LORD also handed Libnah and its king over to Israel. He killed all the people. There were no survivors. He did the same thing to the king of Libnah that he had done to the king of Jericho.

³¹ Joshua and all Israel marched from Libnah to Lachish, camped there, and attacked it.

³² The LORD handed Lachish over to Israel. He captured it on the next day and killed all the people, the same way he had captured Libnah.

³³ At that time King Horam of Gezer had come to help Lachish. But Joshua

killed him and his troops. There were no survivors.

³⁴ Joshua and all Israel marched from Lachish to Eglon, camped there, and attacked it.

³⁵ They captured it that day and killed everyone in it. He claimed it for the LORD by destroying it the same way he had destroyed Lachish.

³⁶ Then Joshua and all Israel marched from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it.

³⁷ They captured it and its neighboring villages and killed its king and all the people. There were no survivors, the same as at Eglon. He claimed the city and all its people for the LORD by destroying them.

³⁸ Then Joshua and all Israel went back to Debir and attacked it.

³⁹ He captured it and its king and all its neighboring villages and killed everyone. So they claimed them all for the LORD

by destroying them. There were no survivors. He did the same thing to Debir and its king that he had done to Hebron and Libnah and their kings.

⁴⁰ So Joshua captured the whole land—the mountains, the Negev, the foothills, and the slopes. There were no survivors. He claimed every living creature for the LORD by destroying it, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded.

⁴¹ So Joshua defeated the people from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from all the country of Goshen as far as Gibeon.

⁴² Joshua captured all these kings and their territories in one campaign because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

⁴³ Then Joshua and all Israel returned to the camp at Gilgal.

11 ¹ King Jabin of Hazor heard what had happened. So he sent

messengers to King Jobab of Madon and to the kings of Shimron and Achshaph.

² He also sent messengers to the northern kings in the mountains, the plains south of Chinneroth, the foothills, and Naphoth Dor in the west,

³ the Canaanites from east and west, the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, the Jebusites in the mountains, and the Hivites at the foot of Mount Hermon in Mizpah.

⁴ They came out with all their armies. Their troops were as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore. They also had horses and chariots.

⁵ All these kings camped together by the Springs of Merom in order to fight Israel.

⁶ The LORD told Joshua, "Don't be afraid of them because I am going to give them to Israel. About this time tomorrow they will all be dead. You must disable their

horses so that they cannot be used in battle. You must burn their chariots."

⁷ Joshua and all his troops arrived suddenly at the Springs of Merom and attacked the Canaanite armies.

⁸ The LORD handed them over to Israel, and the Israelites defeated them. The Israelites chased them as far as Great Sidon, Misrephoth Maim, and the valley of Mizpah in the east. There were no survivors.

⁹ Joshua disabled their horses and burned their chariots, as the LORD had told him.

¹⁰ Then Joshua turned back and captured Hazor. He killed its king with a sword. (Hazor was formerly the head of all these kingdoms.)

¹¹ They claimed everyone for the LORD by destroying them with swords. Not one person survived. Joshua also burned Hazor.

¹² So Joshua captured all these cities and their kings. He claimed them for the LORD by destroying them, as the LORD'S servant Moses had commanded him.

¹³ Israel did not burn cities built on mounds. However, Joshua made an exception and burned Hazor.

¹⁴ The people of Israel took all the loot and livestock from these cities. But they put everyone to death until they were all destroyed. Not one person survived.

¹⁵ So Joshua carried out what the LORD had commanded his servant Moses and what Moses had commanded him. He did not leave out anything the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹⁶ Joshua took all this land, the mountains, all the Negev, all the land of Goshen, the foothills, the plains, and the mountains and foothills of Israel.

¹⁷ The land extended from Mount Halak which ascends to Seir as far as Baal Gad

in the Lebanon Valley at the foot of Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and killed them.

¹⁸ Joshua waged war with all these kings for a long time.

¹⁹ Not one city had made a peace treaty with the people of Israel except Gibeon, where the Hivites lived. Israel captured everything in battle.

²⁰ The LORD made their enemies stubborn enough to continue fighting against Israel so that he could claim them all for destruction without mercy, as he had commanded Moses.

²¹ At that time Joshua also wiped out the people of Anak in the mountains, in Hebron, Debir, and Anab, and in all the hills of Judah and Israel. Joshua claimed them for the LORD by destroying them and their cities.

²² None of the people of Anak remained in Israel. Some of them were left in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

²³ Joshua captured the whole land as the LORD had promised Moses. He gave it to Israel as a possession, dividing it among the tribes. So the land had peace.

12 ¹ These are the kings of the land east of the Jordan River that the people of Israel defeated. Israel also took possession of their lands from the Arnon Valley to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern plains.

² Sihon was the Amorite king who lived in Heshbon. His rule extended from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley to the Jabbok River, which is the border of Ammon. This included the middle of the valley and half of Gilead.

³ It included the eastern plains from the Sea of Galilee to the Sea of the Plains (the Dead Sea) and the road that goes

south from Beth Jeshimoth to the foot of the slopes of Pisgah.

⁴ The territory of King Og of Bashan who lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei was captured. He was the last of the Rephaim.

⁵ He ruled Mount Hermon, Salecah, all of Bashan to the border of Geshur and Maacath, and half of Gilead to the border of King Sihon of Heshbon.

⁶ The LORD'S servant Moses and the people of Israel defeated them. Then he gave their land as a possession to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

⁷ These are the kings of the land west of the Jordan River that Joshua and the people of Israel defeated. Their lands extended from Baal Gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak which rises toward Seir. Joshua gave it as a

possession to Israel, dividing it among the tribes.

⁸ It included the mountains, foothills, plains, slopes, desert, and the Negev that the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites had possessed. The kings were

⁹ the king of Jericho, the king of Ai (near Bethel),

¹⁰ the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron,

¹¹ the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish,

¹² the king of Eglon, the king of Gezer,

¹³ the king of Debir, the king of Geder,

¹⁴ the king of Hormah, the king of Arad,

¹⁵ the king of Libnah, the king of Adullam,

¹⁶ the king of Makkedah, the king of Bethel,

¹⁷ the king of Tappuah, the king of Hopher,

¹⁸ the king of Aphek, the king of Sharon,
¹⁹ the king of Madon, the king of Hazor,
²⁰ the king of Shimron Meron, the king
of Achshaph,
²¹ the king of Taanach, the king of
Megiddo,
²² the king of Kedesh, the king of
Jokneam in Carmel,
²³ the king of Dor in Naphoth Dor, the
king of Goiim in Gilgal,
²⁴ the king of Tirzah. The total was 31
kings.

13 ¹ Joshua was old, near the end
of his life. So the LORD said to
him, "You are old, near the end of your
life, and there is a lot of land left to be
conquered.

² The land that is left includes all the
districts that belong to the Philistines
and Geshur.

³ It extends from the Shihor River,
east of Egypt, northward as far as the

border of Ekron. This is considered to be Canaanite territory, even though there are five Philistine rulers over Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, as well as the Avvim people

⁴ in the south. This territory includes all the land of the Canaanites as well as Mearah which belongs to Sidon as far as Aphek, the Amorite border.

⁵ It also includes the land of the people of Gebal, all Lebanon eastward from Baal Gad at the foot of Mount Hermon to the border of Hamath.

⁶ I will force out of the way of the people of Israel everyone who lives in the mountains from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim and all the people of Sidon. However, you must distribute the land as an inheritance to Israel by drawing lots, as I commanded you.

⁷ So divide this land. It will be an inheritance for the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh."

⁸ The tribes of Reuben and Gad with half of the tribe of Manasseh had received their inheritance east of the Jordan River, since the LORD'S servant Moses had already given it to them.

⁹ The border extended from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley, including the city in the middle of the valley, and the whole plateau from Medeba to Dibon.

¹⁰ It included all the cities of King Sihon of the Amorites up to the border of Ammon. Sihon's capital was Heshbon.

¹¹ It also included Gilead, the territory of the people of Geshur and Maacath, all of Mount Hermon, and all of Bashan as far as Salecah

¹² (the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan). Og ruled in Ashtaroth and Edrei. He was

the last of the Rephaim. Moses had defeated them and forced them out.

¹³ But the Israelites did not force out the people of Geshur and Maacath. So they still live in Israel today.

¹⁴ Moses did not give any land as an inheritance to the tribe of Levi. The sacrifices offered to the LORD God of Israel are what the Levites inherited, as the LORD had promised them.

¹⁵ Moses gave some land as an inheritance to the tribe of Reuben for their families.

¹⁶ Their territory extended from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley, including the city in the middle of the valley and the whole plateau near Medeba.

¹⁷ It included Heshbon and all its cities on the plateau, Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon,

¹⁸ Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath,

¹⁹ Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahaar on the mountain in the valley,

²⁰ Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth.

²¹ It also included all the cities of the plateau, the whole kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon. Moses defeated him and Midian's leaders—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba. They were princes of Sihon, who lived in that country.

²² Along with these leaders, the people of Israel also killed Balaam, son of Beor, who used black magic.

²³ The border of Reuben's territory was the Jordan River. This was Reuben's inheritance for its families. It included cities with their villages.

²⁴ Moses gave some land as an inheritance to the tribe of Gad for its families.

²⁵ Their territory included Jazer, all the cities of Gilead, and half of Ammon as far as Aroer, which is by Rabbah.

²⁶ It extended from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim as far as the border of Lidbir.

²⁷ In the Jordan Valley it included Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon. The Jordan River served as its western border, extending to the end of the Sea of Galilee.

²⁸ This was Gad's inheritance for its families. It included cities with their villages.

²⁹ Moses gave some land as an inheritance to half of the tribe of Manasseh. It was only for the families of that half of the tribe.

³⁰ Their territory extended from Mahanaim and included all of Bashan (the whole kingdom of King Og of

Bashan) and all 60 settlements of Jair that were in Bashan.

³¹ It also included half of Gilead with Ashtaroth and Edrei, the royal cities of Og in Bashan. They were given to half the families of Machir, son of Manasseh, for their inheritance.

³² This is the land that Moses distributed on Moab's plains, east of the Jordan River near Jericho.

³³ Moses did not give any land as an inheritance to the tribe of Levi. The LORD God of Israel is what they inherited, as he had promised them.

14 ¹ This is the land that the people of Israel inherited in Canaan. The priest Eleazar, Joshua (son of Nun), and the heads of Israel's tribes distributed it to the people.

² The land inherited by the nine-and-a-half tribes was determined by drawing

lots as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

³ Moses had given the two-and-a-half tribes their inheritance east of the Jordan River. He did not give any land as an inheritance to Levi's tribe,

⁴ because Joseph's descendants, Manasseh and Ephraim, formed two tribes. The Levites were not given a share of the land. Joseph's descendants gave the Levites cities to live in with pasturelands for their cattle and everything they had.

⁵ So the people of Israel divided the land as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁶ Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb, son of Jephunneh and grandson of Kenaz, said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses, the man of God, at Kadesh Barnea about you and me.

⁷ I was 40 years old when the LORD'S servant Moses sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. I reported to him exactly what I thought.

⁸ But my companions discouraged the people. However, I was completely loyal to the LORD my God.

⁹ On that day Moses swore this oath: 'The land your feet walked on will be a permanent inheritance for you and your descendants because you were completely loyal to the LORD my God.'

¹⁰ "So look at me. The LORD has kept me alive as he promised. It's been 45 years since Israel wandered in the desert when the LORD made this promise to Moses. So now look at me today. I'm 85 years old.

¹¹ I'm still as fit to go to war now as I was when Moses sent me out.

¹² Now give me this mountain region which the LORD spoke of that day. You

heard that the people of Anak are still there and that they have large, fortified cities. If the LORD is with me, I can force them out, as he promised."

¹³ So Joshua blessed Caleb, son of Jephunneh, and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.

¹⁴ Hebron is still the inheritance of Caleb, son of Jephunneh and grandson of Kenaz, because Caleb was completely loyal to the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁵ In the past Hebron was called Kiriath Arba. Arba was the greatest man among the people of Anak. So the land had peace.

15 ¹ The lot was drawn for the families of the tribe of Judah. Their territory extends as far south as the territory of Edom and the desert of Zin.

² The southern border starts from the south end of the Dead Sea

³ and goes south of the Akrabbim Pass. It then passes Zin and goes up south of Kadesh Barnea. From there it goes to Hezron, up to Addar, around to Karka, ⁴ and on to Azmon. It comes out at the River of Egypt so that the border ends at the Mediterranean Sea. This is the southern border.

⁵ The eastern border is the Dead Sea as far north as the mouth of the Jordan River. The northern border starts from the north end of the Dead Sea at the mouth of the Jordan

⁶ and goes up to Beth Hoglah. It then passes north to Beth Arabah and goes up to the Rock of Bohan, son of Reuben.

⁷ From the valley of Achor, the border goes up to Debir and turns north to the region that faces the Adummim Pass, south of the valley. Then the border passes the Springs of En Shemesh and ends at En Rogel.

⁸ It continues up the valley of Ben Hinnom to the south slope of the Jebusite city Jerusalem. It then goes to the top of the mountain that overlooks the valley of Hinnom to the west at the north end of the valley of Rephaim.

⁹ From the top of that mountain the border goes around to the spring of Nephtoah. From there it goes to the cities of Mount Ephron and around to Baalah (now called Kiriath Jearim).

¹⁰ From Baalah the border turns west to Mount Seir and over to the north slope of Mount Jearim (now called Chesalon). Then it goes down to Beth Shemesh and on to Timnah.

¹¹ From there the border goes on the north side of Ekron and turns to Shikkeron, on to Mount Baalah, and comes out at Jabneel. The border ends at the Mediterranean Sea.

¹² The western border is the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea. These are the borders around Judah that belong to their families.

¹³ Joshua gave Caleb, son of Jephunneh, a share of land among the people of Judah as the LORD had told them. It was Kiriath Arba (now called Hebron). Arba was the father of Anak.

¹⁴ Caleb forced out Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, three descendants of Anak from Hebron.

¹⁵ From there he marched against the people living in Debir. (In the past Debir was called Kiriath Sepher.)

¹⁶ Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Achsah as a wife to anyone who attacks Kiriath Sepher and captures it."

¹⁷ Then Othniel, son of Caleb's brother Kenaz, captured it. So Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah as a wife.

¹⁸ When she came to Othniel, she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. When she got down from her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What do you want?"

¹⁹ She answered, "Give me a blessing. Since you've given me some dry land, also give me some springs." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

²⁰ This is the land inherited by the families of the tribe of Judah.

²¹ On the farthest edge of the Negev, on the border of Edom, they gave the tribe of Judah 29 cities with their villages:

Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur,

²² Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah,

²³ Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,

²⁴ Ziph, Telem, Bealoth,

²⁵ Hazor Hadattah, Keriioth Hezron (now called Hazor),

²⁶ Amam, Shema, Moladah,

²⁷ Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet,

²⁸ Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah,

²⁹ Baalah, Iim, Ezem,

³⁰ Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah,

³¹ Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah,

³² Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon.

³³ In the foothills they gave Judah 14 cities with their villages: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah,

³⁴ Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam,

³⁵ Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah,

³⁶ Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim.

³⁷ They also gave Judah 16 other cities with their villages: Zenan, Hadashah, Migdalgad,

³⁸ Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel,

³⁹ Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,

⁴⁰ Cabbon, Lahmas, Chitlish,

⁴¹ Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makedah.

⁴² An additional nine cities with their villages were given to Judah: Libnah, Ether, Ashan,

⁴³ Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib,

⁴⁴ Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah.

⁴⁵ Judah also received Ekron with its cities and villages.

⁴⁶ This included all the cities with their villages between Ekron and the Mediterranean Sea and alongside Ashdod.

⁴⁷ Added to this were Ashdod and Gaza with their cities and villages as far as the River of Egypt and the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴⁸ In the mountains they gave Judah 11 cities with their villages: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh,

⁴⁹ Dannah, Kiriath Sannah (now called Debir),

⁵⁰ Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim,

⁵¹ Goshen, Holon, and Giloh.

⁵² They also gave Judah nine other cities with their villages: Arab, Dumah, Eshan,
⁵³ Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah,
⁵⁴ Humtah, Kiriath Arba (now called Hebron), and Zior.

⁵⁵ They also received another ten cities with their villages: Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah,

⁵⁶ Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah,

⁵⁷ Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah.

⁵⁸ Halhul, Bethzur, Gedor,

⁵⁹ Maarath, Bethanoth, and Eltekon were six other cities with their villages that were given to Judah.

⁶⁰ The two cities of Kiriath Baal (now called Kiriath Jearim) and Rabbah with their villages were given to Judah.

⁶¹ In the desert Judah was given six cities with their villages: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah,

⁶² Nibshan, Ir Hamelah, and En Gedi.

⁶³ However, Judah was not able to force out the people of Jebus who lived in Jerusalem. So they still live with Judah in Jerusalem today.

16 ¹ The lot was drawn for Joseph. The border of Joseph's territory goes from the Jordan River at Jericho to the springs of Jericho on the east, through the desert that goes up from Jericho, and through the mountains to Bethel.

² From Bethel the border goes to Luz and over to Ataroth at the border of the Archites.

³ Then it descends west to the border of Japhlet and Lower Beth Horon, on to Gezer, and ends at the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴ So Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, received this land as their inheritance.

⁵ This is the territory for the families descended from Ephraim. The eastern border of the land they inherited is from Ataroth Addar to Upper Beth Horon.

⁶ From there the border goes west, with Michmethath on the north. The border then turns east to Taanath Shiloh and passes east to Janoah.

⁷ From Janoah it descends to Ataroth and Naarah, touches Jericho, and ends at the Jordan River.

⁸ At Tappuah the border goes west along the Kanah River and ends at the Mediterranean Sea. This is the land given as an inheritance to the families of the tribe of Ephraim

⁹ with all the cities and their villages selected for Ephraim in Manasseh's territory.

¹⁰ However, they did not force out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer. So the

Canaanites still live in Ephraim today, but they are required to do forced labor.

17 ¹The lot was drawn for the tribe of Manasseh, because Manasseh was Joseph's firstborn. Machir, Manasseh's firstborn, the ancestor of the people living in Gilead, had received Gilead and Bashan because he was a soldier.

²The land was given to the rest of the families descended from Manasseh, to the descendants of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hopher, and Shemida. These were the male descendants of Joseph's son Manasseh listed by their families.

³Zelophehad, son of Hopher, grandson of Gilead, and great-grandson of Machir, whose father was Manasseh, had no sons—only daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

⁴ They came to the priest Eleazar, Joshua (son of Nun), and the leaders. They said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us some land as an inheritance among our male relatives." So they gave them an inheritance among their father's relatives as the LORD had required.

⁵ Ten portions of land went to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan east of the Jordan River.

⁶ These portions were distributed because Manasseh's daughters were given an inheritance along with his sons, while Gilead belonged to Manasseh's other descendants.

⁷ Manasseh's border extends from Asher to Michmethath, which faces Shechem. Then the border goes south toward the people who live in En Tappuah.

⁸ (The land of Tappuah belongs to Manasseh, but Tappuah itself, on the border of Manasseh, belongs to Ephraim.)

⁹ The border then descends southward to the Kanah River. These cities belong to Ephraim, although they are among Manasseh's cities. Manasseh's southern border is the river, which ends at the Mediterranean Sea.

¹⁰ What is south of the river belongs to Ephraim, and what is north of it belongs to Manasseh. So the Mediterranean Sea is its western border, Asher its northern border, and Issachar its eastern border.

¹¹ In Issachar and Asher, Manasseh possessed Beth Shean and Ibleam with their villages and the people living in Dor, En Dor, Taanach, and Megiddo and their villages. The last three are on mountain ridges.

¹² But Manasseh was not able to take possession of these cities since the Canaanites were determined to stay in this land.

¹³ When the Israelites became strong enough, they made the Canaanites do forced labor, since they didn't force all of them out.

¹⁴ Joseph's descendants asked Joshua, "Why did you give us only one region for an inheritance? We have a lot of people because the LORD has blessed us."

¹⁵ Joshua replied, "If there are so many of you, go into the forest! Clear ground for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaim if the mountains of Ephraim are too confining for you."

¹⁶ Joseph's descendants responded, "The mountains are not enough for us either. Besides, all the Canaanites living in the valley, in Beth Shean and its

villages, and in the valley of Jezreel have chariots made of iron."

¹⁷ Then Joshua said to the descendants of Joseph, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, "You are an important and very powerful people. One region is really not enough for you.

¹⁸ The mountain region will be yours as well. It is a forest, so you will have to clear it. All of it will be yours. But you must force out the Canaanites, even though they are strong and have chariots made of iron."

18 ¹ The whole congregation of Israel gathered at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land was under their control.

² There were still seven tribes in Israel who had not yet received any land as their inheritance.

³ So Joshua asked the Israelites, "How long are you going to waste time

conquering the land which the LORD God of your ancestors has given you?

⁴ Choose three men from each tribe, and I will send them out. They will survey the land and write a description of it which shows the borders of their inheritance. Then they will come back to me.

⁵ They will divide the land into seven parts. Judah will stay within its territory in the south, and Joseph's descendants will stay within their territory in the north.

⁶ You must describe the seven parts of the land and report to me here. I will draw lots for you here in the presence of the LORD our God.

⁷ Levi's tribe has no separate region among you, because their inheritance is to serve the LORD as priests. The tribes of Gad and Reuben and half of the tribe of Manasseh have received

the inheritance that the LORD'S servant Moses gave them on the east side of the Jordan River."

⁸ As the men got ready to go, Joshua ordered them to write a description of the land. He said, "Go survey the land. Write a description of it, and return to me. Then I will draw lots for you in the presence of the LORD here in Shiloh."

⁹ The men surveyed the land. They described it in a book. The land was divided into seven parts according to its cities. Then they returned to Joshua at the camp at Shiloh.

¹⁰ So Joshua drew lots for them in the presence of the LORD in Shiloh. There Joshua divided the land among the tribes of Israel.

¹¹ The lot was drawn for the families of the tribe of Benjamin. Their territory lies between Judah's and Joseph's.

¹² Their northern border starts at the Jordan, goes up the slope north of Jericho, west through the mountains, and ends at the desert of Beth Aven.

¹³ From there the border goes to the south slope of Luz (now called Bethel). Then the border goes down to Ataroth Addar over the mountains south of Lower Beth Horon.

¹⁴ The border turns and goes around on the west side, south of the mountain that faces Beth Horon, and ends at Kiriath Baal (now called Kiriath Jearim), a city of Judah.

¹⁵ The southern border begins just outside Kiriath Jearim and goes west, to the springs of Nephtoah.

¹⁶ Then the border descends to the foot of the mountain that overlooks the valley of Ben Hinnom, in the north end of the valley of Rephaim. It descends to the valley of Hinnom, to the south

slope of the city of Jebus, and down to En Rogel.

¹⁷ Then it turns north and goes to En Shemesh and from there to the region opposite the Adummim Pass. It descends to the Rock of Bohan, son of Reuben.

¹⁸ Then it continues on to the north side of the slope facing the plains and down into the plains.

¹⁹ The border continues to the north slope of Beth Hoglah and ends at the northern bay of the Dead Sea at the south end of the Jordan River. This is its southern border.

²⁰ The Jordan River is its eastern border. These are the borders surrounding the inheritance given to Benjamin for its families.

²¹ These are the 12 cities with their villages that belong to the tribe of Benjamin for its families: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz,

²² Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,

²³ Avvim, Parah, Ophrah,

²⁴ Chephar Ammoni, Ophni, and Geba.

²⁵ There were 14 other cities with their villages: Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth,

²⁶ Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah,

²⁷ Rekem, Ir Peel, Taralah,

²⁸ Zela, Eleph, Jebus (now called Jerusalem), Gibeath, and Kiriath. This is Benjamin's inheritance for its families.

19 ¹ The second lot was drawn for the families of the tribe of Simeon. Their inheritance was within Judah.

² In their inheritance they received 13 cities and their villages: Beersheba (Sheba), Moladah,

³ Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem,

⁴ Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah,

⁵ Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah,

⁶ Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhem.

⁷ There were four other cities with their villages: Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan.

⁸ All the villages around these cities as far as Baalath Beer and Ramath Negev were also included. This is the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon for its families.

⁹ Simeon's inheritance was a part of Judah's because Judah had more land than it needed. So Simeon received its inheritance inside Judah's borders.

¹⁰ The third lot was drawn for the families descended from Zebulun. The border of their inheritance goes as far as Sarid.

¹¹ Toward the west the border ascends to Maralah and touches Dabbesheth and the river near Jokneam.

¹² But from Sarid it turns directly east toward the border of Chisloth Tabor, on to Daberath, and then ascends toward Japhia.

¹³ From there it goes directly east to Gath Hopher, Eth Kazin, and Rimmon, where it turns to Neah.

¹⁴ There the border turns north to Hannathon and ends at the valley of Iphtah El.

¹⁵ This also includes Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem. There were 12 cities with their villages.

¹⁶ These cities with their villages are the inheritance given to the families descended from Zebulun.

¹⁷ The fourth lot was drawn for the families descended from Issachar.

¹⁸ Their territory included Jezreel, Chesulloth, Shunem,

¹⁹ Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath,

²⁰ Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez,

²¹ Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pazzez.

²² The border touches Tabor, Shahazimah, and Beth Shemesh

and ends at the Jordan River. There were 16 cities with their villages.

²³ These cities with their villages are the inheritance for the families of the tribe of Issachar.

²⁴ The fifth lot was drawn for the families of the tribe of Asher.

²⁵ Their territory included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph,

²⁶ Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal.

The border touches Carmel and Shihor Libnath in the west.

²⁷ Then it turns east to Beth Dagon and touches Zebulun and the valley of Iphtah El in the north and goes to Beth Emek and Neiel. From there it goes northward to Cabul,

²⁸ Abdon, Rehob, Hammon, Kanah, and as far as Great Sidon.

²⁹ Then it turns at Ramah and goes on to the fortified city of Tyre. The border then turns to Hosah and ends at

the Mediterranean Sea. The territory includes Meheleb, Achzib,

³⁰ Umma, Acco, Aphek, and Rehob.

There were 22 cities with their villages.

³¹ These cities with their villages are the inheritance for the families of the tribe of Asher.

³² The sixth lot was drawn for the families descended from the tribe of Naphtali.

³³ Their border starts from Heleph at the oak tree at Zaananim. It continues to Adami Nekeb, Jabneel, to Lakkum, and ends at the Jordan River.

³⁴ The border turns west to Aznoth Tabor, and from there to Hukok. It touches Zebulun in the south, Asher in the west, and Judah in the east at the Jordan.

³⁵ The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth,

³⁶ Adamah, Ramah, Hazor,

³⁷ Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor,

³⁸ Yiron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemeth. There were 19 cities with their villages.

³⁹ These cities with their villages are the inheritance for the families of the tribe of Naphtali.

⁴⁰ The seventh lot was drawn for the families of the tribe of Dan.

⁴¹ The territory of their inheritance included Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh,

⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah,

⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron,

⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath,

⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon,

⁴⁶ Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the border passing in front of Joppa.

⁴⁷ The border of Dan extended beyond them. Dan's descendants went up and attacked Leshem, captured it, and killed everyone there. They took it, settled

there, and renamed the city Dan after their ancestor Dan.

⁴⁸ These cities with their villages are the inheritance for the families of the tribe of Dan.

⁴⁹ When they all had finally received the land they were to inherit, the people of Israel also gave land within their territory as an inheritance to Joshua, son of Nun.

⁵⁰ They gave him the city he asked for, as the LORD had instructed them to do. It was Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim. He rebuilt the city and lived there.

⁵¹ This is the land that the tribes of Israel drew by lot. The priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of the families divided the land by drawing lots. They did this in Shiloh in the presence of the LORD at the entrance of the tent

of meeting. So they finished dividing the land.

20¹ The LORD said to Joshua,
² "Tell the people of Israel, 'Now choose for yourselves the cities of refuge about which I spoke to you through Moses.

³ Choose them so that anyone who unintentionally kills someone may run to them. They will be a place of refuge from any relative who can avenge the death.

⁴ "A person who kills someone accidentally can run to one of these cities. There he will stand at the entrance to the city, where court is held, and present his case to the leaders of that city. Then they will take him into their city and give him a place to live with them.

⁵ "If the relative who can avenge the death pursues him, the leaders must not hand him over to the relative because

he didn't intend to kill the other person. He didn't even hate the person he killed.

⁶ The accused person may remain in that city until he can stand trial in front of the congregation or until whoever is chief priest at that time dies. Then he may go back to his home in the city from which he ran away.'"

⁷ Kedesh in Galilee in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (now called Hebron) in the mountains of Judah were chosen as cities of refuge.

⁸ Bezer on the desert plateau from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan from the tribe of Manasseh were chosen as cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan River, east of Jericho.

⁹ These are the cities chosen as cities of refuge for all Israelites, including the foreigners living among them. Anyone

who accidentally kills someone may escape to these cities. Then he will not be handed over to the relative who can avenge a death before he stands trial in front of the congregation.

21 ¹ Then the leaders of the families of Levi came to the priest Eleazar, to Joshua (son of Nun), and to the leaders of the families of the other Israelite tribes

² at Shiloh in Canaan. They said to them, "The LORD commanded through Moses that we should receive cities to live in and pasturelands for our livestock."

³ So, as the LORD had instructed, Levi's descendants were given the following cities with pasturelands from the Israelites' inheritance.

⁴ These are the cities for the families of Kohath that were chosen by drawing lots. These descendants of the priest Aaron the Levite received 13 cities

from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

⁵ The rest of Kohath's descendants received 10 cities from the families of the tribes of Ephraim and Dan and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

⁶ Gershon's descendants received 13 cities from the families of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and half of the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

⁷ Merari's descendants received 12 cities for their families from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

⁸ The Israelites gave these cities with pasturelands to Levi's descendants by drawing lots, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

⁹ These are the names of the cities from the tribes of Judah and Simeon

¹⁰ that they gave Aaron's descendants who were from the families of Kohath in

the tribe of Levi. Their lot was the first one drawn.

¹¹ They gave them Kiriath Arba (Arba was Anak's father) and the pastureland around it. This is the city of Hebron located in the mountains of Judah.

¹² But they gave its fields and villages to Caleb, son of Jephunneh, as his possession.

¹³ So they gave the following cities with pasturelands to the descendants of Aaron, the priest. The nine cities from those two tribes were Hebron (a city of refuge for murderers), Libnah,

¹⁴ Jattir, Eshtemoa,

¹⁵ Holon, Debir,

¹⁶ Ain, Juttah, and Beth Shemesh.

¹⁷ The tribe of Benjamin also gave them four cities: Gibeon, Geba,

¹⁸ Anathoth, and Almon.

¹⁹ In all, 13 cities with pasturelands were given to the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

²⁰ Cities were chosen by lot from the tribe of Ephraim to give to the rest of Levi's descendants who were from the families of Kohath.

²¹ These four cities with pasturelands were Shechem (a city of refuge for murderers) in the mountains of Ephraim, Gezer,

²² Kibzaim, and Beth Horon.

²³ The tribe of Dan gave them four cities: Eltekeh, Gibbethon,

²⁴ Aijalon, and Gath Rimmon.

²⁵ Half of the tribe of Manasseh gave them two cities with pasturelands: Taanach and Gath Rimmon.

²⁶ In all, ten cities with pasturelands were given to the rest of the families of Kohath.

²⁷ They gave the families of Gershon's descendants, who were in the tribe of Levi, two cities with pasturelands from half of the tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan (a city of refuge for murderers) and Ashtaroth.

²⁸ Four cities with pasturelands were also given to them from the tribe of Issachar: Kishion, Daberath,

²⁹ Jarmuth, and En Gannim.

³⁰ Another four cities with pasturelands were given to them from the tribe of Asher: Mishal, Abdon,

³¹ Helkath, and Rehob.

³² Also three cities with pasturelands were given to them from the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee (a city of refuge for murderers), Hammoth Dor, and Kartan.

³³ In all, 13 cities with pasturelands were given to Gershon's families.

³⁴ To the families of Merari, who were from the tribe of Levi, the tribe of Zebulun gave four cities with pasturelands: Jokneam, Kartah,

³⁵ Dimnah, and Nahalal.

³⁶ The tribe of Reuben also gave them four cities with pasturelands: Bezer, Jahaz,

³⁷ Kedemoth, and Mephaath.

³⁸ The tribe of Gad also gave them four cities with pasturelands: Ramoth in Gilead (a city of refuge for murderers), Mahanaim,

³⁹ Heshbon, and Jazer.

⁴⁰ All these cities belonged to the families of Merari. They were the last of the families of Levi. These 12 cities were chosen by lot.

⁴¹ Within the territory owned by the Israelites there were 48 cities in all for Levi's descendants.

⁴² Each of these cities had its own pastureland around it.

⁴³ So the LORD gave Israel the whole land he had sworn to give their ancestors. They took possession of it and settled there.

⁴⁴ The LORD allowed them to have peace on every side, as he had sworn with an oath to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies stood up to them. The LORD handed all their enemies over to them.

⁴⁵ Every single good promise that the LORD had given the nation of Israel came true.

22 ¹ Joshua summoned the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

² He said to them, "You have done everything the LORD'S servant Moses commanded you. You have also obeyed me in everything I commanded you.

³ All this time, to this day, you have never deserted your relatives. You have carefully kept the commands of the LORD your God.

⁴ "Now the LORD your God has given your relatives peace, as he promised them. So return home, to the land that is your own possession. It is the land that the LORD'S servant Moses gave you east of the Jordan River.

⁵ Carefully follow the commands and teachings that the LORD'S servant Moses gave you. Love the LORD your God, follow his directions, and keep his commands. Be loyal to him, and serve him with all your heart and soul."

⁶ Then Joshua blessed them. He sent them on their way, and they went to their homes.

⁷ Moses had given land in Bashan as an inheritance to half of Manasseh, and Joshua had given the other half of the

tribe their land with their relatives west of the Jordan. When Joshua sent them home, he blessed them.

⁸ He also said to them, "Return to your homes with your vast wealth, large herds of livestock, silver, gold, bronze, iron, and loads of clothing. Divide the loot from your enemies with your relatives."

⁹ So the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh left the rest of the Israelites at Shiloh in Canaan. They returned to Gilead. This was their own possession which they had captured as the LORD had instructed them through Moses.

¹⁰ Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh came to the region of the Jordan that was still in Canaan. They built an altar by the Jordan River. The altar was very large and highly visible.

¹¹ The rest of the Israelites heard about it and said, "See there! Reuben, Gad,

and half of the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar at the border of Canaan. It's in the region near the Jordan River on Israel's side."

¹² When the people of Israel heard about it, the whole congregation of Israel gathered at Shiloh. They intended to wage war against them.

¹³ The Israelites sent Phinehas, son of the priest Eleazar, to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh in Gilead.

¹⁴ Ten leaders, one from each tribe in Israel, went with him. Each man was a leader of a household and head of a family division in Israel.

¹⁵ When they arrived these leaders said to the people of Gilead,

¹⁶ "All of the LORD'S congregation is asking, 'What is this faithless act you have committed against the God of Israel?' Today you have turned away

from following the LORD by building an altar for yourselves. Today you have rebelled against the LORD!

¹⁷ Does the sin we committed at Peor mean nothing to us anymore? Didn't we cleanse ourselves from it? Because of that sin there was a plague on the LORD'S congregation!

¹⁸ You have turned away from following the LORD! Today you rebel against the LORD, and tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.

¹⁹ If your land is unclean, come over here to the LORD'S land. The LORD'S tent is standing here. Take some property for yourselves among us. Don't rebel against the LORD or against us by building an altar for yourselves in addition to the altar of the LORD our God.

²⁰ Didn't Achan, son of Zerah, act faithlessly with the things claimed by the LORD? Didn't the LORD become angry

with the whole congregation of Israel? Achan wasn't the only one who died because of his sin."

²¹ Then the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh answered the heads of the divisions of Israel.

²² They said, "The LORD is the only true God! The LORD is the only true God! He knows, so let Israel know! If our act is rebellious or unfaithful to the LORD,

²³ don't spare us today. If we built an altar with the intention of no longer following him, and if we built it for making burnt offerings, grain offerings, or fellowship offerings, let the LORD punish us.

²⁴ "We were worried because of the situation we're in. We thought sometime in the future your children might say to our children, 'What relationship do you have with the LORD God of Israel?'

²⁵ The LORD has made the Jordan River a dividing line between us and you, the descendants of Reuben and Gad. You have no connection with the LORD!' So your descendants would stop our descendants from worshiping the LORD.

²⁶ Then we said, 'Let's build an altar for ourselves. It will not be for burnt offerings or sacrifices,

²⁷ but it will stand as a witness between us for generations to come. It will stand as a witness that we may worship in the presence of the LORD with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and fellowship offerings.' Then your descendants cannot say to our descendants, 'You have no connection with the LORD!'

²⁸ So we thought, if this statement is made to us or to our descendants in the future, we will answer, 'Look at the model of the LORD'S altar our ancestors made. They didn't make it for burnt

offerings or sacrifices but to stand as a witness between us.'

²⁹ It would be unthinkable for us to rebel against the LORD or to turn back today from following the LORD by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings, or sacrifices in addition to the altar of the LORD our God that is in front of his tent."

³⁰ When the priest Phinehas, the leaders of the congregation, and the heads of the divisions of Israel heard what the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh said, they were satisfied.

³¹ Then Phinehas, son of the priest Eleazar, said to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, "Today we know the LORD is among us, because you did not commit an unfaithful act against the LORD. Now you have rescued the people of Israel from the LORD'S punishment."

³² Then Phinehas (son of the priest Eleazar) and the leaders returned from Reuben and Gad in Gilead to Israel in Canaan and gave them the report.

³³ The people of Israel were satisfied with the report. So they praised God and didn't talk anymore about going to war against Reuben and Gad and destroying the land where they were living.

³⁴ The tribes of Reuben and Gad gave the altar a name: Witness Between Us That the LORD Is the Only True God.

23 ¹ A long time afterward, the LORD gave the Israelites peace with all their enemies around them. Joshua was old, near the end of his life.

² So he called all the leaders, chiefs, judges, and officers of Israel together. He said to them, "I am old, near the end of my life.

³ You have seen for yourselves everything the LORD your God did to

all those nations. The LORD your God fought for you!

⁴ I have given you the territory of the nations that still remain as an inheritance for your tribes. This includes the territory of all the nations I have already destroyed from the Jordan River westward to the Mediterranean Sea.

⁵ The LORD your God will expel them right in front of your eyes and force them out of your way. You will take their land as the LORD your God told you.

⁶ Now you must be very strong to keep and to do everything written in the Book of Moses' Teachings. Don't turn away from them.

⁷ Don't get mixed up with the nations left in your territory. Don't ever mention the names of their gods or swear an oath to them. Don't ever serve their gods or bow down to them.

⁸ But you must be loyal to the LORD your God, as you have been until now.

⁹ The LORD has forced important and powerful nations out of your way. Not one person has ever been able to stand up to you.

¹⁰ One of you used to chase a thousand. That was because the LORD your God was fighting for you, as he had promised you.

¹¹ Be very careful to love the LORD your God.

¹² "But if you turn away and go along with the other nations within your borders, if you intermarry with them or associate with them,

¹³ then you should know that the LORD your God will never again force these people out of your way. Instead, they will be a snare and a trap for you, a whip laid to your sides, and thorns in your eyes until none of you are left in this

good land that the LORD your God has given you.

¹⁴ "Pay attention, because I will soon die like everyone else. You know with all your heart and soul that not one single promise which the LORD your God has given you has ever failed to come true. Every single word has come true.

¹⁵ "Every good word the LORD your God has promised you has come true for you. In the same way the LORD will bring about every evil curse until he has destroyed you from this good land that he has given you.

¹⁶ When you ignore the conditions placed on you by the LORD your God and follow other gods, serve them and bow down to them, the LORD will be angry with you. Then you will quickly disappear from the good land he has given you."

24 ¹ Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem. He called together Israel's leaders, chiefs, judges, and officers, and they presented themselves to God.

² Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Long ago your ancestors, Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor, lived on the other side of the Euphrates River and served other gods.

³ But I took your ancestor Abraham from the other side of the Euphrates River. I led him through all of Canaan and gave him many descendants. I also gave him Isaac.

⁴ To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the mountains in Seir as his own. However, Jacob and his sons went to Egypt.

⁵ "Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I struck Egypt with plagues. Later I led you out.

⁶ When I led your ancestors out of Egypt, you came to the sea. The Egyptians with their chariots and horsemen chased your ancestors to the Red Sea.

⁷ When your ancestors cried out to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians. He made the sea flow back and cover them. You saw for yourselves what I did to Egypt. Then you lived in the desert for a long time.

⁸ "After that I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived on the east side of the Jordan River. They fought you. However, I handed them over to you. So you took their land, and I destroyed them in front of you.

⁹ Then Balak, son of King Zippor of Moab, fought Israel. He summoned Balaam, son of Beor, to curse you.

¹⁰ But I refused to listen to Balaam. All he could do was bless you. So I saved you from his power.

¹¹ "Then you crossed the Jordan River and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho, the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites fought you. But I handed them over to you.

¹² I sent hornets ahead of you to force out the two kings of the Amorites ahead of you. These things didn't happen because of your battle skills or fighting ability.

¹³ So I gave you a land that you hadn't farmed, cities to live in that you hadn't built, vineyards and olive groves that you hadn't planted. So you ate all you wanted!

¹⁴ "Fear the LORD, and serve him with integrity and faithfulness. Get rid of the gods your ancestors served on the other side of the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve only the LORD.

¹⁵ But if you don't want to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Even if you choose the gods your ancestors served on the other side of the Euphrates or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live, my family and I will still serve the LORD."

¹⁶ The people responded, "It would be unthinkable for us to abandon the LORD to serve other gods.

¹⁷ The LORD our God brought us and our ancestors out of slavery in Egypt. He did these spectacular signs right before our eyes. He guarded us wherever we went, especially as we passed through other nations.

¹⁸ The LORD forced out all the people ahead of us, including the Amorites who lived in this land. We, too, will serve the LORD, because he is our God."

¹⁹ But Joshua answered the people, "Since the LORD is a holy God, you can't possibly serve him. He is a God who does not tolerate rivals. He will not forgive your rebellious acts and sins.

²⁰ If you abandon the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you. He will destroy you, although he has been so good to you."

²¹ The people answered Joshua, "No! We will only serve the LORD!"

²² Joshua said to the people, "You have testified that you have chosen to serve the LORD." They answered, "Yes, we have!"

²³ "Get rid of the foreign gods that are among you. Turn yourselves entirely over to the LORD God of Israel."

²⁴ The people replied to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

²⁵ That day Joshua made an agreement for the people and set up laws and rules for them at Shechem.

²⁶ Joshua wrote these things in the Book of God's Teachings. Then he took a large stone and set it up under the oak tree at the LORD'S holy place.

²⁷ Joshua told all the people, "This stone will stand as a witness for us. It has heard all the words which the LORD spoke to us. It will stand as a witness for you. You cannot deceive your God."

²⁸ Then Joshua sent the people away, each to his own property.

²⁹ After these events, the LORD'S servant Joshua, son of Nun, died. He was 110 years old.

³⁰ He was buried on his own land at Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash.

³¹ Israel served the LORD as long as Joshua and the older leaders, who outlived him and who knew everything the LORD had done for Israel, were alive.

³² Joseph's bones, which the people of Israel had brought from Egypt, were buried at Shechem. They were placed in the plot of ground Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor, father of Shechem, for 100 pieces of silver. The plot was inherited by Joseph's descendants.

³³ Aaron's son Eleazar also died. He was buried on the hill that had been given to his son Phinehas in the mountains of Ephraim.

Judges

1 ¹ After Joshua's death the Israelites asked the LORD, "Who will go first to fight the Canaanites for us?"

² The LORD answered, "Judah's troops will go first. I am about to hand the Canaanites over to you."

³ The tribe of Judah said to the tribe of Simeon, "Come with us into the territory given to us when we drew lots, and together we will fight the people of Canaan. Then we'll go with you into your territory." So the tribe of Simeon went along with Judah.

⁴ Judah's troops went into battle, and the LORD handed the Canaanites and Perizzites over to them. They defeated 10,000 men at Bezek.

⁵ At Bezek they also caught up with Adoni Bezek. They fought him and defeated the Canaanites and Perizzites.

⁶ Adoni Bezek fled. Judah's troops chased him, caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

⁷ Adoni Bezek said, "Seventy kings who had their thumbs and big toes cut off used to pick up food under my table. God has paid me back for what I did to them." Judah's troops brought Adoni Bezek to Jerusalem, where he died.

⁸ The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem and captured it. They killed everyone there and set the city on fire.

⁹ After that, the men of Judah went to fight the Canaanites who lived in the mountains, the Negev, and the foothills.

¹⁰ Then they went to fight the Canaanites who lived at Hebron. (In the past Hebron was called Kiriath Arba.)

There they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi.

¹¹ From there Judah's troops went to fight the people living at Debir. (In the past Debir was called Kiriath Sepher.)

¹² Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Achsah as a wife to whoever defeats Kiriath Sepher and captures it."

¹³ Then Othniel, son of Caleb's younger brother Kenaz, captured it. So Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah as a wife.

¹⁴ When she came to Othniel, she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. When she got down from her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What do you want?"

¹⁵ She answered, "Give me a blessing. Since you've given me some dry land, also give me some springs." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

¹⁶ The descendants of Moses' father-in-law, the Kenite, went with the people

of Judah from the City of Palms into the desert of Judah. There they lived with the people of Judah in the Negev near Arad.

¹⁷ The tribe of Judah went to fight along with the tribe of Simeon, their close relatives. They defeated the Canaanites who lived in Zephath and claimed it for the LORD by destroying it. So the city was called Hormah [Claimed for Destruction].

¹⁸ Judah also captured Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron with their territories.

¹⁹ The LORD was with the men of Judah so that they were able to take possession of the mountains. But they could not force out the people living in the valley who had chariots made of iron.

²⁰ As Moses had promised, Hebron was given to Caleb, who forced out the three sons of Anak.

²¹ The men of Benjamin did not force out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem. The Jebusites still live with the tribe of Benjamin in Jerusalem today.

²² The descendants of Joseph also went into battle against Bethel, and the LORD was with them.

²³ They sent men to spy on Bethel. (In the past the city was called Luz.)

²⁴ The spies saw a man coming out of the city. They told him, "Show us how we can get into the city, and we'll treat you kindly."

²⁵ He showed them. So they got into the city and killed everyone there. But they let that man and his whole family go free.

²⁶ The man went to the land of the Hittites. There he built a city and called it Luz. The city still has that name today.

²⁷ Now, the tribe of Manasseh did not force out the people of Beth Shean,

Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, and Megiddo or their villages. The Canaanites were determined to live in this land.

²⁸ When the Israelites were strong enough, they made the Canaanites do forced labor. But they did not force all of them out.

²⁹ The tribe of Ephraim did not force out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer. So the Canaanites continued to live with them in Gezer.

³⁰ The tribe of Zebulun did not force out those who lived at Kitron or Nahalol. So the Canaanites continued to live with them and were made to do forced labor.

³¹ The tribe of Asher did not force out those who lived at Acco or Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphek, or Rehob.

³² So the tribe of Asher continued to live with the Canaanites because they did not force them out.

³³ The tribe of Naphtali did not force out those who lived at Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath. So they continued to live with the Canaanites. But the people of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were made to do forced labor.

³⁴ The Amorites forced the tribe of Dan into the mountains and would not let them come down into the valley.

³⁵ The Amorites were determined to live at Har Heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim. But when the tribes of Joseph became stronger, they made the Amorites do forced labor.

³⁶ The territory of the Amorites extended from the Akrabbim Pass— from Selah northward.

2¹ The Messenger of the LORD went from Gilgal to Bochim. He said, "I brought you out of Egypt into the land that I swore to give to your ancestors. I

said, 'I will never break my promise to you.

² You must never make a treaty with the people who live in this land. You must tear down their altars.' But you didn't obey me. What do you think you're doing?

³ So I have this to say, 'I will not force them out of your way. They will be like thorns in your sides, and their gods will become a trap for you.'"

⁴ While the Messenger of the LORD was saying this to all the people of Israel, they began to cry loudly.

⁵ So they called that place Bochim [Those Who Cry]. They offered sacrifices there to the LORD.

⁶ Now, Joshua sent the people of Israel home. So each family went to take possession of the territory they had inherited.

⁷ The people served the LORD throughout Joshua's lifetime and throughout the lifetimes of the leaders who had outlived him and who had seen all the spectacular works the LORD had done for Israel.

⁸ The LORD'S servant Joshua, son of Nun, died at the age of 110.

⁹ He was buried at Timnath Heres within the territory he had inherited. This was in the mountains of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash.

¹⁰ That whole generation had joined their ancestors in death. So another generation grew up after them. They had no personal experience with the LORD or with what he had done for Israel.

¹¹ The people of Israel did what the LORD considered evil. They began to serve other gods—the Baals.

¹² The Israelites abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors, the God who

brought them out of Egypt. They followed the other gods of the people around them. They worshiped these gods, and that made the LORD angry.

¹³ They abandoned the LORD to serve the god Baal and the goddess Astarte.

¹⁴ So the LORD became angry with the people of Israel. He handed them over to people who robbed them. He also used their enemies around them to defeat them. They could no longer stand up against their enemies.

¹⁵ Whenever the Israelites went to war, the power of the LORD brought disaster on them. This was what the LORD said he would do in an oath. So he made them suffer a great deal.

¹⁶ Then the LORD would send judges to rescue them from those who robbed them.

¹⁷ But the people wouldn't listen to the judges. The Israelites chased after other

gods as though they were prostitutes and worshiped them. They quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors who had obeyed the LORD'S commands. They refused to be like their ancestors.

¹⁸ But when the LORD appointed judges for the Israelites, he was with each judge. The LORD rescued them from their enemies as long as that judge was alive. The LORD was moved by the groaning of those who were tormented and oppressed.

¹⁹ But after each judge died, the people went back to their old ways and acted more corruptly than their parents. They followed, served, and worshiped other gods. They never gave up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

²⁰ The LORD became angry with Israel. He said, "Because the people of this nation have rejected the promise I gave their ancestors and have not obeyed me,

²¹ I will no longer force out the nations Joshua left behind when he died.

²² I will test the people of Israel with these nations to see whether or not they will carefully follow the LORD'S ways as their ancestors did."

²³ So the LORD let these nations stay. He had not handed them over to Joshua or forced them out quickly.

3 ¹ These are the nations the LORD left behind to test all the Israelites who had not experienced any war in Canaan.

² The LORD left them to teach Israel's descendants about war, at least those who had known nothing about it in the past.

³ He left the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon from Mount Baal Hermon to the border of Hamath.

⁴ These nations were left to test the Israelites, to find out if they would obey the commands the LORD had given their ancestors through Moses.

⁵ So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

⁶ The Israelites allowed their sons and daughters to marry these people. Israel also served their gods.

⁷ The people of Israel did what the LORD considered evil. They forgot the LORD their God and served other gods and goddesses—the Baals and the Asherahs.

⁸ The LORD became angry with the people of Israel. He used King Cushan Rishathaim of Aram Naharaim to defeat them. So Israel served Cushan Rishathaim for eight years.

⁹ Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help. The LORD sent a

savior to rescue them. It was Othniel, son of Caleb's younger brother Kenaz.

¹⁰ When the LORD'S Spirit came over him, he became the judge of Israel. He went out to war. The LORD handed King Cushan Rishathaim of Aram Naharaim over to him, and Othniel overpowered him.

¹¹ So there was finally peace in the land for 40 years. Then Othniel, son of Kenaz, died.

¹² Once again, the people of Israel did what the LORD considered evil. So the LORD made King Eglon of Moab stronger than Israel, because Israel did what the LORD considered evil.

¹³ Eglon got the Ammonites and the Amalekites to help him, and they defeated the Israelites and occupied the City of Palms.

¹⁴ The Israelites served King Eglon of Moab for 18 years.

¹⁵ Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help. The LORD sent a savior to rescue them. It was Ehud, a left-handed man from the tribe of Benjamin. (Ehud was the son of Gera.) The people sent him with their tax payment to King Eglon of Moab.

¹⁶ Ehud made a two-edged dagger for himself. He fastened it to his right side under his clothes.

¹⁷ Then he brought the tax payment to King Eglon. (Eglon was a very fat man.)

¹⁸ When Ehud had finished delivering the payment, he sent back the men who had carried it.

¹⁹ However, Ehud turned around at the stone idols near Gilgal and returned to Eglon. He said, "Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you." The king replied, "Keep quiet!" Then all his advisers left the room.

²⁰ Ehud came up to him as he sat alone in his room on the roof. He said to the king, "I have a message from God for you." As the king rose from his throne,

²¹ Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right side, and plunged it into Eglon's belly.

²² Even the handle went in after the blade. Eglon's fat covered the blade because Ehud didn't pull the dagger out. The blade stuck out in back.

²³ Ehud left the room. (He had closed and locked the doors of the room before he left.)

²⁴ After Ehud went out, Eglon's advisers came in. They were surprised that the doors were locked. "He must be using the toilet," they said.

²⁵ They waited and waited, but Eglon didn't open the doors. So they took the key and opened the door. They were

shocked to see their ruler lying on the floor, dead.

²⁶ While they had been waiting, Ehud escaped. He went past the stone idols and escaped to Seirah.

²⁷ When he arrived there, he blew a ram's horn in the mountains of Ephraim to summon the troops. So the troops of Israel came down from the mountains with him, and he led them.

²⁸ He told them, "Follow me! The LORD will hand your enemy Moab over to you." They followed him and captured the shallow crossings of the Jordan River that led to Moab and refused to let anyone cross.

²⁹ At that time they killed about ten thousand of Moab's best fighting men. Not one of them escaped.

³⁰ The power of Moab was crushed by Israel that day. So there was finally peace in the land for 80 years.

³¹ After Ehud came Shamgar, son of Anath. He killed 600 Philistines with a sharp stick used for herding oxen. So he, too, rescued Israel.

4 ¹ After Ehud died, the people of Israel again did what the LORD considered evil.

² So the LORD used King Jabin of Canaan, who ruled at Hazor, to defeat them. The commander of King Jabin's army was Sisera, who lived at Harosheth Haggoyim.

³ The people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help. King Jabin had 900 chariots made of iron and had cruelly oppressed Israel for 20 years.

⁴ Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet. She was the judge in Israel at that time.

⁵ She used to sit under the Palm Tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. The people

of Israel would come to her for legal decisions.

⁶ Deborah summoned Barak, son of Abinoam, from Kedesh in Naphtali. She told him, "The LORD God of Israel has given you this order: 'Gather troops on Mount Tabor. Take 10,000 men from Naphtali and Zebulun with you.

⁷ I will lead Sisera (the commander of Jabin's army), his chariots, and troops to you at the Kishon River. I will hand him over to you.'"

⁸ Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I'll go. But if you don't go with me, I won't go."

⁹ Deborah replied, "Certainly, I'll go with you. But you won't win any honors for the way you're going about this, because the LORD will use a woman to defeat Sisera." So Deborah started out for Kedesh with Barak.

¹⁰ Barak called the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali together at Kedesh. Ten thousand men went to fight under his command. Deborah also went along with him.

¹¹ Heber the Kenite had separated from the other Kenites (the descendants of Hobab, Moses' father-in-law). Heber went as far away as the oak tree at Zaanannim near Kedesh and set up his tent.

¹² The report reached Sisera that Barak, son of Abinoam, had come to fight at Mount Tabor.

¹³ So Sisera summoned all his chariots (900 chariots made of iron) and all his troops from Harosheth Haggoyim to come to the Kishon River.

¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Attack! This is the day the LORD will hand Sisera over to you. The LORD will go ahead of

you." So Barak came down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men behind him.

¹⁵ The LORD threw Sisera, all his chariots, and his whole army into a panic in front of Barak's deadly assault. Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.

¹⁶ Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth Haggoyim. So Sisera's whole army was killed in combat. Not one man survived.

¹⁷ Meanwhile, Sisera fled on foot toward the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Sisera did this because King Jabin of Hazor and Heber's family were on peaceful terms.

¹⁸ When Jael came out of her tent, she met Sisera. She told him, "Sir, come in here! Come into my tent. Don't be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she hid him under a tent curtain.

¹⁹ Sisera said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink. I'm thirsty." But instead she gave him milk to drink and covered him up again.

²⁰ He said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent. If anyone comes and asks if there has been a man around here, tell them no."

²¹ When Sisera had fallen sound asleep from exhaustion, Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and walked quietly toward him with a hammer in her hand. She hammered the tent peg through his temples into the ground. So Sisera died.

²² Barak was still pursuing Sisera. When Jael came out of her tent, she met him. She said to him, "Come in! I have something to show you—the man you've been looking for." So Barak went into her tent. He saw Sisera lying there dead with the tent peg through his temples.

²³ So on that day, God used the people of Israel to crush the power of King Jabin of Canaan.

²⁴ The Israelites became stronger and stronger until they destroyed him.

5 ¹ On that day Deborah and Barak, son of Abinoam, sang this song:

² Praise the LORD! Men in Israel vowed to fight, and people volunteered for service.

³ Listen, you kings! Open your ears, you princes! I will sing a song to the LORD. I will make music to the LORD God of Israel.

⁴ O LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the country of Edom, the earth quaked, the sky poured, the clouds burst,

⁵ and the mountains shook in the presence of the LORD God of Sinai, in the presence of the LORD God of Israel.

⁶ In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, roads were deserted. Those who traveled took back roads.

⁷ Villages in Israel were deserted—deserted until I, Deborah, took a stand—took a stand as a mother of Israel.

⁸ When the people chose new gods, war broke out inside the city gates. Not a weapon was seen among 40,000 in Israel.

⁹ My heart goes out to Israel's commanders, to those people who volunteered. Praise the LORD!

¹⁰ You people who ride on brown donkeys, who sit on saddle blankets, and who walk on the road—think.

¹¹ Listen to the voices of those singing at the wells. Over and over again they repeat the victories of the LORD, the victories for his villages in Israel. Then

the LORD'S people went down to the city gates.

¹² Get up! Get up, Deborah! Get up! Get up and create a song! Barak, attack! Take your prisoners, son of Abinoam.

¹³ Then those mighty men who were left came down. The LORD'S people went into battle for me against the mighty soldiers.

¹⁴ Those who had settled in Amalek's country came down from Ephraim. Benjamin came with its troops after Ephraim. Commanders from Machir went into battle. The officers from Zebulun also went.

¹⁵ Issachar's commanders were with Deborah. They were also with Barak, sent into the valley under his command. Among Reuben's divisions important men had second thoughts.

¹⁶ Why did you sit between the saddlebags? Was it to listen to the

shepherds playing their flutes? Reuben's divisions of important men had second thoughts.

¹⁷ Gilead remained east of the Jordan River. And Dan...Why did he stay by the ships? Asher sat on the seashore and remained along the inlets.

¹⁸ But Zebulun mocked death, and Naphtali risked his life on the battlefield.

¹⁹ Kings came and fought. Then the kings of Canaan fought. They fought at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. But they didn't carry off any rich loot.

²⁰ The stars fought from heaven. They fought against Sisera from their heavenly paths.

²¹ The Kishon River swept them away—that old river, the Kishon. I must march on with strength!

²² Then the horses' hoofs pounded. The mighty war horses galloped on and on.

²³ "Curse Meroz!" said the Messenger of the LORD. "Bitterly curse those who live there! They did not come to help the LORD, to help the LORD and his heroes."

²⁴ Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, should be the most blessed woman, the most blessed woman living in a tent.

²⁵ Sisera asked for water. She gave him milk. She offered him buttermilk in a royal bowl.

²⁶ She reached for a tent peg with one hand, for a workman's hammer with the other. She struck Sisera. She crushed his head. She shattered and pierced his temples.

²⁷ He sank. He fell. He lay between her feet! He sank. He fell between her feet. Where he sank, he fell dead.

²⁸ Sisera's mother looked through her window and cried as she peered through the lattice. "Why is his chariot taking so

long? Why don't I hear the clatter of his chariots?"

²⁹ Her wisest servants gave her an answer. But she kept repeating to herself,

³⁰ "They're really finding and dividing the loot: A girl or two for each soldier, colorful clothes for Sisera, colorful, embroidered clothes, and two pieces of colorful, embroidered cloth for the neck of the looter."

³¹ May all your enemies die like that, O LORD. But may those who love the LORD be like the sun when it rises in all its brightness. So the land had peace for 40 years.

6 ¹ The people of Israel did what the LORD considered evil. So the LORD handed them over to Midian for seven years.

² Midian's power was too strong for Israel. The Israelites made hiding places in the mountains, caves, and mountain

strongholds to protect themselves from Midian.

³ Whenever Israel planted crops, Midian, Amalek, and Kedem came and damaged the crops.

⁴ The enemy used to camp on the land and destroy the crops all the way to Gaza. They left nothing for Israel to live on—not one sheep, cow, or donkey.

⁵ Like swarms of locusts, they came with their livestock and their tents. They and their camels could not be counted. They came into the land only to ruin it.

⁶ So the Israelites became very poor because of Midian and cried out to the LORD for help.

⁷ When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help because of what the Midianites had done to them,

⁸ the LORD sent a prophet to them. He said, "This is what the LORD God of Israel

says: I brought you out of Egypt. I took you away from slavery.

⁹ I rescued you from the power of the Egyptians and from the power of those who oppressed you. I forced people out of your way. I gave you their land.

¹⁰ I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God. You must never fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you will live.' But you have not obeyed me."

¹¹ The Messenger of the LORD came and sat under the oak tree in Ophrah that belonged to Joash from Abiezer's family. Joash's son Gideon was beating out wheat in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites.

¹² The Messenger of the LORD appeared to Gideon and said, "The LORD is with you, brave man."

¹³ Gideon responded, "Excuse me, sir! But if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all

the miracles our ancestors have told us about? Didn't they say, 'The LORD brought us out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and has handed us over to Midian."

¹⁴ The LORD turned to him and said, "You will rescue Israel from Midian with the strength you have. I am sending you."

¹⁵ Gideon said to him, "Excuse me, sir! How can I rescue Israel? Look at my whole family. It's the weakest one in Manasseh. And me? I'm the least important member of my family."

¹⁶ The LORD replied, "I will be with you. You will defeat Midian as if it were only one man."

¹⁷ Gideon said to him, "If you find me acceptable, give me a sign that it is really you speaking to me."

¹⁸ Don't leave until I come back. I want to bring my gift and set it in front of

you." "I will stay until you come back," he said.

¹⁹ Then Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread made with 18 quarts of flour. He put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot. Then he went out and presented them to the Messenger of the LORD under the oak tree.

²⁰ The Messenger of the LORD told him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them." Gideon did so.

²¹ Then the Messenger of the LORD touched the meat and the bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. Fire flared up from the rock and burned the meat and the bread. Then the Messenger of the LORD disappeared.

²² That's when Gideon realized that this had been the Messenger of the LORD.

So he said, "LORD God! I have seen the Messenger of the LORD face to face."

²³ The LORD said to him, "Calm down! Don't be afraid. You will not die."

²⁴ So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD. He called it The LORD Calms. To this day it is still in Ophrah, which belongs to Abiezer's family.

²⁵ That same night the LORD said to Gideon, "Take a bull from your father's herd, a bull that is seven years old. Tear down your father's altar dedicated to the god Baal and cut down the pole dedicated to the goddess Asherah that is next to it.

²⁶ Then, in the proper way, build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this fortified place. Take this second bull and sacrifice it as a burnt offering on the wood from the Asherah pole that you have cut down."

²⁷ Gideon took ten of his servants and did what the LORD had told him to do. However, he didn't do anything during the day. He was too afraid of his father's family and the men of the city, so he did it at night.

²⁸ When the men of the city got up early in the morning, they saw that the Baal altar had been torn down. The Asherah pole next to it had also been cut down. They saw that the second bull had been sacrificed as a burnt offering on the altar that had been built.

²⁹ They asked each other, "Who did this?" While they were investigating the matter, someone said, "Gideon, son of Joash, did this."

³⁰ Then the men of the city told Joash, "Bring your son out. He must die. He has torn down the Baal altar and cut down the Asherah pole that was beside it."

³¹ But Joash said to everyone standing around him, "You're not going to defend Baal, are you? Do you think you should save him? Whoever defends him will be put to death in the morning. If he's a god, let him defend himself when someone tears down his altar."

³² So that day they nicknamed Gideon "Jerubbaal" [Let Baal Defend Himself], because they said, "When someone tears down Baal's altar, let Baal defend himself."

³³ All of Midian, Amalek, and Kedem combined their armies, crossed the Jordan River, and camped in the valley of Jezreel.

³⁴ Then the LORD'S Spirit gave Gideon strength. So Gideon blew the ram's horn to summon Abiezer's family to follow him.

³⁵ He also sent messengers throughout Manasseh to summon the people to

follow him. The tribes of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali were also summoned to follow him, and they went to meet the enemy in battle.

³⁶ Then Gideon said to God, "You said that you would rescue Israel through me.

³⁷ I'll place some wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the wool while all the ground is dry, then I'll know that you will rescue Israel through me, as you said."

³⁸ And that is what happened. The next morning Gideon got up early. He squeezed out a bowl full of water from the wool.

³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Don't be angry with me. But let me ask one more thing. Let me make one more test with the wool. Let the wool be dry while all the ground is covered with dew."

⁴⁰ During the night, God did what Gideon asked. The wool was dry, but all the ground was covered with dew.

7 ¹ Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the troops with him got up early and camped above En Harod. Midian's camp was north of him at the hill of Moreh in the valley.

² The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men with you for me to hand Midian over to you. Israel might brag and say, 'We saved ourselves.'

³ Announce to the troops, 'Whoever is scared or frightened should leave Mount Gilead and go back home.'" So 22,000 men went back home, and 10,000 were left.

⁴ The LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say to you, 'This one will go with you,' he must go with you. And if I

say to you, 'This one won't go with you,' he must not go."

⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. The LORD said to him, "Separate those who lap water with their tongues like dogs from those who kneel down to drink."

⁶ Three hundred men lapped water with their hands to their mouths. All the rest of the men knelt down to drink water.

⁷ Then the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped water I will save you and hand Midian over to you. All the other men should go home."

⁸ So Gideon sent the other men of Israel home, but the 300 men who stayed kept all the supplies and rams' horns. The camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

⁹ That night the LORD said to Gideon, "Attack! Go into the camp! I will hand it over to you.

¹⁰ But if you're afraid to go, take your servant Purah to the camp with you.

¹¹ Listen to what people are saying. After that, you will have the courage to go into the camp and attack it." So Gideon and his servant Purah went to the edge of the camp.

¹² Midian, Amalek, and all of Kedem were spread out in the valley like a swarm of locusts. There were so many camels that they could not be counted. They were as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore.

¹³ When Gideon got there, he heard a man telling his friend a dream. The man said, "I had a strange dream. There was a loaf of barley bread rolling around in the camp of Midian. When it got to the command post, the loaf of bread hit that

tent so hard that the tent collapsed, turned upside down, and fell flat."

¹⁴ His friend replied, "That can only be the sword of Gideon, son of Joash, from Israel. God is going to hand Midian and the whole camp over to him."

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped the LORD. Then he went back to the camp of Israel and said, "Attack! The LORD will hand Midian's camp over to you."

¹⁶ Gideon divided the 300 men into three companies. He gave them each rams' horns and jars with torches inside.

¹⁷ He said to them, "Watch me, and do what I do. When I come to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do.

¹⁸ When I and those with me blow our rams' horns, then the rest of you around the camp do the same and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon!'"

¹⁹ Gideon and his 100 men came to the edge of the camp. It was the beginning of the midnight watch just at the change of the guards. They blew their rams' horns and smashed the jars they were holding in their hands.

²⁰ The three companies also blew their rams' horns and broke their jars. They held the torches in their left hands and the rams' horns in their right hands so that they could blow them. They shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"

²¹ While each man kept his position around the camp, everyone in the Midianite camp began to run away, screaming as they fled.

²² The 300 men kept on blowing their rams' horns, and the LORD caused the whole camp of Midian to fight among themselves. They fled as far as Beth Shittah, toward Zererah, and as far as

the bank of the stream at Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

²³ The men of Israel were summoned from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh to help pursue the troops of Midian.

²⁴ Gideon also sent messengers to the whole mountain region of Ephraim with this message, "Go into battle against Midian. Capture the watering holes as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan River." All the men of Ephraim were also summoned to help. They captured the watering holes as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan River.

²⁵ They also captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two Midianite commanders. They killed Oreb at the Rock of Oreb and Zeeb at the Winepress of Zeeb and kept on pursuing Midian. Then they brought the severed heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan River.

8 ¹ The men from Ephraim strongly protested Gideon's actions. They said, "Why did you do this to us? You didn't invite us to go fight Midian with you."

² Gideon replied, "I haven't done anything compared with what you have done. Aren't the grapes that Ephraim picked after the harvest better than all the grapes in Abiezer's entire harvest?"

³ God handed Oreb and Zeeb, Midian's commanders, over to you. What have I done compared with that?" When they heard what Gideon said, they weren't angry with him anymore.

⁴ Gideon and his 300 men headed toward the Jordan River. They were exhausted when they crossed it, but they kept pursuing the enemy.

⁵ So Gideon said to the men of Succoth, "Please give me some food for the men under my command. They're exhausted,

and I'm pursuing King Zebah and King Zalmunna of Midian."

⁶ The generals at Succoth replied, "We shouldn't give your army food. You haven't captured Zebah and Zalmunna yet."

⁷ Gideon responded, "Alright, then. When the LORD hands Zebah and Zalmunna over to me, I'll whip your bodies with thorns and thistles from the desert."

⁸ Then Gideon went to Penuel and asked the people there for the same help. But they gave him the same reply that the men of Succoth gave.

⁹ So he told them, "When I come back after my victory, I'll tear down this tower."

¹⁰ Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with an army of about 15,000 men. This was all that was left of Kedem's entire

army. In the battle, 120,000 soldiers died.

¹¹ So Gideon went up Tent Dwellers Road, east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and defeated the unsuspecting Midianite army.

¹² Zebah and Zalmunna fled as Gideon pursued them. He captured King Zebah and King Zalmunna of Midian, and the whole Midianite army panicked.

¹³ Gideon, son of Joash, returned from the battle through the Heres Pass

¹⁴ and captured a young man from Succoth. He questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the 77 officials and leaders of Succoth.

¹⁵ Gideon went to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna! You insulted me when you said, 'We shouldn't give your exhausted men

food before you've captured Zebah and Zalmunna.'"

¹⁶ So Gideon took the leaders of the city and taught them a lesson using thorns and thistles from the desert.

¹⁷ Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of that city.

¹⁸ He asked Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?" They answered, "They were like you. Each one looked like a king's son."

¹⁹ Gideon replied, "They were my brothers, my mother's sons. I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not have to kill you now."

²⁰ Then he told Jether, his firstborn son, "Get up and kill them!" But Jether didn't draw his sword. He was afraid because he was only a young man.

²¹ Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Get up and do it yourself! It's a man's job!" So

Gideon got up and killed them. Then he took the half-moon ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

²² The men of Israel said to Gideon, "You, then your son, and then your grandson, must rule us. You rescued us from Midian."

²³ Gideon replied, "I will not rule you nor will my son. The LORD will rule you."

²⁴ Then Gideon said to them, "Do me a favor. Each of you give me the earrings from your loot." (Their enemies, the Ishmaelites, wore gold earrings.)

²⁵ The men of Israel answered, "Yes, we'll give them to you." So they spread out a coat. Each man took the earrings from his loot and dropped them on it.

²⁶ The gold earrings Gideon had asked for weighed 40 pounds. This did not include the half-moon ornaments, the earrings, the purple clothes worn by the

kings of Midian, and the chains from their camels' necks.

²⁷ Then Gideon used the gold to make an idol and placed it in his hometown, Ophrah. All Israel chased after it there as though it were a prostitute. It became a trap for Gideon and his family.

²⁸ The power of Midian was crushed by the people of Israel, and Midian never again became a threat. So the land had peace for 40 years during Gideon's life.

²⁹ Jerubbaal, son of Joash, went home to live.

³⁰ Gideon had 70 sons because he had many wives.

³¹ His concubine at Shechem also gave birth to a son. That son was named Abimelech.

³² Gideon, son of Joash, died at a very old age. He was buried in the tomb of his father Joash at Ophrah, the city belonging to Abiezer's family.

³³ As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel chased after other gods—the Baals—as though they were prostitutes. They made Baal Berith their god.

³⁴ The Israelites did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from all the enemies around them.

³⁵ And they were not kind to the family of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) despite all the good he had done for Israel.

9 ¹ Abimelech, son of Jerubbaal [Gideon], went to Shechem to see the uncles on his mother's side of the family. He spoke to them and his mother's whole family.

² He said, "Please ask all citizens of Shechem, 'What seems best to you? Do you really want all of Jerubbaal's 70 sons to rule you or just one man? Remember, I'm your own flesh and blood.'"

³ His uncles repeated everything he said to all citizens of Shechem. They were

persuaded to follow Abimelech because he was their relative.

⁴ So they gave him 70 pieces of silver from the temple of Baal Berith. With the silver, Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men to follow him.

⁵ Then he went to his father's home in Ophrah. There he executed his 70 brothers, Jerubbaal's sons. But Jotham, Jerubbaal's youngest son, survived because he hid.

⁶ All the citizens from Shechem and Beth Millo united. They went to the oak tree that was still standing in Shechem and proclaimed Abimelech king.

⁷ When Jotham was told about this, he went to a high spot on Mount Gerizim. He shouted to them, "Listen to me, you citizens of Shechem, so that God might listen to you.

⁸ "The trees went to anoint someone to be king over them. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king!'

⁹ But the olive tree responded, 'Should I stop producing oil, which people use to honor gods and humans, in order to rule the trees?'

¹⁰ Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come and be our king!'

¹¹ But the fig tree responded, 'Should I stop producing my good, sweet fruit in order to rule the trees?'

¹² Then the trees said to the grapevine, 'You come and be our king!'

¹³ But the grapevine responded, 'Should I stop producing my wine, which makes gods and humans happy, in order to rule the trees?'

¹⁴ Then all the trees said to the thornbush, 'You come and be our king!'

¹⁵ But the thornbush responded to the trees, 'If you really want to anoint me to

be your king, then come and take shelter in my shade. But if not, fire will come out of the thornbush and burn up the cedars of Lebanon.'

¹⁶ "If you acted with sincerity and integrity when you made Abimelech king, be happy. If you treated Jerubbaal and his family well, if you treated him as he deserved, be happy.

¹⁷ My father fought for you. He risked his life and rescued you from Midian.

¹⁸ But today you have attacked my father's family. You have executed his 70 sons. You have made Abimelech, who is the son of my father's slave girl, king over the citizens of Shechem just because he's your brother.

¹⁹ So if you are now acting with sincerity and integrity toward Jerubbaal and his family, then be happy with Abimelech and let Abimelech be happy with you.

²⁰ But if that's not the case, let fire come out of Abimelech and burn up citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo. Also let fire come out of citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo and burn up Abimelech."

²¹ Then Jotham ran away quickly. He went to Beerah and lived there to avoid his brother Abimelech.

²² Abimelech ruled Israel for three years.

²³ Then God sent an evil spirit to cause problems between Abimelech and citizens of Shechem. So citizens of Shechem turned against Abimelech.

²⁴ God did this so that the bloody violence committed against Jerubbaal's 70 sons would happen to Abimelech and citizens of Shechem. Citizens of Shechem had helped Abimelech execute his brothers.

²⁵ So citizens of Shechem set ambushes for Abimelech on top of the mountains.

They also robbed everyone who passed by them on the road. This was reported to Abimelech.

²⁶ Then Gaal (son of Ebed) and his brothers moved into Shechem. Citizens of Shechem trusted him.

²⁷ They went into the country and harvested grapes in the vineyards to make wine. Then they made an offering of praise in the temple of their gods. They ate, drank, and cursed Abimelech.

²⁸ Gaal (son of Ebed) said, "Who's Abimelech, and who are we, the people of Shechem, that we should serve him? Isn't he Jerubbaal's son, and isn't Zebul his officer? Serve the descendants of Hamor, Shechem's father! Why should we serve Abimelech?"

²⁹ How I wish I controlled these people! Then I'd get rid of Abimelech. I would tell him, 'Get yourself a big army and come out.'

³⁰ Zebul, Shechem's ruler, heard what Gaal (son of Ebed) had said, and he became angry.

³¹ He secretly sent messengers to Abimelech. "Watch out! Gaal (son of Ebed) and his brothers have come to Shechem. They have turned the city against you.

³² You and your men must start out tonight. Set an ambush for them in the fields around Shechem.

³³ In the morning, when the sun rises, get up quickly and raid the city. When Gaal and his men come out to attack you, do whatever you want to him."

³⁴ Abimelech and all his troops started out at night. He used four companies to set ambushes around Shechem.

³⁵ Gaal (son of Ebed) went out and stood at the entrance to the city. Then Abimelech and his troops rose from their ambush.

³⁶ When Gaal saw the troops, he said to Zebul, "Look, troops are coming down from the mountaintops!" Zebul replied, "The shadows of the mountains look like men to you."

³⁷ Gaal spoke again, "No, there are troops coming down from Tabbur Haares. One company is coming along the road by the Fortunetellers' Tree."

³⁸ Then Zebul said to him, "Where is your big mouth now? You were the one who said, 'Who's Abimelech that we should serve him?' Aren't these the troops whose ruler you despised? Now go out and fight him."

³⁹ Then Gaal led citizens of Shechem out to fight Abimelech.

⁴⁰ Abimelech chased Gaal so that he ran away from him. Many were killed at the entrance of the city.

⁴¹ Abimelech continued to live at Arumah. Zebul threw Gaal and his

brothers out and would not let them live in Shechem.

⁴² The next day the people of Shechem went into the fields. Abimelech was told about it.

⁴³ So he took his troops, divided them into three companies, and set an ambush in the fields. He watched and saw the people coming out of the city. Then he began to attack them.

⁴⁴ Abimelech and his company charged the city and captured its entrance. The other two companies charged at everyone in the fields and attacked them.

⁴⁵ Abimelech attacked the city all day long. He captured the city and killed the people in it. He also tore down the city and scattered salt all over the land.

⁴⁶ All the citizens of Shechem's Tower heard about it and went into the basement of the temple of El Berith.

⁴⁷ When Abimelech was told that they had gathered there,

⁴⁸ he and all his men went to Mount Zalmon. Abimelech took an ax, cut some brushwood, and carried it on his shoulder. He told his men, "Hurry and do what you've seen me do!"

⁴⁹ So all his troops also cut brushwood and followed Abimelech. They piled the brushwood on top of the basement and set it on fire with the people inside. So all the people in Shechem's Tower died too. There were about a thousand men and women.

⁵⁰ Then Abimelech went to Thebez, camped there, and captured it.

⁵¹ Now, there was a strong tower inside the town. All the men, women, and leaders of the town fled to it. They locked the door behind them and went up on the roof of the tower.

⁵² Abimelech came to the tower. He began to fight against it and went near the entrance of the tower to burn it down.

⁵³ Then a woman threw a small millstone that hit Abimelech on the head and cracked his skull.

⁵⁴ He quickly called his armorbearer. He told him, "Take your sword and kill me! I don't want anyone to say, 'A woman killed Abimelech.'" His armorbearer did as he said, so Abimelech died.

⁵⁵ When the people of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they all went home.

⁵⁶ So God paid back Abimelech for the evil he had done to his father when he killed his 70 brothers.

⁵⁷ God also paid back the men of Shechem for all their evil. So the curse of Jotham, son of Jerubbaal, came true.

10¹ After Abimelech, Tola, who was the son of Puah and grandson of Dodo, came to rescue Israel. Tola was from Issachar and lived in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim.

² He judged Israel for 23 years. Tola died and was buried in Shamir.

³ After Tola, Jair from Gilead became a judge. He judged Israel for 22 years.

⁴ Jair had 30 sons who rode on 30 donkeys. He also had 30 towns that are still called Havvoth Jair to this day. They are in the region of Gilead.

⁵ Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

⁶ The people of Israel again did what the LORD considered evil. They began to serve other gods and goddesses—the Baals and the Astartes—and the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines. They abandoned the LORD and did not serve him.

⁷ The LORD became angry with the people of Israel. So he used the Philistines and Ammonites to defeat them.

⁸ They oppressed and crushed the people of Israel that year. For 18 years they oppressed all who lived east of the Jordan River in the land of the Amorites in Gilead.

⁹ Ammon also crossed the Jordan River to fight the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. So Israel suffered a great deal.

¹⁰ Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help. They said, "We have sinned against you. We have abandoned our God and served other gods—the Baals."

¹¹ The LORD said to the people of Israel, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines,

¹² the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites oppressed you, you cried out to me for help. Didn't I rescue you from them?

¹³ But you still abandoned me and served other gods. That's why I won't rescue you again.

¹⁴ Cry out for help to the gods you chose. Let them rescue you when you're in trouble."

¹⁵ The people of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do to us whatever you think is right. But please rescue us today!"

¹⁶ Then they got rid of the foreign gods they had and served the LORD. So the LORD could not bear to have Israel suffer any longer.

¹⁷ The troops of Ammon were summoned to fight, and they camped at Gilead. The people of Israel also

gathered together and camped at Mizpah.

¹⁸ The leaders of the people of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever starts the fight against Ammon will rule everyone who lives in Gilead."

11 ¹ Jephthah was a soldier from the region of Gilead. Jephthah's father was named Gilead. His mother was a prostitute.

² Gilead's wife also gave birth to sons. When his wife's sons grew up, they threw Jephthah out. They told him, "You'll get no inheritance from our father. You're the son of that other woman."

³ Jephthah fled from his brothers. He went to live in the land of Tob. Worthless men gathered around Jephthah and went out on raids with him.

⁴ Later, Ammon waged war with Israel.

⁵ When the Ammonites attacked Israel, Gilead's leaders went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.

⁶ They said to Jephthah, "Come and be our commander so that we can wage war against Ammon."

⁷ But Jephthah replied to Gilead's leaders, "Don't you hate me? Didn't you throw me out of my father's house? So why are you coming to me now when you're in trouble?"

⁸ Gilead's leaders answered Jephthah, "The reason we've turned to you now is that we want you to go with us and wage war against Ammon. You will be the ruler of everyone who lives in Gilead."

⁹ Jephthah told them, "If you take me back to fight against Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me, I will be your leader."

¹⁰ Gilead's leaders said to Jephthah, "The LORD is a witness between us. We will certainly do what you say."

¹¹ Jephthah went with them, and the people made him their leader and commander. So Jephthah went to Mizpah and repeated all these things in the presence of the LORD.

¹² Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon. They asked the king, "Why did you invade my land and wage war against me?"

¹³ The king of Ammon answered Jephthah's messengers, "When the people of Israel left Egypt, they took my land. It stretched from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River and the Jordan River. Now give it back peacefully."

¹⁴ Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of Ammon.

¹⁵ They said, "This is what Jephthah says: The people of Israel didn't take

away the land belonging to Moab or Ammon.

¹⁶ When the people of Israel left Egypt, they went through the desert to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh.

¹⁷ The people of Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom. They said, 'Please let us go through your country.' But the king of Edom wouldn't listen to them. They also sent messengers to the king of Moab. But he wouldn't allow it, either. So the people of Israel remained at Kadesh.

¹⁸ "Then they went through the desert, by-passing Edom and Moab. They camped east of Moab—east of the Arnon River. They did not cross the Arnon River because it was Moab's border.

¹⁹ "Then the people of Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites. Sihon ruled from Heshbon.

The people of Israel said to him, 'Please let us go through your land to our own.'

²⁰ But Sihon did not trust the Israelites enough to let them go through his territory. Sihon assembled all his troops. He camped at Jahaz and attacked Israel.

²¹ But the LORD God of Israel handed Sihon and all his people over to Israel. Israel defeated them and took possession of all the land of the Amorites who lived there.

²² Israel took all the Amorite territory from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River and from the desert to the Jordan River.

²³ "The LORD God of Israel forced the Amorites out of the way of his people Israel. So what right do you have to take it back?

²⁴ Shouldn't you take possession of what your god Chemosh took for you? Shouldn't we take everything the LORD our God took for us?

²⁵ You're not any better than Balak, son of King Zippor of Moab, are you? Did he ever have a case against Israel? Or did he ever fight against Israel?

²⁶ Israel has now lived in Heshbon, Aroer, all their villages, and in all the cities along the Arnon River for 300 years. Why didn't you recapture these cities during that time?

²⁷ I haven't sinned against you. But you have done wrong by waging war against me. The LORD is the judge who will decide today whether Israel or Ammon is right."

²⁸ But the king of Ammon didn't listen to the message Jephthah sent him.

²⁹ Then the LORD'S Spirit came over Jephthah. Jephthah went through Gilead, Manasseh, and Mizpah in Gilead to gather an army. From Mizpah in Gilead Jephthah went to attack Ammon.

³⁰ Jephthah made a vow to the LORD. He said, "If you will really hand Ammon over to me,

³¹ then whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return safely from Ammon will belong to the LORD. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

³² So Jephthah went to fight against Ammon. The LORD handed the people of Ammon over to him.

³³ He defeated them from Aroer to Minnith and on to Abel Keramim, 20 cities in all. It was a decisive defeat. So the Ammonites were crushed by the people of Israel.

³⁴ When Jephthah went to his home in Mizpah, he saw his daughter coming out to meet him. She was dancing with tambourines in her hands. She was his only child. Jephthah had no other sons or daughters.

³⁵ When he saw her, he tore his clothes in grief and said, "Oh no, Daughter! You've brought me to my knees! What disaster you've brought me! I made a foolish promise to the LORD. Now I can't break it."

³⁶ She said to him, "Father, you made a promise to the LORD. Do to me whatever you promised since the LORD has punished your enemy Ammon."

³⁷ Then she said to her father, "Do me a favor. Give me two months for my friends and me to walk in the mountains and mourn that I will never have an opportunity to get married."

³⁸ "Go!" he said, and he sent her off for two months. She and her friends went to the mountains, and she cried about never being able to get married.

³⁹ At the end of those two months she came back to her father. He did to her

what he had vowed, and she never had a husband. So the custom began in Israel⁴⁰ that for four days every year the girls in Israel would go out to sing the praises of the daughter of Jephthah, the man from Gilead.

12¹ The men of Ephraim were summoned to fight. They crossed the Jordan River to Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, "Why did you fight against Ammon without inviting us to go with you? Now we're going to burn your house down with you in it."

² Jephthah answered, "My people and I were involved in a legal dispute with Ammon. I asked you for help, but you didn't rescue me from them."

³ When I saw that you would not rescue me, I risked my life and went to fight the people of Ammon. The LORD handed them over to me. So why did you come to fight against me today?"

⁴ Then Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and fought Ephraim. The men of Gilead defeated Ephraim. They did this because Ephraim had said, "You people from Gilead are nothing but fugitives from Ephraim and Manasseh."

⁵ The men of Gilead captured the shallow crossings of the Jordan River leading back to Ephraim. Whenever a fugitive from Ephraim said, "Let me cross," the men of Gilead would ask, "Are you from Ephraim?" If he answered, "No,"

⁶ they would tell him, "Say the word shibboleth." If the fugitive would say sibboleth, because he couldn't pronounce the word correctly, they would grab him and kill him at the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. At that time 42,000 men from Ephraim died.

⁷ Jephthah judged Israel for six years. Then Jephthah of Gilead died and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

⁸ After Jephthah, Ibzan from Bethlehem judged Israel.

⁹ He had 30 sons and 30 daughters. His sons and daughters married people from outside their own families. He judged Israel for seven years.

¹⁰ When Ibzan died, he was buried in Bethlehem.

¹¹ After Ibzan, Elon from the tribe of Zebulun judged Israel. He judged Israel for ten years.

¹² When Elon died, he was buried in Aijalon in the territory of Zebulun.

¹³ After Elon, Abdon, son of Hillel, from Pirathon judged Israel.

¹⁴ He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on 70 donkeys. He judged Israel for eight years.

¹⁵ When Abdon died, he was buried in Pirathon, in the territory of Ephraim, in the mountains of Amalek.

13 ¹ The people of Israel again did what the LORD considered evil. So the LORD handed them over to the Philistines for 40 years.

² There was a man from Zorah named Manoah. Manoah was from the family of Dan. His wife was not able to have children.

³ The Messenger of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You've never been able to have a child, but now you will become pregnant and have a son.

⁴ Now you must be careful. Don't drink any wine or liquor or eat any unclean food.

⁵ You're going to become pregnant and have a son. You must never cut his hair because the boy will be a Nazirite dedicated to God from birth. He will

begin to rescue Israel from the power of the Philistines."

⁶ The woman went to tell her husband. She said, "A man of God came to me. He had a very frightening appearance like the Messenger of God. So I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name.

⁷ He told me, 'You're going to become pregnant and have a son. So don't drink any wine or liquor or eat any unclean food because the boy will be a Nazirite dedicated to God from the time he is born until he dies.'

⁸ Then Manoah pleaded with the LORD, "Please, Lord, let the man of God you sent come back to us. Let him teach us what we must do for the boy who will be born."

⁹ God did what Manoah asked. The Messenger of God came back to his wife while she was sitting out in the fields.

But her husband Manoah was not with her.

¹⁰ The woman ran quickly to tell her husband. She said, "The man who came to me the other day has just appeared to me again."

¹¹ Manoah immediately followed his wife. When he came to the man, he asked him, "Are you the man who spoke to my wife?" "Yes," he answered.

¹² Then Manoah asked, "When your words come true, how should the boy live and what should he do?"

¹³ The Messenger of the LORD answered Manoah, "Your wife must be careful to do everything I told her to do.

¹⁴ She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevines, drink any wine or liquor, or eat any unclean food. She must be careful to do everything I commanded."

¹⁵ Manoah said to the Messenger of the LORD, "Please stay while we prepare a young goat for you to eat."

¹⁶ But the Messenger of the LORD responded, "If I stay here, I will not eat any of your food. But if you make a burnt offering, sacrifice it to the LORD." (Manoah did not realize that it was the Messenger of the LORD.)

¹⁷ Then Manoah asked the Messenger of the LORD, "What is your name? When your words come true, we will honor you."

¹⁸ The Messenger of the LORD asked him, "Why do you ask for my name? It's a name that works miracles."

¹⁹ So Manoah took a young goat and a grain offering and sacrificed them to the LORD on a rock he used as an altar. While Manoah and his wife watched, the LORD did something miraculous.

²⁰ As the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the Messenger of the LORD went up in the flame. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they immediately bowed down with their faces touching the ground.

²¹ The Messenger of the LORD didn't appear again to Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah knew that this had been the Messenger of the LORD.

²² So Manoah said to his wife, "We will certainly die because we have seen God."

²³ But Manoah's wife replied, "If the LORD wanted to kill us, he would not have accepted our burnt offering and grain offering. He would not have let us see or hear all these things just now."

²⁴ So the woman had a son and named him Samson. The boy grew up, and the LORD blessed him.

²⁵ The LORD'S Spirit began to stir in him while he was at Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

14 ¹ When Samson went to Timnah, he saw a young Philistine woman.

² He went home and told his father and mother, "I've seen a Philistine woman at Timnah. Now get her for me so that I can marry her."

³ His father and mother asked him, "Aren't there any women among our relatives or all our people? Do you have to marry a woman from those godless Philistines?" But Samson told his father, "Get her for me! She's the one I want!"

⁴ His father and mother didn't know that the LORD was behind this. The LORD was looking for an opportunity to do something to the Philistines. (At that time the Philistines were ruling Israel.)

⁵ Samson went with his father and mother to Timnah. When they were

coming to the vineyards of Timnah, a young roaring lion met Samson.

⁶ The LORD'S Spirit came over him. With his bare hands, he tore the lion apart as if it were a young goat. He didn't tell his parents what he had done.

⁷ Then he went to talk to the young woman. She was the one he wanted.

⁸ Later he went back to marry her. On his way he left the road to look at the lion he had killed. He saw a swarm of bees and some honey in the lion's dead body.

⁹ He scraped the honey into his hands and ate it as he walked along. When he came to his father and mother, he gave them some of the honey to eat. He didn't tell them he had scraped it out of the lion's dead body.

¹⁰ After his father went to see the woman, Samson threw a party. (This is what young men used to do.)

¹¹ When her family saw him, they chose 30 of their friends to be with him.

¹² Then Samson said to them, "Let me tell you a riddle. If you solve it during the seven days of the party, I'll give you 30 linen shirts and 30 changes of clothes.

¹³ But if you can't solve it, you will give me the same things." They responded, "Tell us your riddle! Let's hear it!"

¹⁴ So Samson said to them, "From the eater came something to eat. From the strong one came something sweet." For three days they couldn't solve the riddle.

¹⁵ On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Trick your husband into solving the riddle for us. If you don't, we'll burn you and your family to death. Did the two of you invite us just to make us poor?"

¹⁶ So Samson's wife cried on his shoulder. She said, "You hate me! You don't really love me! You gave my friends

a riddle and didn't tell me the answer." Samson replied, "I haven't even told my father and mother, so why should I tell you?"

¹⁷ But she cried on his shoulder for the rest of the seven days of the party. Finally, on the seventh day he told her the answer because she made his life miserable. Then she told her friends the answer to the riddle.

¹⁸ So before sundown on the seventh day, the men of the city said to him, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" Samson replied, "If you hadn't used my cow to plow, you wouldn't know my riddle now."

¹⁹ When the LORD'S Spirit came over him, he went to Ashkelon and killed 30 men there. He took their clothes and gave them to the men who solved the riddle. He was angry, and he went to his father's house.

²⁰ Samson's wife was given to his best man.

15 ¹ Later, during the wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife. He took a young goat along for her. He said, "I'm going to sleep with my wife in her bedroom." But her father would not let him go in.

² Her father said, "I thought you hated her. So I gave her to your best man. Isn't her younger sister better looking? Marry her instead!"

³ Samson said to him, "This time I won't be guilty when I get even with the Philistines, even though I'm going to do something terrible to them."

⁴ So Samson caught 300 foxes. He tied them together in pairs by their tails. Then he fastened a torch between their tails.

⁵ He set the torches on fire and released the foxes in the Philistines' grain fields.

So he set fire to all their grain, whether it was stacked or in the fields. Their olive orchards also caught on fire.

⁶ Some Philistines asked, "Who did this?" They were told, "Samson! He's the son-in-law of the man at Timnah. Samson did it because the man at Timnah took Samson's wife and gave her to his best man." So the Philistines burned Samson's wife and her father to death.

⁷ Samson said to them, "If that's how you're going to act, I'll get even with you before I stop."

⁸ So he attacked them violently and slaughtered them. Then he went to live in a cave in the cliff at Etam.

⁹ The Philistines came, camped in Judah, and overran Lehi.

¹⁰ The men of Judah asked, "Why did you come to fight us?" The Philistines answered, "We've come to tie up

Samson and do to him what he did to us."

¹¹ So 3,000 men from Judah went to the cave in the cliff at Etam. They said to Samson, "Don't you know that the Philistines rule us? Why have you done this to us?" Samson replied, "I did to them what they did to me."

¹² So the men from Judah told him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines." Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you won't harm me yourselves."

¹³ They told him, "We promise we'll only tie you up and hand you over to them. We certainly won't kill you." So they tied him up with two new ropes and brought him back from the cliff.

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines met him with shouts of triumph. But the LORD'S Spirit came over him. The ropes on his arms became like strings

burned in a fire, and those on his hands snapped.

¹⁵ Samson found the jawbone from a donkey that had just died. He picked it up and killed 1,000 men with it.

¹⁶ Then Samson said, "With a jawbone from a donkey, I've made two piles of them. With a jawbone from a donkey, I've killed a thousand men."

¹⁷ When he finished saying this, he threw the jawbone away. He called that place Ramath Lehi [Jawbone Hill].

¹⁸ Samson was very thirsty. So he called out to the LORD and said, "You have given me this great victory. But now I'll die from thirst and fall into the power of godless men."

¹⁹ So God split open the hollow place at Lehi, and water gushed out. Samson drank some water. Then he was refreshed and revived. So he called the place En Hakkore [Spring of the One

Who Calls Out]. It is still there at Lehi today.

²⁰ Samson judged Israel for 20 years during the time of the Philistines.

16 ¹ Samson went to Gaza. There he saw a prostitute and slept with her.

² The people of Gaza were told, "Samson's here!" So they surrounded the place and waited all night at the city gate to ambush him. They were quiet all night. They thought, "We'll kill him at dawn."

³ But Samson was in bed with the prostitute only until midnight. Then he got up, took hold of the doors, door posts, and bar of the city gate and pulled them out. He carried them on his shoulders to the top of the hill facing Hebron.

⁴ After leaving Gaza, he fell in love with a woman in the Sorek Valley. Her name was Delilah.

⁵ The Philistine rulers came to her and said, "Trick him, and find out what makes him so strong. Find out how we can overpower him. We want to tie him up in order to torture him. Each of us will give you 1,100 pieces of silver."

⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me what makes you so strong. How can you be tied up so that someone could torture you?"

⁷ Samson told her, "If someone ties me up with seven new bowstrings that are not dried out, I will be like any other man."

⁸ The Philistine rulers brought her seven new bowstrings that were not dried out. She tied Samson up with them.

⁹ Some men were hiding in the bedroom waiting for her to tie him

up. Then she said to him, "Samson, the Philistines are attacking!" Samson snapped the bowstrings as a thread snaps when it touches fire. So no one found out why he was so strong.

¹⁰ Delilah told Samson, "Look, you're making fun of me by telling me lies. Now, tell me how you can be tied up."

¹¹ Samson told her, "If someone ties me up tightly with new ropes that have never been used, I will be like any other man."

¹² So Delilah took some new ropes and tied him up with them. Then she said to him, "Samson, the Philistines are attacking!" Some men were in her bedroom waiting to ambush him. But Samson tore the ropes off his arms as though they were strings.

¹³ Delilah told Samson, "You're still making fun of me by telling me lies. Tell me how you can be tied up." Samson

replied, "Just weave the seven braids of my hair with the other threads in the loom."

¹⁴ So Delilah tied his braids to the loom shuttle. Then she said to him, "Samson, the Philistines are attacking!" But Samson woke up and tore his braids and the threads out of the loom shuttle.

¹⁵ Delilah said to Samson, "How can you say that you love me when your heart isn't mine? You've made fun of me three times now, but you still haven't told me what makes you so strong."

¹⁶ Every day she made his life miserable with her questions. She pestered him until he wished he were dead.

¹⁷ Finally, he told her the truth. He told her, "Because I'm a Nazirite, no one has ever cut the hair on my head. I was dedicated to God before I was born. If my hair is ever shaved off, my strength

will leave me. Then I'll be like any other man."

¹⁸ When Delilah realized that he had told her everything, she sent a message to the Philistine rulers, "Come here once more." (She did this because Samson had told her everything.) So the Philistine rulers arrived with the money in their hands.

¹⁹ Delilah put Samson to sleep on her lap. She called for a man to shave off his seven braids. Then she began to torture him because his strength had left him.

²⁰ She said, "Samson, the Philistines are attacking!" Samson woke up. He thought, "I'll get out of this as usual and shake myself free." (He didn't realize that the LORD had left him.)

²¹ The Philistines grabbed him. They poked out his eyes and took him to the prison in Gaza. They tied him up with

double chains and made him grind grain in the mill there.

²² But his hair started to grow back as soon as it was shaved off.

²³ Now, the Philistine rulers gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon and to celebrate. They said, "Our god handed Samson, our enemy, over to us."

²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god. They said, "Our god gave our enemy, destroyer of our land and killer of so many, into our very hand!"

²⁵ When all the Philistines were enjoying themselves, they said, "Call Samson in to entertain us." Samson was called from the prison, and he made them laugh. They made him stand between two columns.

²⁶ Samson told the young man who was leading him by the hand, "Let me rest.

Let me touch the columns on which the building stands so that I can lean against them."

²⁷ The building was filled with people. All the Philistine rulers were there. On the roof there were about three thousand men and women who watched Samson entertain them.

²⁸ Then Samson called to the LORD, "Almighty LORD, please remember me! God, give me strength just one more time! Let me get even with the Philistines for at least one of my two eyes."

²⁹ Samson felt the two middle columns on which the building stood. With his right hand on one column and his left on the other, he pushed hard against them.

³⁰ "Let me die with the Philistines," he said. With that, he pushed with all his might, and the building fell on the rulers and everyone in it. So he killed more

Philistines when he died than he had when he was alive.

³¹ Then his relatives and his father's whole family went to Gaza. They took Samson and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. Samson had judged Israel for 20 years.

17 ¹ There was a man named Micah from the mountain region of Ephraim.

² He told his mother, "You were upset about the 1,100 pieces of silver that were taken from you. I even heard you put a curse on them. Here's the silver. I took it!" His mother said, "The LORD bless you, my son!"

³ So Micah gave the 1,100 pieces of silver back to his mother. Then his mother said, "I dedicate this silver to the LORD for my son's benefit. I want to

make a carved idol and a metal idol. So now I'm giving the silver back to you."

⁴ When Micah returned the silver to his mother, she took 200 pieces of the silver and gave it to a silversmith. He made a carved idol and a metal idol. Both were placed in Micah's home.

⁵ Micah owned a shrine. He also made an ephod and household idols. He ordained one of his sons to be his priest.

⁶ In those days Israel didn't have a king. Everyone did whatever he considered right.

⁷ There was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah. (Bethlehem belongs to the family of Judah.) He was a Levite but was living in Bethlehem.

⁸ This man left Bethlehem in Judah to live wherever he could find a place. He came to Micah's house in the mountains of Ephraim to carry on his work.

⁹ Micah asked him, "Where do you come from?" The man told him, "I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah. I'm going to live wherever I can find a place."

¹⁰ Micah told him, "Stay with me! Be a father and a priest to me. I'll give you ten pieces of silver a year, a set of clothes, and your room and board." The Levite accepted the offer

¹¹ and agreed to live with Micah. The young man became like one of Micah's sons.

¹² Micah ordained the Levite. So the young man became his priest and a part of his family.

¹³ Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me. I have a Levite for my priest."

18 ¹ In those days Israel didn't have a king. And in those days the tribe of Dan was looking for a place to live. Up to that time they had not received land

as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel as they should have.

² So all the families of Dan sent out five qualified men from Zorah and Eshtaol. They were sent to spy throughout the land and explore it. They were told, "Go and explore the land!" They came to Micah's house in the mountains of Ephraim. They spent the night there.

³ While they were at Micah's house, they recognized the young Levite's voice. So they stopped to ask him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing here? Why are you here?"

⁴ The Levite told them what Micah had done for him and added, "Micah hired me, so I became his priest."

⁵ They said to him, "Please find out from God if our journey will be successful."

⁶ The priest told them, "Go in peace. The LORD approves of your journey."

⁷ The five men left there and came to the city of Laish. They saw that the people there lived without a care. These people were like the people of Sidon. They were peaceful and secure. There was no one around who threatened to take away their property by force. They were far from the people of Sidon and totally independent.

⁸ The men went back to their relatives in Zorah and Eshtaol. Their relatives asked them, "What did you find?"

⁹ They replied, "Get up, let's attack Laish. We saw the land. It's very good! "Don't just sit there! Go at once and take the land.

¹⁰ When you get there, you will come to a secure people. The land is wide open to you. God will hand it over to you. It's a place where you will have everything you could want."

¹¹ So 600 men from the tribe of Dan left Zorah and Eshtaol armed for war.

¹² They camped at Kiriath Jearim in Judah. This is why the place just west of Kiriath Jearim is still called Mahaneh Dan [The Camp of Dan] today.

¹³ From there they marched to the mountains of Ephraim as far as Micah's house.

¹⁴ Then the five men who had gone to spy throughout the land around Laish spoke up. They said to the other men of Dan, "Do you know that there's an ephod, a carved idol, a metal idol, and household idols in these houses? What do you think we should do?"

¹⁵ So they stopped and entered Micah's house and greeted the young Levite.

¹⁶ The 600 armed men from Dan stood at the entrance to the city.

¹⁷ The five men who had gone to spy throughout the land went inside. They

took the carved idol, the ephod, the household idols, and the metal idol. The priest stood at the entrance to the city with the 600 armed men.

¹⁸ When these men entered Micah's house and took the carved idol, the ephod, the household idols, and the metal idol, the priest asked them, "What are you doing?"

¹⁹ They told him, "Keep quiet! Don't say a word! Come with us and be our father and priest. Is it better for you to be a priest for one man's house or for a tribe in Israel and its families?"

²⁰ The priest was content. He took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved idol and went with the people.

²¹ When they left, they put their children, livestock, and property in front of them.

²² When they had already gone some distance from Micah's house, Micah's

neighbors were called together to help him catch up to the people of Dan.

²³ They shouted at them. But the people of Dan turned around and said to Micah, "What's your problem? Why did you call your neighbors together to attack us?"

²⁴ Micah answered, "You've taken away the gods I made as well as my priest. What do I have left? How can you say to me, 'What's your problem?'"

²⁵ The people of Dan replied, "Don't make another sound, or some violent men will attack you. Then you and your family will lose your lives."

²⁶ The people of Dan went on their way. Micah saw they were stronger than he was, so he turned around and went home.

²⁷ The people of Dan took what Micah had made and the man who had become his priest and went to the city of Laish.

They attacked a peaceful and secure people, killed them all with swords, and burned their city.

²⁸ There was no one to rescue them because their city was far from Sidon and totally independent. The city was in the valley that belonged to Beth Rehob. The people of Dan rebuilt the city and lived in it.

²⁹ They named the city Dan in honor of their ancestor Dan, Israel's son. Originally, the city was called Laish.

³⁰ The people of Dan set up the carved idol for themselves. Jonathan (son of Gershom and grandson of Moses) and his descendants were priests for Dan's tribe until the people living in that land were taken captive.

³¹ So they set up for themselves the carved idol Micah had made. It stayed there the whole time the house of God was at Shiloh.

19 ¹ In those days when Israel didn't have a king, there was a Levite who lived in a remote area in the mountains of Ephraim. He took a woman from Bethlehem in Judah to be his concubine.

² But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went to her father's home, to Bethlehem in Judah. When she had been there four months,

³ her husband went to persuade her to come back home. He took along his servant and two donkeys. She took her husband into her father's house. Her father was thrilled to see him.

⁴ He made the Levite stay there with him, celebrating for three days.

⁵ On the fourth day they got up early in the morning to leave, but the woman's father told his son-in-law, "Eat something to keep up your strength and then you can go."

⁶ So they both sat down and ate and drank together. The woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Why don't you spend the night and enjoy yourself?"

⁷ When the Levite started to leave, his father-in-law urged him to stay another night, so he did.

⁸ On the morning of the fifth day, the Levite got up early to leave. The woman's father said, "Eat something to keep up your strength!" So they spent the time eating until late afternoon.

⁹ The Levite started to leave with his concubine and his servant. But his father-in-law said to him, "It's already evening. Please stay another night. It's too late to leave now. Stay here, and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can start out early to go home."

¹⁰ But the Levite refused to spend another night. He left and traveled as far as Jebus (now called Jerusalem). He had

with him two saddled donkeys and his concubine.

¹¹ By the time they were near Jebus, it was very late in the day. The Levite's servant said to him, "Let's go spend the night in Jebus."

¹² The Levite told him, "We'll never go into a city of foreigners. They're not Israelites. We'll go on to Gibeah."

¹³ He told his servant, "Let's go someplace else. We'll spend the night either at Gibeah or Ramah."

¹⁴ So they went on. It was sunset by the time they arrived at Gibeah. (Gibeah belonged to the tribe of Benjamin.)

¹⁵ They went to spend the night there. The Levite entered Gibeah and sat down in the city square, because no one offered to take them home for the night.

¹⁶ That evening an old man came into the city from his work in the fields. He was from the mountain region of

Ephraim but lived in Gibeah. The other people who lived there were from the tribe of Benjamin.

¹⁷ He saw the traveler in the city square. So the old man asked, "Where do you come from? And where are you going?"

¹⁸ The Levite replied, "We're on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the mountains of Ephraim. That's where I'm from. I had gone to Bethlehem in Judah. Now I'm going to the LORD'S house, but no one has offered to take me into his home.

¹⁹ We have straw and fodder for our donkeys. I even have bread and wine for myself, the woman, and my servant. We have everything we need."

²⁰ Then the old man said, "Welcome! Let me take care of your needs. Just don't spend the night in the city square."

²¹ So he took the Levite to his house and fed the donkeys. After they washed, they ate and drank.

²² While they were enjoying themselves, some worthless men from the city surrounded the house and pounded on the door. They told the old man, the owner of the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so that we can have sex with him."

²³ The owner went out to them. He told them, "No, my friends! Please don't do anything so evil! This man is a guest in my home. Don't do such a godless thing!

²⁴ Here, let me bring out my virgin daughter and this man's concubine. Rape them, and do with them whatever you want. Just don't do such a godless thing to this man."

²⁵ But the men refused to listen to him. So the Levite grabbed his concubine and forced her outside. They had sex

with her and abused her all night until morning. They let her go when the sun was coming up.

²⁶ At daybreak, the woman came to the door of the house where her husband was and collapsed. She was still there when it became light.

²⁷ Her husband got up in the morning, opened the doors of the house, and was about to leave. His wife (that is, his concubine) was lying at the door of the house with her hands on the doorstep.

²⁸ The Levite said to her, "Get up! Let's go!" But she did not answer. So he put her on the donkey and left for home.

²⁹ When he arrived home, he got a knife. He took his concubine and cut her limb from limb into 12 pieces. Then he sent the pieces throughout the territories of Israel.

³⁰ Everyone who saw it said, "Never has such a thing happened or been seen

from the time the people of Israel came out of Egypt until today. Think about it! Form a plan, and speak out!"

20 ¹ All the people of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and from Gilead came to Mizpah. The congregation stood united in the presence of the LORD.

² The leaders of all Israel's tribes took their places in the congregation of God's people. There were 400,000 foot soldiers with swords.

³ The people of Benjamin heard that Israel had come to Mizpah. The people of Israel said, "Tell us how such an evil thing could happen."

⁴ The Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, answered, "My concubine and I went to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night.

⁵ The citizens of Gibeah came to attack me. They surrounded the house where I was staying that night. They intended

to kill me, but instead, they raped my concubine until she died.

⁶ So I took my concubine and cut her into pieces. Then I sent the pieces throughout the territory of Israel. I did this because the citizens of Gibeah did this perverted and godless thing in Israel.

⁷ All you people of Israel, tell me what you think. Give me your advice right now!"

⁸ All the people stood united, saying, "None of us will go to his tent or return to his house.

⁹ This is what we'll do to Gibeah. We'll decide by lot who should attack it.

¹⁰ We'll take one-tenth of all the men from the tribes of Israel to get supplies for the troops. When the troops go to Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin they can punish the citizens of Gibeah for the godless thing they did in Israel."

¹¹ So all the men of Israel assembled. They stood united against the city.

¹² The tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin. They asked, "How could such an evil thing happen among you?"

¹³ Now hand over those worthless men in Gibeah. We must put them to death to rid ourselves of this kind of evil in Israel." But the men of Benjamin refused to listen to the men of Israel.

¹⁴ So the men of Benjamin went from their towns and assembled at Gibeah to go to war with the men of Israel.

¹⁵ That day 26,000 men armed with swords came from Benjamin's cities and organized for battle along with 700 of Gibeah's best men.

¹⁶ Out of all these troops, the best 700 were left-handed. Each could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

¹⁷ The men of Israel (Benjamin not included) totaled 400,000 soldiers armed with swords.

¹⁸ The men of Israel went to Bethel. They asked God, "Who will go first to fight Benjamin?" The LORD answered, "Judah will go first."

¹⁹ The Israelites got up early in the morning and camped at Gibeah.

²⁰ So the men of Israel went to war with the men of Benjamin. The Israelites formed their battle line facing Gibeah.

²¹ That day the men of Benjamin came out from Gibeah. They slaughtered 22,000 of Israel's men.

²² But Israel's troops got reinforcements. They formed their battle line where they had formed it on the first day.

²³ The Israelites went and cried in the presence of the LORD until evening. They asked the LORD, "Should we continue to

wage war against our close relatives, the men of Benjamin?" The LORD answered, "Go fight them!"

²⁴ On the second day the Israelite troops advanced against Benjamin.

²⁵ Benjamin went out from Gibeah to meet them. This time they slaughtered 18,000 men from Israel who were armed with swords.

²⁶ Then all the men of Israel and all the troops went to Bethel. They sat there and cried in the presence of the LORD and fasted that day until evening. Then they sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD.

²⁷ In those days the ark of God's promise was at Bethel.

²⁸ (Phinehas, son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron, served in front of it.) So the people of Israel asked the LORD, "Should we continue to wage war against our close relatives, the men of

Benjamin? Or should we stop?" The LORD answered, "Go! Tomorrow I will hand them over to you."

²⁹ Then Israel placed troops in ambush around Gibeah.

³⁰ On the third day the men of Israel went to fight the men of Benjamin. They formed their battle line facing Gibeah as they did before.

³¹ The men of Benjamin went out to attack Israel's troops and were led away from the city. They started to inflict casualties as before. They killed about 30 men from Israel in the open country and on the roads to Bethel and Gibeah.

³² The men of Benjamin shouted, "They're defeated as before!" But the men of Israel had said, "Let's flee in order to lead them from the city to the roads."

³³ So the men of Israel left their positions. They formed their battle line

at Baal Tamar. Meanwhile, those waiting in ambush rushed from their position to the west of Gibeah.

³⁴ Then 10,000 of Israel's best men attacked Gibeah. The battle was fierce. But Benjamin's men didn't realize their own evil was about to overtake them.

³⁵ So the LORD defeated them in front of Israel. On that day the Israelites slaughtered 25,100 men from Benjamin who were armed with swords.

³⁶ Then the men of Benjamin realized they were defeated. The Israelites had allowed the men of Benjamin to take back some ground. The Israelites relied on those waiting in ambush near Gibeah.

³⁷ The men in ambush quickly charged toward Gibeah. They spread out in the city and killed everyone.

³⁸ The men of Israel had arranged with those waiting in ambush that they would

make a big column of smoke rise from the city as a signal.

³⁹ Then the men of Israel would turn around in the battle. The men of Benjamin had already killed about 30 men of Israel. They even said, "Israel is completely defeated, just like in the first battle."

⁴⁰ But when the column of smoke started to rise from the city, the men of Benjamin turned around and saw the whole city going up in smoke.

⁴¹ Then the men of Israel turned around, and the men of Benjamin panicked. They realized that their evil had overtaken them.

⁴² They turned in front of Israel toward the road to the desert. But the battle caught up with the men of Benjamin. Israel slaughtered whoever came out of the cities on the road to the desert.

⁴³ They closed in on the men of Benjamin and pursued them without stopping. They overtook them east of Gibeah.

⁴⁴ There were 18,000 experienced men from Benjamin who died in battle.

⁴⁵ The others turned and fled into the desert to Rimmon Rock. But the men of Israel killed 5,000 more on the roads. They caught up with another 2,000 and killed them near Gidom.

⁴⁶ In all, 25,000 men from Benjamin who were armed with swords were killed that day. They were all experienced men.

⁴⁷ But 600 men turned and fled into the desert to Rimmon Rock. They stayed at Rimmon Rock for four months.

⁴⁸ Then the men of Israel went back to attack the rest of the territory of Benjamin. They killed all the people and cattle they found in every city. They also burned down every city they came to.

21 ¹ The men of Israel had taken this oath in Mizpah: "None of us will ever let our daughters marry anyone from Benjamin."

² The people went to Bethel and sat there in the presence of God until evening. They cried very loudly,

³ "LORD God of Israel, why has this happened among us? Why should one tribe be missing today in Israel?"

⁴ The next day the people got up early. They built an altar there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.

⁵ The people asked, "Is there any family from Israel that did not take part in the assembly in the presence of the LORD?" They had taken a solemn oath that whoever had not come into the presence of the LORD at Mizpah must be put to death.

⁶ The people of Israel felt sorry for their close relatives, the men of Benjamin.

They said, "Today one tribe has been excluded from Israel.

⁷ What will we do to provide wives for the men who are left? We swore to the LORD that we would not let any of our daughters marry them."

⁸ Then they asked, "Is there any family from Israel that did not come into the presence of the LORD at Mizpah?" No one from Jabesh Gilead had come to the assembly in the camp.

⁹ So they questioned the people, and there was no one there from Jabesh Gilead.

¹⁰ The congregation sent 12,000 soldiers. They ordered them, "Go and kill the people of Jabesh Gilead, including the women and children.

¹¹ These are your directions: Claim every female who has gone to bed with a man, and claim every male. Claim them for the LORD by destroying them."

¹² Among the people of Jabesh Gilead they found 400 unmarried women who had never gone to bed with a man. They brought them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan.

¹³ Then the whole congregation sent messengers to the men of Benjamin at Rimmon Rock and offered them peace.

¹⁴ So the men of Benjamin came back at that time. These men were given the women from Jabesh Gilead who had been kept alive. However, the congregation had not found enough women for all of them.

¹⁵ The congregation felt sorry for the people of Benjamin because the LORD had broken the unity of the tribes of Israel.

¹⁶ The leaders of the congregation asked, "What should we do to provide wives for the men who are left, since the women in Benjamin have been killed?"

¹⁷ Some said, "Benjamin's men who survived must be allowed to have families. No tribe of Israel should be wiped out.

¹⁸ However, we can't give them any of our daughters as wives. The people of Israel have taken an oath that whoever gives wives to the men of Benjamin is under a curse."

¹⁹ Others said, "Every year the LORD'S festival is held at Shiloh. Shiloh is north of Bethel, east of the highway going from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah."

²⁰ So they told the men of Benjamin, "Hide in the vineyards and

²¹ watch. When the young women of Shiloh come out to take part in the dances, come out of the vineyards. Each of you catch a woman from Shiloh to be your wife. Then go back to the territory of Benjamin.

²² When their fathers or brothers come to us to complain, we'll tell them, 'Have pity on them, since we didn't provide a wife for each man in the battle. You won't be guilty because you didn't give them the wives yourselves.'"

²³ The men of Benjamin did just that. They captured the number of wives they needed from the women who were dancing and went home. So they rebuilt their cities and lived in them.

²⁴ At that time the people of Israel left. Each man went to his tribe and family. They all went home.

²⁵ In those days Israel didn't have a king. Everyone did whatever he considered right.

Ruth

1 ¹ In the days when the judges were ruling, there was a famine in the land. A man from Bethlehem in Judah went with his wife and two sons to live for a while in the country of Moab.

² The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of their two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were descendants of Ephrathah from Bethlehem in the territory of Judah. They went to the country of Moab and lived there.

³ Now, Naomi's husband Elimelech died, and she was left alone with her two sons.

⁴ Each son married a woman from Moab. One son married a woman named Orpah, and the other son married a

woman named Ruth. They lived there for about ten years.

⁵ Then both Mahlon and Chilion died as well. So Naomi was left alone, without her two sons or her husband.

⁶ Naomi and her daughters-in-law started on the way back from the country of Moab. (While they were still in Moab she heard that the LORD had come to help his people and give them food.

⁷ So she left the place where she had been living, and her two daughters-in-law went with her.) They began to walk back along the road to the territory of Judah.

⁸ Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back! Each of you should go back to your mother's home. May the LORD be as kind to you as you were to me and to our loved ones who have died.

⁹ May the LORD repay each of you so that you may find security in a home with a husband." When she kissed them goodbye, they began to cry loudly.

¹⁰ They said to her, "We are going back with you to your people."

¹¹ But Naomi said, "Go back, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Do I have any more sons in my womb who could be your husbands?"

¹² Go back, my daughters. Go, because I am too old to get married again. If I said that I still have hope.... And if I had a husband tonight.... And even if I gave birth to sons,

¹³ would you wait until they grew up and stay single just for them? No, my daughters. My bitterness is much worse than yours because the LORD has sent me so much trouble."

¹⁴ They began to cry loudly again.

Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth held on to her tightly.

¹⁵ Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Go back with your sister-in-law."

¹⁶ But Ruth answered, "Don't force me to leave you. Don't make me turn back from following you. Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and I will be buried there with you. May the LORD strike me down if anything but death separates you and me!"

¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she ended the conversation.

¹⁹ So both of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited

about them. "This can't be Naomi, can it?" the women asked.

²⁰ She answered them, "Don't call me Naomi [Sweet]. Call me Mara [Bitter] because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.

²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi when the LORD has tormented me and the Almighty has done evil to me?"

²² When Naomi came back from the country of Moab, Ruth, her Moabite daughter-in-law, came along with her. They happened to enter Bethlehem just when the barley harvest began.

2¹ Naomi had a relative. He was from Elimelech's side of the family. He was a man of outstanding character named Boaz.

² Ruth, who was from Moab, said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field of

anyone who will be kind to me. There I will gather the grain left behind by the reapers." Naomi told her, "Go, my daughter."

³ So Ruth went. She entered a field and gathered the grain left behind by the reapers. Now it happened that she ended up in the part of the field that belonged to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family.

⁴ Just then, Boaz was coming from Bethlehem, and he said to his reapers, "May the LORD be with all of you!" They answered him, "May the LORD bless you!"

⁵ Boaz asked the young man in charge of his reapers, "Who is this young woman?"

⁶ The young man answered, "She's a young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

⁷ She said, 'Please let me gather grain. I will only gather among the bundles behind the reapers.' So she came here and has been on her feet from daybreak until now. She just sat down this minute in the shelter."

⁸ Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Don't go in any other field to gather grain, and don't even leave this one. Stay here with my young women.

⁹ Watch where my men are reaping, and follow the young women in that field. I have ordered my young men not to touch you. When you're thirsty, go to the jars and drink some of the water that the young men have drawn."

¹⁰ Ruth immediately bowed down to the ground and said to him, "Why are you so helpful? Why are you paying attention to me? I'm only a foreigner."

¹¹ Boaz answered her, "People have told me about everything you have

done for your mother-in-law after your husband died. They told me how you left your father and mother and the country where you were born. They also told me how you came to people that you didn't know before.

¹² May the LORD reward you for what you have done! May you receive a rich reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose protection you have come for shelter."

¹³ Ruth replied, "Sir, may your kindness to me continue. You have comforted me and reassured me, and I'm not even one of your own servants."

¹⁴ When it was time to eat, Boaz told her, "Come here. Have some bread, and dip it into the sour wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he handed her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over.

¹⁵ When she got up to gather grain, Boaz ordered his servants, "Let her gather grain even among the bundles. Don't give her any problems.

¹⁶ Even pull some grain out of the bundles and leave it for her to gather. Don't give her a hard time about it."

¹⁷ So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. Then she separated the grain from its husks. She had about half a bushel of barley.

¹⁸ She picked it up and went into the town, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gathered. Ruth also took out what she had left over from lunch and gave it to Naomi.

¹⁹ Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you gather grain today? Just where did you work? May the man who paid attention to you be blessed." So Ruth told her mother-in-law about the person with whom she worked. She said,

"The man I worked with today is named Boaz."

²⁰ Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May the LORD bless him. The LORD hasn't stopped being kind to people—living or dead." Then Naomi told her, "That man is a relative of ours. He is a close relative, one of those responsible for taking care of us."

²¹ Ruth, who was from Moab, told her, "He also said to me, 'Stay with my younger workers until they have finished the harvest.'"

²² Naomi told her daughter-in-law Ruth, "It's a good idea, my daughter, that you go out to the fields with his young women. If you go to someone else's field, you may be molested."

²³ So Ruth stayed with the young women who were working for Boaz. She gathered grain until both the barley harvest and the wheat harvest ended.

And she continued to live with her mother-in-law.

3¹ Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, said to her, "My daughter, shouldn't I try to look for a home that would be good for you?"

² Isn't Boaz, whose young women you've been working with, our relative? He will be separating the barley from its husks on the threshing floor tonight.

³ Freshen up, put on some perfume, dress up, and go down to the threshing floor. Don't let him know that you're there until he's finished eating and drinking.

⁴ When he lies down, notice the place where he is lying. Then uncover his feet, and lie down there. He will make it clear what you must do."

⁵ Ruth answered her, "I will do whatever you say."

⁶ Ruth went to the threshing floor and did exactly as her mother-in-law had directed her.

⁷ Boaz had eaten and drunk to his heart's content, so he went and lay at the edge of a pile of grain. Then she went over to him secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

⁸ At midnight the man was shivering. When he turned over, he was surprised to see a woman lying at his feet.

⁹ "Who are you?" he asked. She answered, "I am Ruth. Spread the corner of your garment over me because you are a close relative who can take care of me."

¹⁰ Boaz replied, "May the LORD bless you, my daughter. This last kindness—that you didn't go after the younger men, whether rich or poor—is better than the first.

¹¹ Don't be afraid, my daughter. I will do whatever you say. The whole town knows that you are a woman who has strength of character.

¹² It is true that I am a close relative of yours, but there is a relative closer than I.

¹³ Stay here tonight. In the morning if he will agree to take care of you, that is good. He can take care of you. But if he does not wish to take care of you, then, I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, I will take care of you myself. Lie down until morning."

¹⁴ So Ruth lay at his feet until morning. Then she got up early before anyone could be recognized. At that moment Boaz thought to himself, "I hope that no one will ever know that this woman came to the threshing floor."

¹⁵ Then Boaz told Ruth, "Stretch out the cape you're wearing and hold it tight."

So she held it tight while he measured out six measures of barley. Then he placed it on her back and went into the town.

¹⁶ When Ruth returned, her mother-in-law Naomi asked, "How did things go, my daughter?" Ruth told Naomi everything the man had done for her.

¹⁷ She said, "He gave me these six measures of barley and told me not to come back to you empty-handed."

¹⁸ Naomi replied, "Stay here, my daughter, until you know how it turns out. The man won't rest unless he settles this matter today."

4 ¹ Boaz went to the city gate and sat there. Just then, the relative about whom he had spoken was passing by. Boaz said, "Please come over here and sit, my friend." So the man came over and sat down.

² Then Boaz chose ten men who were leaders of that city and said, "Sit here." So they also sat down.

³ Boaz said to the man, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the field that belonged to our relative Elimelech.

⁴ So I said that I would inform you. Buy it in the presence of these men sitting here and in the presence of the leaders of our people. If you wish to buy back the property, you can buy back the property. But if you do not wish to buy back the property, tell me. Then I will know that I am next in line because there is no other relative except me." The man said, "I'll buy back the property."

⁵ Boaz continued, "When you buy the field from Naomi, you will also assume responsibility for the Moabite Ruth, the dead man's widow. This keeps the inheritance in the dead man's name."

⁶ The man replied, "In that case I cannot assume responsibility for her. If I did, I would ruin my inheritance. Take all my rights to buy back the property for yourself, because I cannot assume that responsibility."

⁷ (This is the way it used to be in Israel concerning buying back property and exchanging goods: In order to make every matter legal, a man would take off his sandal and give it to the other man. This was the way a contract was publicly approved in Israel.)

⁸ So when the man said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he took off his sandal.

⁹ Then Boaz said to the leaders and to all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.

¹⁰ In addition, I have bought as my wife the Moabite Ruth, Mahlon's widow, to

keep the inheritance in the dead man's name. In this way the dead man's name will not be cut off from his relatives or from the public records. Today you are witnesses."

¹¹ All the people who were at the gate, including the leaders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make this wife, who is coming into your home, like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built our family of Israel. So show your strength of character in Ephrathah and make a name for yourself in Bethlehem.

¹² Also, from the descendant whom the LORD will give you from this young woman, may your family become like the family of Perez, the son whom Tamar gave birth to for Judah."

¹³ Then Boaz took Ruth home, and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the LORD gave her the ability to become pregnant. So she gave birth to a son.

¹⁴ The women said to Naomi, "Praise the LORD, who has remembered today to give you someone who will take care of you. The child's name will be famous in Israel.

¹⁵ He will bring you a new life and support you in your old age. Your daughter-in-law who loves you is better to you than seven sons, because she has given birth."

¹⁶ Naomi took the child, held him on her lap, and became his guardian.

¹⁷ The women in the neighborhood said, "Naomi has a son." So they gave him the name Obed. He became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

¹⁸ This is the account of Perez and his family. Perez was the father of Hezron.

¹⁹ Hezron was the father of Ram. Ram was the father of Amminadab.

²⁰ Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

²¹ Salmon was the father of Boaz. Boaz was the father of Obed.

²² Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David.

1 Samuel

1 ¹ There was a man named Elkanah from Ramathaim Zophim in the mountains of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham, grandson of Elihu, great-grandson of Tohu, whose father was Zuph from the tribe of Ephraim.

² Elkanah had two wives, one named Hannah, the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

³ Every year this man would go from his own city to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of Armies at Shiloh. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served there as priests of the LORD.

⁴ Whenever Elkanah offered a sacrifice, he would give portions of it to his wife Peninnah and all her sons and daughters.

⁵ He would also give one portion to Hannah because he loved her, even though the LORD had kept her from having children.

⁶ Because the LORD had made her unable to have children, her rival Peninnah tormented her endlessly in order to make her miserable.

⁷ This happened year after year. Whenever Hannah went to the LORD'S house, Peninnah would make her miserable, and Hannah would cry and not eat.

⁸ Her husband Elkanah would ask her, "Hannah, why are you crying? Why haven't you eaten? Why are you so downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

⁹ One day, after Hannah had something to eat and drink in Shiloh, she got up. (The priest Eli was sitting on a chair by the door of the Lord's temple.)

¹⁰ Though she was resentful, she prayed to the LORD while she cried.

¹¹ She made this vow, "LORD of Armies, if you will look at my misery, remember me, and give me a boy, then I will give him to you for as long as he lives. A razor will never be used on his head."

¹² While Hannah was praying a long time in front of the LORD, Eli was watching her mouth.

¹³ She was praying silently. Her voice couldn't be heard; only her lips were moving. Eli thought she was drunk.

¹⁴ "How long are you going to stay drunk?" Eli asked her. "Get rid of your wine."

¹⁵ Hannah responded, "No, sir. I'm not drunk. I'm depressed. I'm pouring out my heart to the LORD.

¹⁶ Don't take me to be a good-for-nothing woman. I was praying like

this because I've been troubled and tormented."

¹⁷ Eli replied, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your request."

¹⁸ "May you continue to be kind to me," she said. Then the woman went her way and ate. She was no longer sad.

¹⁹ Early in the morning Elkanah and his family got up and worshiped in front of the LORD. Then they returned home to Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her.

²⁰ Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel [God Hears], because she said, "I asked the LORD for him."

²¹ To keep his vow, Elkanah and his entire household again went to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD.

²² But Hannah didn't go. She told her husband, "I'll wait until the boy is weaned. Then I'll bring him and present

him to the LORD, and he'll stay there permanently."

²³ "Do what you think is best," her husband Elkanah told her. "Wait until you've weaned him. May the LORD keep his word." The woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

²⁴ As soon as she had weaned Samuel, she took him with her. She also brought a three-year-old bull, half a bushel of flour, and a full wineskin. She brought him to the LORD'S house at Shiloh while the boy was still a child.

²⁵ Then the parents butchered the bull and brought the child to Eli.

²⁶ "Sir," Hannah said, "as sure as you live, I'm the woman who stood here next to you and prayed to the LORD.

²⁷ I prayed for this child, and the LORD granted my request.

²⁸ In return, I am giving him to the LORD. He will be dedicated to the LORD for his whole life." And they worshiped the LORD there.

2 ¹ Hannah prayed out loud, "My heart finds joy in the LORD. My head is lifted to the LORD. My mouth mocks my enemies. I rejoice because you saved me.

² There is no one holy like the LORD. There is no one but you, O LORD. There is no Rock like our God.

³ "Do not boast or let arrogance come out of your mouth because the LORD is a God of knowledge, and he weighs our actions.

⁴ "The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumble are armed with strength.

⁵ Those who were well-fed hire themselves out for a piece of bread, but those who were hungry hunger no more.

Even the woman who was childless gives birth to seven children, but the mother of many children grieves all alone.

⁶ "The LORD kills, and he gives life. He makes people go down to the grave, and he raises them up again.

⁷ The LORD causes poverty and grants wealth. He humbles people; he also promotes them.

⁸ He raises the poor from the dust. He lifts the needy from the trash heap in order to make them sit with nobles and even to make them inherit a glorious throne. "The pillars of the earth are the LORD'S. He has set the world on them.

⁹ He safeguards the steps of his faithful ones, but wicked people are silenced in darkness because humans cannot succeed by their own strength.

¹⁰ "Those who oppose the LORD are broken into pieces. He thunders at them from the heavens. The LORD judges the

ends of the earth. He gives strength to his King and lifts the head of his Messiah."

¹¹ Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. But the boy Samuel served the LORD under the priest Eli.

¹² Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were good-for-nothing priests; they had no faith in the LORD.

¹³ Now, this was how the priests dealt with the people who were offering sacrifices: While the meat was boiling, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand.

¹⁴ Then he would stick it into the pot, kettle, cauldron, or pan. Whatever the fork brought up from the pot belonged to the priest. This is what the priests did in Shiloh to all the people of Israel who came there to sacrifice.

¹⁵ But in the case of Eli's sons, even before the people burned the fat, their

servants would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the meat to the priest to roast. He doesn't want boiled meat from you. He wants it raw."

¹⁶ If the man said to the servant, "First let the fat be burned, then take as much as you want," the servant would say to him, "Give it to me now, or I'll take it by force."

¹⁷ The sin of Eli's sons was a serious matter to the LORD, because these men were treating the offerings made to the LORD with contempt.

¹⁸ Meanwhile, Samuel continued to serve in front of the LORD. As a boy he was already wearing a linen ephod.

¹⁹ His mother would make him a robe and bring it to him every year when she went with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice.

²⁰ Eli would bless Elkanah (and his wife) and say, "May the LORD give you

children from this woman in place of the one which she has given to the LORD." Then they would go home.

²¹ The LORD came to Hannah. She became pregnant five times and had three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in front of the LORD.

²² Now, Eli was very old, and he had heard everything that his sons were doing to all Israel and that they were sleeping with the women who served at the gate of the tent of meeting.

²³ So he asked them, "Why are you doing such things? I hear about your wicked ways from all these people.

²⁴ Sons, the report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading isn't good!

²⁵ If one person sins against another, God will take care of him. However, when a person sins against the LORD, who will pray for him?" But they wouldn't listen

to their father's warning—the LORD wanted to kill them.

²⁶ The boy Samuel continued to grow and gained the favor of the LORD and the people.

²⁷ Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: I revealed myself to your ancestors when they were under Pharaoh's control in Egypt.

²⁸ I chose one of your ancestors out of all the tribes of Israel to serve as my priest, to sacrifice burnt offerings on my altar, to burn incense, and to wear the ephod in my presence. And I gave your ancestors the right to keep portions of the sacrifices that the people of Israel burned on the altar.

²⁹ Why do you show no respect for my sacrifices and grain offerings that I have commanded people to make in my dwelling place? Why do you honor

your sons more than me by making yourselves fat on the best of all the sacrifices offered by my people Israel?

³⁰ "Therefore, the LORD God of Israel declares: I certainly thought that your family and your father's family would always live in my presence. "But now the LORD declares: I promise that I will honor those who honor me, and those who despise me will be considered insignificant.

³¹ The time is coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house so that no one will grow old in your family.

³² You will see distress in my dwelling place. In spite of the good that I do for Israel, no one in your family will live to an old age.

³³ Any man in your family whom I do not remove from my altar will have his eyes fail, and he will be heartbroken.

And all your descendants will die in the prime of life.

³⁴ What is going to happen to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you: Both of them will die on the same day.

³⁵ Then I will appoint a faithful priest to serve me. He will do everything I want him to do. I will give him faithful descendants, and he will always live as my anointed one.

³⁶ Then anyone who is left from your household will bow down in front of him to get a coin or a loaf of bread and say, 'Please appoint me to one of the priestly classes so that I may eat a piece of bread.'

3¹ The boy Samuel was serving the LORD under Eli. In those days a prophecy from the LORD was rare; visions were infrequent.

² One night Eli was lying down in his room. His eyesight had begun to fail so that he couldn't see well.

³ The lamp in God's temple hadn't gone out yet, and Samuel was asleep in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was kept.

⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel. "Here I am," Samuel responded.

⁵ He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So Samuel went back and lay down.

⁶ The LORD called Samuel again. Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I didn't call you, son," he responded. "Go back to bed."

⁷ Samuel had no experience with the LORD, because the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸ The LORD called Samuel a third time. Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said,

"Here I am. You called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy.

⁹ "Go, lie down," Eli told Samuel. "When he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD. I'm listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his room.

¹⁰ The LORD came and stood there. He called as he had called the other times: "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak. I'm listening."

¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel, "I am going to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears it ring.

¹² On that day I am going to do to Eli and his family everything I said from beginning to end.

¹³ I told him that I would hand down a permanent judgment against his household because he knew about his

sons' sin—that they were cursing God—but he didn't try to stop them.

¹⁴ That is why I have taken an oath concerning Eli's family line: No offering or sacrifice will ever be able to make peace for the sins that Eli's family committed."

¹⁵ Samuel remained in bed until morning. Then he opened the doors of the LORD'S house. But Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the vision.

¹⁶ Then Eli called Samuel. "Samuel, my son!" he said. "Here I am," he responded.

¹⁷ "What did the LORD tell you?" he asked. "Please don't hide anything from me. May God strike you dead if you hide anything he told you from me."

¹⁸ So Samuel told Eli everything. Eli replied, "He is the LORD. May he do what he thinks is right."

¹⁹ Samuel grew up. The LORD was with him and didn't let any of his words go unfulfilled.

²⁰ All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew Samuel was the LORD'S appointed prophet.

²¹ The LORD continued to appear in Shiloh, since the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh through the word of the LORD. And Samuel spoke to all Israel.

4 ¹ Israel went to fight against the Philistines and camped near Ebenezer while the Philistines camped at Aphek.

² The Philistines organized their troops to meet Israel in battle. As the battle spread, the Philistines defeated Israel and killed about 4,000 soldiers in the field.

³ When the troops came back to the camp, the leaders of Israel asked, "Why has the LORD used the Philistines to

defeat us today? Let's get the ark of the LORD'S promise from Shiloh so that he may be with us and save us from our enemies."

⁴ The troops sent some men who brought back the ark of the promise of the LORD of Armies—who is enthroned over the angels. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, came along with God's ark.

⁵ When the LORD'S ark came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth rang with echoes.

⁶ As the Philistines heard the noise, they asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?" The Philistines found out that the LORD'S ark had come into the camp.

⁷ Then they were frightened and said, "A god has come into their camp." They also said, "Oh no! Nothing like this has ever happened before."

⁸ We're in trouble now! Who can save us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every kind of plague in the desert.

⁹ Be strong, Philistines, and act like men, or else you will serve the Hebrews as they served you. Act like men and fight."

¹⁰ The Philistines fought and defeated Israel. Every Israelite soldier fled to his tent. It was a major defeat in which 30,000 Israelite foot soldiers died.

¹¹ The ark of God was captured. Both of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

¹² A man from the tribe of Benjamin ran from the front line of the battle. He went to Shiloh that day with his clothes torn and dirt on his head.

¹³ When he arrived, Eli was sitting on a chair beside the road, watching. He was worried about the ark of God. The man

went into the city to tell the news. The whole city cried out.

¹⁴ Hearing the cry, Eli asked, "What is this commotion?" So the man went quickly to tell Eli the news.

¹⁵ (Eli was 98 years old, and his eyesight had failed so that he couldn't see.)

¹⁶ The man told Eli, "I'm the one who came from the battle. I fled from the front line today." "What happened, son?" Eli asked.

¹⁷ "Israel fled from the Philistines," the messenger answered. "Our troops suffered heavy casualties. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, also are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."

¹⁸ When the messenger mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell from his chair backwards toward the gate. He broke his neck, and he died. (The man was old and heavy.) He had judged Israel for 40 years.

¹⁹ His daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor prematurely and gave birth to a son.

²⁰ As she was dying, the women helping her said, "Don't be afraid. You've given birth to a son." But she didn't answer or pay attention.

²¹ She called the boy Ichabod [No Glory], saying, "Israel's glory is gone," because the ark of God had been captured and because her father-in-law and her husband died.

²² "Israel's glory is gone because the ark of God has been captured," she said.

5 ¹ After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

² They brought it into the temple of Dagon and placed it beside Dagon.

³ Early the next day the people of Ashdod saw that Dagon had fallen forward on the ground in front of the LORD'S ark. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place.

⁴ But the next morning they saw that Dagon had again fallen forward on the ground in front of the LORD'S ark. Dagon's head and his two hands were cut off and were lying on the temple's threshold. The rest of Dagon's body was intact.

⁵ This is why the priests of Dagon and everyone else who comes into Dagon's temple in Ashdod still don't step on the temple's threshold.

⁶ The LORD dealt harshly with the people of Ashdod. He destroyed them by striking the people in the vicinity of Ashdod with tumors.

⁷ When the people of Ashdod realized what was happening, they said, "The ark

of the God of Israel must not stay with us, because their God is dealing harshly with us and our god Dagon."

⁸ The people of Ashdod called together all the Philistine rulers. "What should we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" they asked. "The ark of the God of Israel must be taken to Gath," the rulers said. So the people took the ark of the God of Israel there.

⁹ But after they had moved it, the LORD threw the city into a great panic: He struck all the important and unimportant people in the city, and they were covered with tumors.

¹⁰ So the people of Gath sent the ark of God to Ekron. But when the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They brought the ark of the God of Israel here to kill us."

¹¹ They called together all the Philistine rulers. "Send the ark of the God of Israel

away," they said. "Let it go back to its own place so that it won't kill us or our people." There was a fear of death throughout the city, where God dealt with them very harshly.

¹² The people who didn't die were struck with tumors. So the cry of the city went up to heaven.

6 ¹ The ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months

² when the Philistines called for priests and people skilled in explaining omens. The Philistines asked, "What should we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how to return it to its proper place."

³ The priests answered, "If you're returning the ark of the God of Israel, don't send it away empty, but by all means return it to its proper place with a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and you will know why he would not turn his anger away from you."

⁴ The Philistines asked, "What kind of guilt offering should we give him?" The priests answered, "Five gold tumors and five gold mice for the five Philistine rulers because all of you and your rulers suffer from the same plague.

⁵ Make models of your tumors and your mice which are destroying the country, and give glory to the God of Israel. Maybe he will no longer be so hard on you, your gods, and your country.

⁶ Why should you be as stubborn as the Egyptians and their Pharaoh were? After he toyed with the Egyptians, didn't they send the Israelites on their way?

⁷ Now get a new cart ready for two dairy cows that have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart. Take their calves away, and leave them in their stall.

⁸ Take the ark of the LORD, and put it on the cart. Put the gold objects which

you're giving him as a guilt offering in a box beside the ark. Send the cart on its way,

⁹ but then watch where it goes. If it goes up the road to its own country toward Beth Shemesh, then this disaster is the LORD'S doing. But if not, we'll know it wasn't his hand that struck us, but what happened to us was an accident."

¹⁰ The people did this. They took two dairy cows, hitched them to a cart, and shut the calves in the stall.

¹¹ They put the ark of the LORD and the box containing the gold mice and the models of their hemorrhoids on the cart.

¹² The cows went straight up the road to Beth Shemesh. Continually mooing, they stayed on the road and didn't turn right or left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth Shemesh.

¹³ The people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley. When they looked up and saw the ark, they were overjoyed.

¹⁴ The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh and stopped there by a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD.

¹⁵ (The Levites had already taken down from the cart the ark of the LORD and the box which contained the gold objects and put them on the large rock.) The people of Beth Shemesh presented burnt offerings and sacrifices to the LORD that day.

¹⁶ After the five rulers of the Philistines saw this, they went back to Ekron that same day.

¹⁷ The gold hemorrhoids which the Philistines sent as a guilt offering to the

LORD were for the cities of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.

¹⁸ And the number of gold mice was the same as the number of Philistine cities belonging to the five rulers, including walled cities and farm villages. The large rock on which they put the ark of the LORD is a witness. It is still there today in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

¹⁹ God struck down some of the people from Beth Shemesh because they looked inside the ark of the LORD. He struck down 70 people. The people mourned because the LORD struck them with such a great blow.

²⁰ The people of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to which people will he go when he leaves us?"

²¹ They sent messengers to the people living at Kiriath Jearim to say, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of

the LORD. Come and take it back with you."

7¹ The men of Kiriath Jearim came to take the LORD'S ark and brought it into Abinadab's house on the hill. They gave Abinadab's son Eleazar the holy occupation of guarding the LORD'S ark.

² A long time passed after the ark came to stay at Kiriath Jearim. For 20 years the entire nation of Israel mournfully sought the LORD.

³ Samuel told the entire nation of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD wholeheartedly, get rid of the foreign gods you have, including the statues of the goddess Astarte. Make a commitment to the LORD, and serve only him. Then he will rescue you from the Philistines."

⁴ So the Israelites got rid of the statues of Baal and Astarte and served only the LORD.

⁵ Then Samuel said, "Gather all the Israelites together at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you."

⁶ So the Israelites gathered together at Mizpah. They drew some water, poured it out in front of the LORD, and fasted that day. They confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." So Samuel judged Israel in Mizpah.

⁷ When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, the Philistine rulers came to attack Israel. The Israelites heard about the Philistine plan and were afraid of them.

⁸ The Israelites said to Samuel, "Don't turn a deaf ear to us! Don't stop crying to the LORD our God for us! Ask him to save us from the Philistines!"

⁹ Then Samuel took a lamb, one still feeding on milk, and sacrificed it as a burnt offering to the LORD. Samuel cried

to the LORD on behalf of Israel, and the LORD answered him.

¹⁰ While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines came to fight against Israel. On that day the LORD thundered loudly at the Philistines and threw them into such confusion that they were defeated by Israel.

¹¹ Israel's soldiers left Mizpah, pursued the Philistines, and killed them as far as Beth Car.

¹² Then Samuel took a rock and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer [Rock of Help] and said, "Until now the LORD has helped us."

¹³ The power of the Philistines was crushed, so they didn't come into Israel's territory again. The LORD restrained the Philistines as long as Samuel lived.

¹⁴ The cities between Ekron and Gath which the Philistines took from Israel were returned to Israel. And Israel

recovered the territory controlled by these cities from the Philistines. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

¹⁵ Samuel judged Israel as long as he lived.

¹⁶ Every year he went around to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah in order to judge Israel in all those places.

¹⁷ Then he would return home to Ramah. There, too, he judged Israel. And in Ramah he built an altar to the LORD.

8 ¹ When Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel.

² The name of his firstborn son was Joel; the name of his second son was Abijah. They were judges in Beersheba.

³ The sons didn't follow their father's example but turned to dishonest ways of making money. They took bribes and denied people justice.

⁴ Then all the leaders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.

⁵ They told him, "You're old, and your sons aren't following your example. Now appoint a king to judge us so that we will be like all the other nations."

⁶ But Samuel considered it wrong for them to request a king to judge them. So Samuel prayed to the LORD.

⁷ The LORD told Samuel, "Listen to everything the people are saying to you. They haven't rejected you; they've rejected me.

⁸ They're doing just what they've done since I took them out of Egypt—leaving me and serving other gods.

⁹ Listen to them now, but be sure to warn them and tell them about the rights of a king."

¹⁰ Then Samuel told the people who had asked him for a king everything the LORD had said.

¹¹ Samuel said, "These are the rights of a king: He will draft your sons, make them serve on his chariots and horses, and make them run ahead of his chariots.

¹² He will appoint them to be his officers over 1,000 or over 50 soldiers, to plow his ground and harvest his crops, and to make weapons and equipment for his chariots.

¹³ He will take your daughters and have them make perfumes, cook, and bake.

¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields, vineyards, and olive orchards and give them to his officials.

¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and wine and give it to his aids and officials.

¹⁶ He will take your male and female slaves, your best cattle, and your donkeys for his own use.

¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks. In addition, you will be his servants.

¹⁸ "When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king whom you have chosen for yourselves. The LORD will not answer you when that day comes."

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. They said, "No, we want a king!

²⁰ Then we, too, will be like all the other nations. Our king will judge us, lead us out to war, and fight our battles."

²¹ When Samuel heard everything the people had to say, he reported it privately to the LORD.

²² The LORD told him, "Listen to them, and give them a king." Then Samuel told the people of Israel, "Go back to your own cities."

9¹ There was a man from the tribe of Benjamin whose name was Kish. He was a son of Abiel, grandson of Zeror, and great-grandson of Becorath, whose father was Aphiah, a descendant of Benjamin. Kish was a powerful man.

² He had a son named Saul, a handsome, young man. No man in Israel was more handsome than Saul. He stood a head taller than everyone else.

³ When some donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish were lost, Kish told Saul, "Take one of the servants with you, and go look for the donkeys."

⁴ They went through the mountains of Ephraim and the region of Shalisha without finding the donkeys. Then Saul and his servant went through the region of Shaalim, but the donkeys weren't there. The men went through the territory of Benjamin but still didn't find them.

⁵ When they came to the territory of Zuph, Saul told his servant who was with him, "Let's go back, or my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and worry about us instead."

⁶ The servant responded, "There's a man of God in this city, a highly respected man. Everything he says is sure to happen. Let's go there. Maybe he'll tell us which way we should go."

⁷ "If we go," Saul asked his servant, "what could we bring the man since the food in our sacks is gone? There's no present we can bring the man of God. What do we have?"

⁸ The servant again answered Saul, "Look, here! I have one-tenth of an ounce of silver. I'll give it to the man of God. Then he'll tell us where to find the donkeys."

⁹ (Formerly in Israel, when a person went to ask God a question, he would say, "Come, let's go to the seer," because a person we now call a prophet used to be called a seer.)

¹⁰ Saul told his servant, "That's a good idea! Come on, let's go." They went to the city where the man of God was.

¹¹ As they were going up the hill to the city, they met girls coming out to get water. They asked the girls, "Is the seer here?"

¹² The girls answered, "He's there ahead of you. Hurry! He just went into the city today since the people are offering a sacrifice on the worship site.

¹³ As you go into the city, you can find him before he goes to the worship site to eat. The people will not eat until he comes, since he blesses the sacrifice. Then those who are invited may eat. Go. You should be able to find him now."

¹⁴ So Saul and his servant went to the city. As they entered it, Samuel was coming toward them on his way to the worship site.

¹⁵ Now, the LORD had revealed the following message to Samuel one day before Saul came:

¹⁶ "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the territory of Benjamin. Anoint him to be ruler of my people Israel. He will save my people from the Philistines because I've seen my people's suffering and their cry has come to me."

¹⁷ When Samuel noticed Saul, the LORD told him, "There's the man I told you about. This man will govern my people."

¹⁸ Saul approached Samuel inside the gateway and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is."

¹⁹ Samuel replied, "I'm the seer. Go ahead of me to the worship site. You will eat with me today. In the morning I'll let you go after I tell you all that's on your mind."

²⁰ Don't trouble yourself about the donkeys that were lost three days ago because they've been found. Who will have all that is desirable in Israel? Won't it be you and your father's family?"

²¹ Saul replied, "I am a man from the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe of Israel. My family is the most insignificant of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin. So why are you saying such things to me?"

²² Samuel brought Saul and his servant to the banquet hall and had them sit at the head of the guests—about 30 people.

²³ Samuel said to the cook, "Bring me the portion of the sacrificial meat that I gave you and told you to put aside."

²⁴ So the cook picked up the leg and thigh and laid it in front of Saul. Samuel said, "This was kept in order to be laid in front of you. Eat it. When I invited

people to the feast, I set it aside for you." Saul ate with Samuel that day.

²⁵ Then they left the worship site for the city. They spread blankets on the roof for Saul, and he slept there.

²⁶ At dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get up! It's time for me to send you away." Saul got up, and both he and Samuel went outside.

²⁷ As they were going toward the city limits, Samuel told Saul, "Have the servant go ahead of you." (He went ahead.) "But you stay here, and I will tell you God's word."

10 ¹ Samuel took a flask of olive oil, poured it on Saul's head, kissed him, and said, "The LORD has anointed you to be ruler of his people Israel. You will rule his people and save them from all their enemies. This will be the sign that the LORD has anointed you to be ruler of his people.

² When you leave me today, two men will be at Rachel's grave on the border of Benjamin at Zelzah. They'll tell you, 'We've found the donkeys you went looking for. Your father no longer cares about them. Instead, he's worried about you. He keeps asking, "What can I do to find my son?"'

³ Keep going until you come to the oak tree at Tabor. There you will find three men on their way to worship God at Bethel: One will be carrying three young goats, one will be carrying three loaves of bread, and one will be carrying a full wineskin.

⁴ They will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you should accept from them.

⁵ After that, you will come to the hill of God, where the Philistines have a military post. When you arrive at the city, you will meet a group of prophets

prophesying as they come from the worship site. They will be led by men playing a harp, a tambourine, a flute, and a lyre.

⁶ Then the LORD'S Spirit will come over you. You will be a different person while you prophesy with them.

⁷ When these signs happen to you, do what you must, because God is with you.

⁸ Go ahead of me to Gilgal. Then I will come to sacrifice burnt offerings and make fellowship offerings. Wait seven days until I come to tell you what to do."

⁹ When Saul turned around to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's attitude. That day all these signs happened.

¹⁰ When Saul came to the hill, a group of prophets came to meet him, and God's Spirit came over him. He prophesied with them.

¹¹ When all who had known him before saw how he prophesied with the

prophets, the people asked one another, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul one of the prophets?"

¹² But a man from that place asked, "But who's the chief prophet?" So it became a proverb: "Is Saul one of the prophets?"

¹³ And when he had finished prophesying, he came to the worship site.

¹⁴ Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where did you go?" Saul answered, "To look for the donkeys, and when we couldn't find them, we went to Samuel."

¹⁵ Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."

¹⁶ "He assured us the donkeys had been found," Saul answered his uncle. But Saul didn't tell him what Samuel said about his becoming king.

¹⁷ Samuel called the people to come into the presence of the LORD at Mizpah.

¹⁸ He said to the Israelites, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I brought Israel out of Egypt and rescued you from the power of the Egyptians and all the kings who were oppressing you.

¹⁹ But now you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your troubles and distresses. You said, 'No! Place a king over us.' Now then, stand in front of the LORD by your tribes and family groups."

²⁰ When Samuel had all the tribes of Israel come forward, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.

²¹ When he had the tribe of Benjamin come forward by families, the family of Matri was chosen. Then Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen. They looked for him but couldn't find him.

²² They asked the LORD again, "Has he arrived here yet?" The LORD answered, "He's hiding among the baggage."

²³ They ran and got him from there. As he stood among the people, he was a head taller than everyone else.

²⁴ Samuel asked the people, "Do you see whom the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." Then all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

²⁵ Samuel explained the laws concerning kingship to the people. He wrote the laws on a scroll, which he placed in front of the LORD. Then Samuel sent the people back to their homes.

²⁶ Saul also went home to Gibeah. With him went some soldiers whose hearts God had touched.

²⁷ However, some good-for-nothing people asked, "How can this man save us?" They despised him and wouldn't

bring him presents, but he didn't respond.

11 ¹ King Nahash of Ammon was severely oppressing the tribes of Gad and Reuben. He would poke out everyone's right eye and allow no one to rescue Israel. There was no one among the Israelites east of the Jordan River whose right eye King Nahash of Ammon had not poked out. However, seven thousand men had escaped from the Ammonites and gone to Jabesh Gilead. About a month later Nahash the Ammonite blockaded Jabesh Gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we'll serve you."

² Nahash the Ammonite responded, "I'll make a treaty with you on this one condition: I'll poke out everyone's right eye and bring disgrace on all Israel."

³ The leaders of Jabesh told him, "Give us seven days so that we can send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. And if there's no one to save us, we'll surrender to you."

⁴ The messengers came to Saul's town, Gibeah. When they told the people the news, the people cried loudly.

⁵ Just then Saul was coming from the field behind some oxen. "Why are these people crying?" Saul asked. So they told him the news about the men of Jabesh.

⁶ When he heard this news, God's Spirit came over him, and he became very angry.

⁷ Saul took a pair of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent them by messengers throughout the territory of Israel with the following message: "This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who doesn't follow Saul and Samuel into battle." So the people became terrified

by the LORD, and they came out united behind Saul.

⁸ When Saul counted them at Bezek, there were 300,000 troops from Israel and 30,000 troops from Judah.

⁹ They told the messengers who had come, "This is what you are to say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun gets hot, you will be rescued.'" When the men of Jabesh received the message, they were overjoyed.

¹⁰ They said to Nahash, "Tomorrow we'll surrender to you, and you may do to us whatever you think is right."

¹¹ The next day Saul arranged the army in three divisions. They came into the Ammonite camp during the morning hours and continued to defeat the Ammonites until it got hot that day. The survivors were so scattered that no two of them were left together.

¹² Then the people asked Samuel, "Who said that Saul shouldn't rule us? Let us have them, and we'll kill them."

¹³ But Saul said, "No one will be killed today, because today the LORD saved Israel."

¹⁴ Samuel told the troops, "Come, let's go to Gilgal and there acknowledge Saul's kingship."

¹⁵ Then all the troops went to Gilgal, and there in the LORD'S presence, they confirmed Saul as their king. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings to the LORD. Saul and all of Israel's soldiers celebrated.

12 ¹ Then Samuel said to all Israel, "I have listened to everything you have said to me and appointed a king over you.

² And now, here is the king who will lead you. I am old and gray, but my sons

are with you. I have led you from my youth until this day.

³ Here I am. Testify against me in front of the LORD and in front of his anointed king. Did I take anyone's ox? Did I take anyone's donkey? Did I cheat or oppress anyone? Did I take a bribe from anyone to look the other way? If so, I will give it all back."

⁴ They answered, "You didn't cheat us, oppress us, or take anything from anyone."

⁵ Samuel told them, "The LORD is a witness to what you've said, and his anointed king is a witness today that you've found nothing in my hands." "He is a witness," they answered.

⁶ Samuel told the people, "The LORD appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your ancestors out of Egypt.

⁷ Now, stand up while I put you on trial in front of the LORD and cite all the

righteous things the LORD did for you and your ancestors.

⁸ When your ancestors went with Jacob to Egypt and were oppressed, they cried out to the LORD, who sent Moses and Aaron to bring them out of Egypt. The LORD settled them in this place.

⁹ But they forgot the LORD their God. So he handed them over to Sisera, who was the commander of the army of Hazor, to the Philistines, and to the king of Moab. All of them fought against your ancestors.

¹⁰ Then they cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned. We have abandoned the LORD and served other gods and goddesses—the Baals and the Astartes. But rescue us from our enemies now, and we will serve you.'

¹¹ "Then the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah, and Samuel and

rescued you from your enemies on every side so that you could live securely.

¹² But when you saw King Nahash of Ammon coming to attack you, you told me, 'No, a king should rule over us,' though the LORD your God was your king.

¹³ "Now, here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for. See, the LORD has put a king over you.

¹⁴ If you fear the LORD, serve him, obey him, and don't rebel against what he says, then you and your king will follow the LORD your God.

¹⁵ But if you don't obey the LORD, if you rebel against what he says, then the LORD will be against you as he was against your ancestors.

¹⁶ Now then, stand still and watch this great thing the LORD is going to do right before your eyes.

¹⁷ Isn't the wheat being harvested today? I will call on the LORD, and he'll send thunder and rain. Then you will realize what a wicked thing you did in the LORD'S presence when you asked for a king."

¹⁸ Then Samuel called on the LORD. That day the LORD sent thunder and rain so that all the people feared the LORD and Samuel very much.

¹⁹ All the people pleaded with Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your God for us so that we will not die. We have added another evil thing to all our other sins by asking for a king."

²⁰ "Don't be afraid," Samuel told the people. "You did do all these evil things. But don't turn away from the LORD. Instead, serve the LORD wholeheartedly.

²¹ Don't turn away to follow other gods. They can't help or rescue you, because they don't exist.

²² For the sake of his great name, the LORD will not abandon his people, because the LORD wants to make you his people.

²³ It would be unthinkable for me to sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. I will go on teaching you the way that is good and right.

²⁴ Fear the LORD, and serve him sincerely. Consider the great things he did for you.

²⁵ But if you go on doing what is evil, you and your king will be wiped out."

13 ¹ Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he was king of Israel forty–two years.

² Saul chose 3,000 men from Israel; 2,000 of them were stationed with Saul at Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and 1,000 were stationed with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. But the rest of the people he sent home.

³ Jonathan defeated the Philistine troops at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. With the sounding of the ram's horn throughout the land, Saul announced, "Listen, Hebrews!"

⁴ (So all Israel listened.) "I, Saul, have defeated the Philistine troops, and now Israel has become offensive to the Philistines!" All the troops rallied behind Saul at Gilgal.

⁵ The Philistines assembled to fight against Israel. They had 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and as many soldiers as the sand on the seashore. They camped at Michmash, east of Beth Aven.

⁶ When the Israelites saw they were in trouble because the army was hard-pressed, they hid in caves, in thorny thickets, among rocks, in pits, and in cisterns.

⁷ Some Hebrews crossed the Jordan River into the territory of Gad and

Gilead. But Saul remained in Gilgal, and all the people who followed him trembled in fear.

⁸ He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel. But Samuel had not come to Gilgal, and the troops began to scatter.

⁹ Then Saul said, "Bring me the animals for the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." So he sacrificed the burnt offering.

¹⁰ As he finished sacrificing the burnt offering, Samuel came, and Saul went to greet him.

¹¹ Samuel asked, "What have you done?" Saul replied, "I saw the troops were scattering. You didn't come when you said you would, and the Philistines were assembling at Michmash.

¹² So I thought, 'Now, the Philistines will come against me at Gilgal, but I haven't sought the LORD'S favor.' I felt pressured into sacrificing the burnt offering."

¹³ "You did a foolish thing," Samuel told Saul. "You didn't follow the command of the LORD your God. If you had, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel permanently.

¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not last. The LORD has searched for a man after his own heart. The LORD has appointed him as ruler of his people, because you didn't follow the command of the LORD."

¹⁵ Samuel left Gilgal. The rest of the people followed Saul to meet the soldiers. They went from Gilgal to Gibeah in Benjamin, where Saul counted the troops who were still with him—about 600 men.

¹⁶ Saul, his son Jonathan, and the troops who were with them stayed at Geba in Benjamin while the Philistines camped at Michmash.

¹⁷ Raiding parties left the Philistine camp in three columns. One column turned onto the road to Ophrah to the region of Shual.

¹⁸ Another column turned onto the road to Beth Horon. And one turned onto the road toward the region that overlooks the valley of Zeboim and the desert.

¹⁹ No blacksmith could be found in the entire land of Israel. In this way the Philistines kept the Hebrews from making swords and spears.

²⁰ Everyone in Israel had to go to the Philistines to sharpen the blade of his plow, his mattock, ax, or sickle.

²¹ The price was a pim for plow blades and mattocks, and one-tenth of an ounce of silver to sharpen a mattock or set a metal point on a cattle-prod.

²² So on the day of battle, not one sword or spear could be found among

all the troops who were with Saul and Jonathan. But Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

²³ Now, Philistine troops had gone out to the pass at Michmash.

14 ¹ One day Saul's son Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Let's go to the Philistine military post on the other side." But Jonathan didn't tell his father he was going.

² Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree at Migron. He had with him about 600 men

³ in addition to Ahijah, the son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub, who was the son of Phinehas and the grandson of Eli, the LORD'S priest at Shiloh. Ahijah was wearing the priestly ephod. The troops didn't know Jonathan had left.

⁴ There was a cliff on each side of the mountain pass where Jonathan searched for a way to cross over to attack the

Philistine military post. The name of one cliff was Bozez, and the name of the other was Seneh.

⁵ One cliff stood like a pillar on the north facing Michmash, the other stood south facing Geba.

⁶ Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Let's go to the military post of these uncircumcised people. Maybe the LORD will act on our behalf. The LORD can win a victory with a few men as well as with many."

⁷ His armorbearer answered him, "Do whatever you have in mind. Go ahead! I agree with you."

⁸ Jonathan continued, "Listen, we'll cross over to the Philistines and show ourselves to them.

⁹ If they say to us, 'Stay where you are until we come to you,' then we'll stay where we are and not go up to them.

¹⁰ But if they say to us, 'Come up here,' then we'll go up, because that will be our sign that the LORD has handed them over to us."

¹¹ So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine troops. The Philistines said, "Look, some Hebrews are coming out of the holes they were hiding in."

¹² "Come up here," the men of the military post said to Jonathan and his armorbearer. "We have something to show you." Jonathan told his armorbearer, "Follow me up to the military post because the LORD has handed the troops over to Israel."

¹³ Jonathan climbed up the cliff, and his armorbearer followed him. Jonathan struck down the Philistines. His armorbearer, who was behind him, finished killing them.

¹⁴ In their first slaughter Jonathan and his armorbearer killed about twenty men within about a hundred yards.

¹⁵ There was panic among the army in the field and all the troops in the military post. The raiding party also trembled in fear. The earth shook, and there was a panic sent from God.

¹⁶ Saul's watchmen at Gibeah in Benjamin could see the crowd in the Philistine camp dispersing in all directions.

¹⁷ "Look around," Saul told the troops who were with him, "and see who has left our camp." They looked and found that Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there.

¹⁸ Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the priestly ephod," because Ahijah carried the ephod in front of Israel that day.

¹⁹ While Saul was talking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp

grew worse and worse. Then Saul said to the priest, "Remove your hand from the ephod."

²⁰ Saul and all the troops with him assembled and went into battle. They found Philistine soldiers killing their fellow soldiers in wild confusion.

²¹ The Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before this and had been stationed in the camp now joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

²² When all the men of Israel who had been hiding in the mountains of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they also pursued the Philistines in battle.

²³ So the LORD saved Israel that day. Now, the battle moved beyond Beth Aven.

²⁴ Israel's soldiers were driven hard that day. Saul made the troops swear,

"Cursed is anyone who eats food before the evening comes and before I've gotten revenge on my enemies." So none of his troops tasted any food.

²⁵ The entire land had honeycombs, and there was honey on the ground.

²⁶ When the troops entered the woods, the honey was flowing. But no one put his hand to his mouth, because the troops were afraid of violating their oath.

²⁷ Jonathan hadn't heard that his father forced the troops to take an oath. So he stretched out the tip of the staff he had in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb. When he put it to his mouth, his eyes lit up.

²⁸ Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father forced the troops to take a solemn oath: 'Cursed is anyone who eats food today.'" Now, the army was exhausted.

²⁹ Jonathan answered, "My father has brought trouble to the country. See how my eyes lit up when I tasted a little of this honey?"

³⁰ If only the troops had eaten some of the enemies' food, which they found today. We would have killed more Philistines."

³¹ That day they struck down the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon, but the troops were thoroughly exhausted.

³² So the troops seized the Philistines' belongings. They took sheep, cows, and calves, and butchered them on the ground. The troops ate the meat with blood still in it.

³³ Some soldiers told Saul, "The troops are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with blood in it." Saul replied, "You have been unfaithful. Roll a large rock over to me now."

³⁴ Then Saul said, "Spread out through the troops, and tell them, 'Each of you, bring me your ox or your sheep, and butcher it here, and eat. But don't sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood in it.'" So each of the soldiers brought his ox with him that night and butchered it there.

³⁵ Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had built an altar to the LORD.

³⁶ Saul said to his men, "Let's attack the Philistines tonight and take their possessions until the light of dawn. And let's not leave any of them alive." "Do whatever you think is best," they responded. But the priest said, "Let's consult God first."

³⁷ Then Saul asked God, "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to Israel?" But he received no answer that day.

³⁸ So Saul ordered all the leaders of the troops, "Come here! Find out what sin was committed today.

³⁹ I solemnly swear, as the LORD and Savior of Israel lives, even if it is my son Jonathan who did it, he must die." But not one of the soldiers replied.

⁴⁰ Saul told all Israel, "You stand on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will stand on the other side." "Do whatever you think is best," the troops responded to Saul.

⁴¹ Then Saul said to the LORD, "O God of Israel, why didn't you answer me today? If this sin is mine or my son Jonathan's, LORD God of Israel, let the priest draw Urim. But if it is in your people Israel, let him draw Thummim." Jonathan and Saul were chosen, and the people were freed from guilt.

⁴² "Choose between me and my son Jonathan," Saul said. Then Jonathan was chosen.

⁴³ "Tell me," Saul asked Jonathan. "What did you do?" So Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey on the tip of the staff I had in my hand. And for that I am to die?"

⁴⁴ Saul said, "May God do worse things to me than are in this curse if you do not die, Jonathan!"

⁴⁵ The troops asked Saul, "Should Jonathan die after he has won this great victory in Israel? That would be unthinkable! We solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, not a single hair of his head will fall to the ground, because he has done this with God's help today." So the troops rescued Jonathan from death.

⁴⁶ Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines. So the Philistines returned to their own land.

⁴⁷ When Saul had taken over the kingdom of Israel, he fought against his enemies on every side—against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he was victorious.

⁴⁸ He acted forcefully and defeated Amalek. He rescued Israel from the enemies who looted their possessions.

⁴⁹ Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. The names of his two daughters were Merab (the firstborn daughter) and Michal (the younger daughter).

⁵⁰ The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of his army was Abner, the son of Saul's uncle Ner.

⁵¹ Kish (Saul's father) and Ner (Abner's father) were the sons of Abiel.

⁵² There was intense warfare with the Philistines as long as Saul lived.

Whenever any warrior or any skilled fighting man came to Saul's attention, Saul would enlist him in the army.

15 ¹ Samuel told Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king of his people Israel. Now listen to the LORD'S words.

² This is what the LORD of Armies says: I will punish Amalek for what they did to Israel. They blocked Israel's way after the Israelites came from Egypt.

³ Now go and attack Amalek. Claim everything they have for God by destroying it. Don't spare them, but kill men and women, infants and children, cows and sheep, camels and donkeys."

⁴ Saul organized the troops, and he counted them at Telaim: 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men from Judah.

⁵ Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley.

⁶ Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Get away from the Amalekites so that I won't destroy you with them. You were kind to all the Israelites when they came from Egypt." So the Kenites left the Amalekites.

⁷ Saul attacked the Amalekites from Havilah to Shur, east of Egypt.

⁸ He captured King Agag of Amalek alive. But he claimed all the people for God by destroying them.

⁹ Saul and the army spared Agag and the best sheep and cows, the fattened animals, the lambs, and all the best property. The army refused to claim them for God by destroying them. But everything that was worthless and weak the army did claim for God and destroy.

¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke to Samuel:

¹¹ "I regret that I made Saul king. He turned away from me and did not carry

out my instructions." Samuel was angry, and he prayed to the LORD all night.

¹² Early in the morning he got up to meet Saul. Samuel was told, "Saul went to Carmel to set up a monument in his honor. Then he left there and went to Gilgal."

¹³ Samuel came to Saul, who said, "The LORD bless you. I carried out the LORD'S instructions."

¹⁴ However, Samuel asked, "But what is this sound of sheep in my ears and this sound of cows that I hear?"

¹⁵ Saul answered, "The army brought them from the Amalekites. They spared the best sheep and cows to sacrifice to the LORD your God. But the rest they claimed for God and destroyed."

¹⁶ "Be quiet," Samuel told Saul, "and let me tell you what the LORD told me last night." "Speak," Saul replied.

¹⁷ Samuel said, "Even though you don't consider yourself great, you were the head of Israel's tribes. The LORD anointed you king of Israel.

¹⁸ And the LORD sent you on a mission. He said, 'Claim those sinners, the Amalekites, for me by destroying them. Wage war against them until they're wiped out.'

¹⁹ Why didn't you obey the LORD? Why have you taken their belongings and done what the LORD considers evil?"

²⁰ "But I did obey the LORD," Saul told Samuel. "I went where the LORD sent me, brought back King Agag of Amalek, and claimed the Amalekites for God.

²¹ The army took some of their belongings—the best sheep and cows were claimed for God—in order to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

²² Then Samuel said, "Is the LORD as delighted with burnt offerings and

sacrifices as he would be with your obedience? To follow instructions is better than to sacrifice. To obey is better than sacrificing the fat of rams.

²³ The sin of black magic is rebellion. Wickedness and idolatry are arrogance. Because you rejected the word of the LORD, he rejects you as king."

²⁴ Then Saul told Samuel, "I have sinned by not following the LORD'S command or your instructions. I was afraid of the people and listened to them.

²⁵ Now please forgive my sin and come back with me so that I may worship the LORD."

²⁶ Samuel told Saul, "I will not go back with you because you rejected what the LORD told you. So the LORD rejects you as king of Israel."

²⁷ When Samuel turned to leave, Saul grabbed the hem of his robe, and it tore.

²⁸ Samuel told him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today. He has given it to your neighbor who is better than you.

²⁹ In addition, the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind, because he is not a mortal who changes his mind."

³⁰ Saul replied, "I have sinned! Now please honor me in front of the leaders of my people and in front of Israel. Come back with me, and let me worship the LORD your God."

³¹ Then Samuel turned and followed Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

³² "Bring me King Agag of Amalek," Samuel said. Agag came to him trembling. "Surely, the bitterness of death is past," Agag said.

³³ But Samuel said, "As your sword made women childless, so your mother will be made childless among women."

And Samuel cut Agag in pieces in the presence of the LORD at Gilgal.

³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went to his home at Gibeah.

³⁵ Samuel didn't see Saul again before he died, though Samuel mourned over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king of Israel.

16 ¹ The LORD asked Samuel, "How long are you going to mourn for Saul now that I have rejected him as king of Israel? Fill a flask with olive oil and go. I'm sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem because I've selected one of his sons to be king."

² "How can I go?" Samuel asked. "When Saul hears about it, he'll kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I've come to sacrifice to the LORD.'"

³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice. I will reveal to you what you should do, and

you will anoint for me the one I point out to you."

⁴ Samuel did what the LORD told him. When he came to Bethlehem, the leaders of the city, trembling with fear, greeted him and said, "May peace be with you."

⁵ "Greetings," he replied, "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Perform the ceremonies to make yourselves holy, and come with me to the sacrifice." He performed the ceremonies for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he saw Eliab and thought, "Certainly, here in the LORD'S presence is his anointed king."

⁷ But the LORD told Samuel, "Don't look at his appearance or how tall he is, because I have rejected him. God does not see as humans see. Humans look

at outward appearances, but the LORD looks into the heart."

⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and brought him to Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."

⁹ Then Jesse had Shammah come to Samuel. "The LORD has not chosen this one either," Samuel said.

¹⁰ So Jesse brought seven more of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel told Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these.

¹¹ "Are these all the sons you have?" "There's still the youngest one," Jesse answered. "He's tending the sheep." Samuel told Jesse, "Send someone to get him. We won't continue until he gets here."

¹² So Jesse sent for him. He had a healthy complexion, attractive eyes, and a handsome appearance. The LORD said, "Go ahead, anoint him. He is the one."

¹³ Samuel took the flask of olive oil and anointed David in the presence of his brothers. The LORD'S Spirit came over David and stayed with him from that day on. Then Samuel left for Ramah.

¹⁴ Now, the LORD'S Spirit had left Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.

¹⁵ Saul's officials told him, "An evil spirit from God is tormenting you.

¹⁶ Your Majesty, why don't you command us to look for a man who can play the lyre well? When the evil spirit from God comes to you, he'll strum a tune, and you'll feel better."

¹⁷ Saul told his officials, "Please find me a man who can play well and bring him to me."

¹⁸ One of the officials said, "I know one of Jesse's sons from Bethlehem who can play well. He's a courageous man and a

warrior. He has a way with words, he is handsome, and the LORD is with him."

¹⁹ Saul sent messengers to Jesse to say, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep."

²⁰ Jesse took six bushels of bread, a full wineskin, and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul.

²¹ David came to Saul and served him. Saul loved him very much and made David his armorbearer.

²² Saul sent this message to Jesse, "Please let David stay with me because I have grown fond of him."

²³ Whenever God's spirit came to Saul, David took the lyre and strummed a tune. Saul got relief from his terror and felt better, and the evil spirit left him.

17 ¹ The Philistines assembled their armies for war. They assembled at Socoh, which is in Judah, and camped

between Socoh and Azekah at Ephes Dammim.

² So Saul and the army of Israel assembled and camped in the Elah Valley. They formed a battle line to fight the Philistines.

³ The Philistines were stationed on a hill on one side, and the Israelites were stationed on a hill on the other side. There was a ravine between the two of them.

⁴ The Philistine army's champion came out of their camp. His name was Goliath from Gath. He was ten feet tall.

⁵ He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore a bronze coat of armor scales weighing 125 pounds.

⁶ On his legs he had bronze shin guards and on his back a bronze javelin.

⁷ The shaft of his spear was like the beam used by weavers. The head of his spear was made of 15 pounds of iron.

The man who carried his shield walked ahead of him.

⁸ Goliath stood and called to the Israelites, "Why do you form a battle line? Am I not a Philistine, and aren't you Saul's servants? Choose a man, and let him come down to fight me.

⁹ If he can fight me and kill me, then we will be your slaves. But if I overpower him and kill him, then you will be our slaves and serve us."

¹⁰ The Philistine added, "I challenge the Israelite battle line today. Send out a man so that we can fight each other."

¹¹ When Saul and all the Israelites heard what this Philistine said, they were gripped with fear.

¹² David was a son of a man named Jesse from the region of Ephrath and the city of Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's day he was an old man.

¹³ Jesse's three oldest sons joined Saul's army for the battle. The firstborn was Eliab, the second was Abinadab, the third was Shammah,

¹⁴ and David was the youngest. The three oldest joined Saul's army.

¹⁵ David went back and forth from Saul's camp to Bethlehem, where he tended his father's flock.

¹⁶ Each morning and evening for 40 days, the Philistine came forward and made his challenge.

¹⁷ Jesse told his son David, "Take this half-bushel of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread to your brothers. Take them to your brothers in the camp right away.

¹⁸ And take these ten cheeses to the captain of the regiment. See how your brothers are doing, and bring back some news about them.

¹⁹ They, along with Saul and all the soldiers of Israel, are in the Elah Valley fighting the Philistines."

²⁰ David got up early in the morning and had someone else watch the sheep. He took the food and went, as Jesse ordered him. He went to the camp as the army was going out to the battle line shouting their war cry.

²¹ Israel and the Philistines formed their battle lines facing each other.

²² David left the supplies behind in the hands of the quartermaster, ran to the battle line, and greeted his brothers.

²³ While he was talking to them, the Philistine champion, Goliath from Gath, came from the battle lines of the Philistines. He repeated his words, and David heard them.

²⁴ When all the men of Israel saw Goliath, they fled from him because they were terrified.

²⁵ The men of Israel said, "Did you see that man coming from the Philistine lines? He keeps coming to challenge Israel. The king will make the man who kills this Philistine very rich. He will give his daughter to that man to marry and elevate the social status of his family."

²⁶ David asked the men who were standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and gets rid of Israel's disgrace? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should challenge the army of the living God?"

²⁷ The soldiers repeated to David how the man who kills Goliath would be treated.

²⁸ Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard David talking to the men. Then Eliab became angry with David. "Why did you come here," he asked him, "and with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how

overconfident and headstrong you are. You came here just to see the battle."

²⁹ "What have I done now?" David snapped at him. "Didn't I merely ask a question?"

³⁰ He turned to face another man and asked the same question, and the other soldiers gave him the same answer.

³¹ What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, who then sent for him.

³² David told Saul, "No one should be discouraged because of this. I will go and fight this Philistine."

³³ Saul responded to David, "You can't fight this Philistine. You're just a boy, but he's been a warrior since he was your age."

³⁴ David replied to Saul, "I am a shepherd for my father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock,

³⁵ I went after it, struck it, and rescued the sheep from its mouth. If it attacked me, I took hold of its mane, struck it, and killed it.

³⁶ I have killed lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them because he has challenged the army of the living God."

³⁷ David added, "The LORD, who saved me from the lion and the bear, will save me from this Philistine." "Go," Saul told David, "and may the LORD be with you."

³⁸ Saul put his battle tunic on David; he put a bronze helmet on David's head and dressed him in armor.

³⁹ David fastened Saul's sword over his clothes and tried to walk, but he had never practiced doing this. "I can't walk in these things," David told Saul. "I've never had any practice doing this." So David took all those things off.

⁴⁰ He took his stick with him, picked out five smooth stones from the riverbed, and put them in his shepherd's bag. With a sling in his hand, he approached the Philistine.

⁴¹ The Philistine, preceded by the man carrying his shield, was coming closer and closer to David.

⁴² When the Philistine got a good look at David, he despised him. After all, David was a young man with a healthy complexion and good looks.

⁴³ The Philistine asked David, "Am I a dog that you come to attack me with sticks?" So the Philistine called on his gods to curse David.

⁴⁴ "Come on," the Philistine told David, "and I'll give your body to the birds."

⁴⁵ David told the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the

LORD of Armies, the God of the army of Israel, whom you have insulted.

⁴⁶ Today the LORD will hand you over to me. I will strike you down and cut off your head. And this day I will give the dead bodies of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals. The whole world will know that Israel has a God.

⁴⁷ Then everyone gathered here will know that the LORD can save without sword or spear, because the LORD determines every battle's outcome. He will hand all of you over to us."

⁴⁸ When the Philistine moved closer in order to attack, David quickly ran toward the opposing battle line to attack the Philistine.

⁴⁹ Then David reached into his bag, took out a stone, hurled it from his sling, and struck the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank into Goliath's forehead, and he fell to the ground on his face.

⁵⁰ So using only a sling and a stone, David proved to be stronger than the Philistine. David struck down and killed the Philistine, even though David didn't have a sword in his hand.

⁵¹ David ran and stood over the Philistine. He took Goliath's sword, pulled it out of its sheath, and made certain the Philistine was dead by cutting off his head. When the Philistines saw their hero had been killed, they fled.

⁵² Then the soldiers of Israel and Judah rose up, shouted a battle cry, and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Wounded Philistines lay on the road to Shaaraim and all the way to Gath and Ekron.

⁵³ When the Israelites came back from their pursuit of the Philistines, they looted all the goods in the Philistine camp.

⁵⁴ David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he kept Goliath's armor in his tent.

⁵⁵ As Saul watched David going out against the Philistine, he asked Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" Abner answered, "I solemnly swear, as you live, Your Majesty, I don't know."

⁵⁶ The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is."

⁵⁷ When David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner brought him to Saul. David had the Philistine's head in his hand.

⁵⁸ Saul asked him, "Whose son are you, young man?" "The son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem," David answered.

18 ¹ David finished talking to Saul. After that, Jonathan became David's closest friend. He loved David as much as he loved himself.

² (From that day on Saul kept David as his servant and didn't let him go back to his family.)

³ So Jonathan made a pledge of mutual loyalty with David because he loved him as much as he loved himself.

⁴ Jonathan took off the coat he had on and gave it to David along with his battle tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt.

⁵ David was successful wherever Saul sent him. Saul put him in charge of the fighting men. This pleased all the people, including Saul's officials.

⁶ As they arrived, David was returning from a campaign against the Philistines. Women from all of Israel's cities came to meet King Saul. They sang and danced, accompanied by tambourines, joyful music, and triangles.

⁷ The women who were celebrating sang, "Saul has defeated thousands but David tens of thousands!"

⁸ Saul became very angry because he considered this saying to be insulting. "To David they credit tens of thousands," he said, "but to me they credit only a few thousand. The only thing left for David is my kingdom."

⁹ From that day on Saul kept an eye on David.

¹⁰ The next day an evil spirit from God seized Saul. He began to prophesy in his house while David strummed a tune on the lyre as he did every day. Now, Saul had a spear in his hand.

¹¹ He raised the spear and thought, "I'll nail David to the wall." But David got away from him twice.

¹² Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul.

¹³ So he kept David away. He made David captain of a regiment. David led the troops out to battle and back again.

¹⁴ He was successful in everything he undertook because the LORD was with him.

¹⁵ Saul noticed how very successful he was and became even more afraid of him.

¹⁶ Everyone in Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in and out of battle.

¹⁷ Finally, Saul said to David, "Here is my oldest daughter Merab. I will give her to you as your wife if you prove yourself to be a warrior for me and fight the LORD'S battles." (Saul thought, "I must not lay a hand on him. Let the Philistines do that.")

¹⁸ "Who am I?" David asked Saul. "And how important are my relatives or my father's family in Israel that I should be the king's son-in-law?"

¹⁹ But when the time came to give Saul's daughter Merab to David, she was married to Adriel from Meholah.

²⁰ However, Saul's daughter Michal fell in love with David. When Saul was told about it, the news pleased him.

²¹ Saul thought, "I'll give her to David. She will trap him, and the Philistines will get him." So he said to David a second time, "You will now be my son-in-law."

²² Saul ordered his officers, "Talk to David in private. Tell him, 'The king likes you, and all his officers are fond of you. Become the king's son-in-law.'"

²³ When Saul's officers made it a point to say this, David asked, "Do you think it's easy to become the king's son-in-law? I am a poor and unimportant person."

²⁴ When the officers told Saul what David had said,

²⁵ Saul replied, "Tell David, 'The king doesn't want any payment for the bride

except 100 Philistine foreskins so that he can get revenge on his enemies.'" In this way Saul planned to have David fall into the hands of the Philistines.

²⁶ When his officers told David this, David concluded that it was acceptable to become the king's son-in-law. Before the time was up,

²⁷ David and his men went out and struck down 200 Philistines. David brought the foreskins, and they counted them out for the king so that David could become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal as his wife.

²⁸ Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David.

²⁹ Then Saul was even more afraid of David, and so Saul became David's constant enemy.

³⁰ The Philistine generals still went out to fight Israel. But whenever they went

out to fight, David was more successful than the rest of Saul's officers. So David gained a good reputation.

19 ¹ Saul told his son Jonathan and all his officers to kill David. But Saul's son Jonathan was very fond of David,

² so he reported to David, "My father Saul is trying to kill you. Please be careful tomorrow morning. Go into hiding, and stay out of sight.

³ I'll go out and stand beside my father in the field where you'll be. I'll speak with my father about you. If I find out anything, I'll tell you."

⁴ So Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul. "You should not commit a sin against your servant David," he said. "He hasn't sinned against you. Instead, he has done some very fine things for you:

⁵ He risked his life and killed the Philistine Goliath, and the LORD gave all Israel a great victory. When you saw it, you rejoiced. Why then should you sin by shedding David's innocent blood for no reason?"

⁶ Saul listened to Jonathan, and he promised, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, he will not be killed."

⁷ Jonathan told David all of this. Then Jonathan took David to Saul. So David was returned to his former status in Saul's court.

⁸ When war broke out again, David went to fight the Philistines. He defeated them so decisively that they fled from him.

⁹ Then an evil spirit from the LORD came over Saul while he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. David was strumming a tune.

¹⁰ Saul tried to nail David to the wall with his spear. But David dodged it, and Saul's spear struck the wall. David fled, escaping from Saul that night.

¹¹ Saul sent messengers to watch David's house and kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, advised him, "If you don't save yourself tonight, you'll be dead tomorrow!"

¹² So Michal lowered David through a window, and he ran away to escape.

¹³ Then Michal took some idols, laid them in the bed, put a goat-hair blanket at its head, and covered the idols with a garment.

¹⁴ When Saul sent messengers to get David, Michal said, "He's sick."

¹⁵ Then Saul sent the messengers back to see David themselves. Saul told them, "Bring him here to me in his bed so that I can kill him."

¹⁶ The messengers came, and there in the bed were the idols with the goat-hair blanket at its head.

¹⁷ Saul asked Michal, "Why did you betray me by sending my enemy away so that he could escape?" Michal answered, "He told me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'"

¹⁸ David escaped and went to Samuel at Ramah. He told Samuel everything Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to the pastures and lived there.

¹⁹ When it was reported to Saul that David was in the pastures at Ramah,

²⁰ Saul sent messengers to get David. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying with Samuel serving as their leader, God's Spirit came over Saul's messengers so that they also prophesied.

²¹ When they told Saul about this, he sent other messengers, but they also

prophesied. Saul even sent a third group of messengers, but they also prophesied.

²² Then he went to Ramah himself. He went as far as the big cistern in Secu and asked the people, "Where are Samuel and David?" He was told, "Over there in the pastures at Ramah."

²³ As he went toward the pastures at Ramah, God's Spirit came over him too. He continued his journey, prophesying until he came to the pastures at Ramah.

²⁴ He even took off his clothes as he prophesied in front of Samuel and lay there naked all day and all night. This is where the saying, "Is Saul one of the prophets?" came from.

20¹ David fled from the pastures at Ramah, came to Jonathan, and asked, "What have I done? What crime am I guilty of? What sin have I committed against your father that he's trying to kill me?"

² Jonathan answered, "That's unthinkable! You're not going to die! My father does nothing without telling me, whether it's important or not. Why should my father hide this from me? It's just not that way."

³ But David took an oath, saying, "Your father certainly knows that you support me, so he said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know about this. It will bring him distress.' But I solemnly swear, as the LORD and you live, I'm only one step away from death."

⁴ Jonathan said to David, "I'll do whatever you say."

⁵ David replied, "Tomorrow is the New Moon Festival, when I should sit and eat at the king's table. But let me go and hide in the countryside for two more nights."

⁶ If your father really misses me, tell him, 'David repeatedly begged me to let

him run to Bethlehem, his hometown, because his relatives are offering the annual sacrifice there.'

⁷ If he says, 'Good!' then I will be safe. But if he gets really angry, then you'll know for sure that he has decided to harm me.

⁸ Now, be kind to me. After all, you forced me into an agreement with the LORD. If I have committed any crime, kill me yourself. Why bother taking me to your father?"

⁹ Jonathan answered, "That's unthinkable! If I knew for sure that my father had decided to harm you, I would have told you about it."

¹⁰ Then David asked, "Who will tell me whether or not your father gives you a harsh answer?"

¹¹ Jonathan said, "Let's go out into the country." So they went out into the country.

¹² "As the LORD God of Israel is my witness," Jonathan continued, "I'll find out in the next two or three days how my father feels about you. If he does feel kindly toward you, then I will send someone to tell you.

¹³ If my father plans to harm you and I fail to tell you and send you away safely, may the LORD harm me even more. May the LORD be with you as he used to be with my father.

¹⁴ But as long as I live, promise me that you will show me kindness because of the LORD. And even when I die,

¹⁵ never stop being kind to my family. The Lord will wipe each of David's enemies off the face of the earth.

¹⁶ At that time, if Jonathan's name is cut off from David's family, then may the LORD punish David's house."

¹⁷ Once again Jonathan swore an oath to David because of his love for David.

He loved David as much as he loved himself.

¹⁸ "Tomorrow is the New Moon Festival," Jonathan told him, "and you will be missed when your seat is empty.

¹⁹ The day after tomorrow you will be missed even more. So go to the place where you hid on that other occasion, and stay by the rock.

²⁰ I will shoot three arrows from beside it toward a target.

²¹ Then I will send out a boy and say, 'Go, find the arrows.' Now, if I tell the boy, 'Look, the arrows are next to you; get them,' then come back with me. You will be safe, and there will be no trouble. I swear it, as the LORD lives.

²² But if I tell the boy, 'The arrows are next to you,' then go, because the LORD has sent you away.

²³ We have made a promise to each other, and the LORD is a witness between you and me forever."

²⁴ So David hid in the countryside. When the New Moon Festival came, King Saul sat down to eat the festival meal.

²⁵ He sat in his usual seat by the wall, while Jonathan stood. Abner sat beside Saul, but David's place was empty.

²⁶ Saul didn't say anything that day, thinking, "Something has happened to him so that he's unclean. He must be unclean."

²⁷ But on the second day of the month, David's place was still empty. Saul asked his son Jonathan, "Why hasn't Jesse's son come to the meal either yesterday or today?"

²⁸ Jonathan answered Saul, "David repeatedly begged me to let him go to Bethlehem.

²⁹ David said to me 'Please let me go. Our relatives will offer a sacrifice in the city, and my brother ordered me to be there. If you will permit it, please let me go to see my brothers.' This is why he hasn't come to your banquet."

³⁰ Then Saul got angry with Jonathan. "Son of a crooked and rebellious woman!" he called Jonathan. "I know you've sided with Jesse's son. You have no shame. You act as if you are your mother's son but not mine.

³¹ As long as Jesse's son lives on earth, neither you nor your right to be king is secure. Now, send some men to bring him to me. He's a dead man!"

³² Jonathan asked his father, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?"

³³ Saul raised his spear to strike him. Then Jonathan knew his father was determined to kill David.

³⁴ Jonathan got up from the table very angry and ate nothing that second day of the month. He was worried sick about David because Jonathan had been humiliated by his own father.

³⁵ In the morning Jonathan went out to the country to the place he and David had agreed on. Jonathan had a young boy with him.

³⁶ "Run," he told the boy, "please find the arrows I shoot." The boy ran, and Jonathan shot the arrow over him.

³⁷ When the boy reached the place where Jonathan's arrow had landed, Jonathan called after him, "The arrows are next to you!"

³⁸ Jonathan added, "Quick! Hurry up! Don't stand there!" Jonathan's young servant gathered the arrows and came to his master.

³⁹ The boy had no idea what was going on, but Jonathan and David understood.

⁴⁰ Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy. He told the boy, "Take them back into town."

⁴¹ When the boy had left, David came out from the south side of the rock and quickly bowed down three times with his face touching the ground. Then they kissed each other and cried together, but David cried the loudest.

⁴² "Go in peace!" Jonathan told David. "We have both taken an oath in the LORD'S name, saying, 'The LORD will be a witness between me and you and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'" So David left, and Jonathan went into the city.

21 ¹ David went to the priest Ahimelech at Nob. Ahimelech was trembling as he went to meet David. "Why are you alone?" he asked David. "Why is no one with you?"

² "The king ordered me to do something," David answered the priest Ahimelech, "and he told me, 'No one must know anything about this mission I'm sending you on and about the orders I've given you. I've stationed my young men at a certain place.'"

³ David added, "Now, what do you have to eat? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever you can find."

⁴ "I don't have any ordinary bread," the chief priest answered David. "But there is holy bread for the young men if they haven't had sexual intercourse today."

⁵ David answered the priest, "Of course women have been kept away from us as usual when we go on a mission. The young men's bodies are kept holy even on ordinary campaigns. How much more then will their bodies be holy today?"

⁶ So the priest gave him holy bread because he only had the bread of the

presence which had been taken from the LORD'S presence and replaced with warm bread that day.

⁷ That same day one of Saul's servants who was obligated to stay in the LORD'S presence was there. His name was Doeg. A foreman for Saul's shepherds, he was from Edom.

⁸ David asked Ahimelech, "Don't you have a spear or a sword here? I didn't take either my spear or any other weapon because the king's business was urgent."

⁹ The chief priest answered, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Elah Valley, is here. It is wrapped in a cloth behind the priestly ephod. If you want to take it, take it. There's no other weapon here." David said, "There's none like it. Let me have the sword."

¹⁰ That day David left. He was still fleeing from Saul when he came to King Achish of Gath.

¹¹ Achish's officers asked, "Isn't this David, the king of his country? He's the one they used to sing about in the dances: 'Saul has defeated thousands but David tens of thousands.'"

¹² When David realized what they had said, he was terrified of King Achish of Gath.

¹³ So he changed his behavior when he was in their presence and acted insane as long as he was under their authority. He scribbled on the doors of the city gate and let his spit run down his beard.

¹⁴ Achish said to his officers, "Look at him! Don't you see that he's insane? Why bring him to me?"

¹⁵ Do I have such a shortage of lunatics that you bring this man so that he can

show me he is insane? Does this man have to come into my house?"

22 ¹ So David escaped from that place and fled to the cave at Adullam. When his brothers and all the rest of his family heard about it, they went to him.

² Then everyone who was in trouble, in debt, or bitter about life joined him, and he became their commander. There were about four hundred men with him.

³ From there David went to Mizpah in Moab. He asked the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother stay with you until I know what God is going to do for me."

⁴ He brought them to the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was living in his fortified camp.

⁵ "Don't live in your fortified camp," the prophet Gad told David. "Go to the land

of Judah." So David went to the forest of Hereth.

⁶ Saul heard that David and his men had been found. Saul was staying in Gibeah under the tamarisk tree at the worship site with his spear in his hand and all his officials standing around him.

⁷ He said to his officials, "Listen here, men of Benjamin! Will Jesse's son give every one of you fields and vineyards? Will he make you all officers over a regiment or a battalion of soldiers?"

⁸ All of you are plotting against me, and no one informed me when my son entered into a loyalty pledge with Jesse's son. No one felt sorry for me and informed me that my son has encouraged my servant David to ambush me, as he's doing now."

⁹ Then Doeg from Edom, standing with Saul's officials, answered him, "I saw

Jesse's son when he came to Ahimelech, Ahitub's son, in Nob.

¹⁰ Ahimelech prayed to the LORD for David and gave him food and the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

¹¹ Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech, who was Ahitub's son, and his entire family who were the priests in Nob. All of them came to the king.

¹² Saul said, "Listen here, son of Ahitub!" "Yes, sir?" he responded.

¹³ Saul asked him, "Why did you and Jesse's son plot against me? You gave him bread and a sword and prayed to God for him so that he can rise up against me and ambush me, as he's doing now."

¹⁴ Ahimelech asked the king, "But whom among all your officials can you trust like David? Your Majesty, he's your son-in-law, the commander of your

bodyguard. He's honored in your own household.

¹⁵ Is this the first time I have prayed to God for him? Not at all! You shouldn't blame me or anyone in my family for this. I knew nothing at all about this."

¹⁶ Saul said, "Ahimelech, you and your entire family are going to die."

¹⁷ "Turn and kill the LORD'S priests because they support David," the king said to the runners standing around him. "When they knew David was fleeing, they didn't inform me." But the king's men refused to attack the LORD'S priests.

¹⁸ So the king said to Doeg, "You turn and attack the priests." Doeg from Edom turned and attacked the priests, and that day he killed 85 men wearing the linen priestly ephod.

¹⁹ He also killed the people of Nob, the city of the priests. Using his sword, he

killed men and women, children and infants, cows, donkeys, and sheep.

²⁰ But Ahimelech, Ahitub's son, had one son who escaped. His name was Abiathar. He fled to David.

²¹ Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD'S priests.

²² David told Abiathar, "I knew that day when Doeg from Edom was there that he would be certain to tell Saul. I am the one responsible for all the lives of your family.

²³ Stay with me. Don't be afraid. The one who is seeking my life is also seeking your life. However, you will be under my protection."

23 ¹ David was asked, "Did you know that the Philistines are fighting against Keilah? They are robbing the threshing floors."

² David asked the LORD, "Should I go and attack these Philistines?" "Go," the

LORD told David, "attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."

³ David's men told him, "We're afraid of staying here in Judah. How much more afraid do you think we'll be if we go to Keilah against the Philistine army?"

⁴ David asked the LORD again, and the LORD answered him. He said, "Go to Keilah. I'm giving you the power to defeat the Philistines."

⁵ David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines, drove off their livestock, and decisively defeated them. So David rescued the people who lived in Keilah.

⁶ When Ahimelech's son Abiathar fled to David at Keilah, Abiathar brought a priestly ephod with him.

⁷ When Saul was told that David went to Keilah, Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hands. He has trapped himself by going into a city which has a

gate with a double door held shut by a bar."

⁸ So Saul called together all the troops to go to war and blockade Keilah, where David and his men were.

⁹ When David learned that Saul was planning to harm him, he told the priest Abiathar, "Bring the ephod."

¹⁰ Then David said, "LORD God of Israel, I have actually heard that Saul is going to come to Keilah and destroy the city on account of me.

¹¹ Will the citizens of Keilah hand me over to him? Will Saul come here as I have heard? LORD God of Israel, please tell me." "He will come," the LORD answered.

¹² "Will the citizens of Keilah hand me and my men over to Saul?" David asked. "They will hand you over," the LORD answered.

¹³ So David and his men, about six hundred in all, left Keilah. They went wherever they could go. Then Saul was told, "David has escaped from Keilah!" So he gave up the campaign.

¹⁴ David lived in fortified camps in the desert, and he lived in fortified camps in the mountains of the desert of Ziph. Saul was always searching for him, but God didn't let him capture David.

¹⁵ David was afraid because Saul had come to kill him at Horesh in the desert of Ziph.

¹⁶ Saul's son Jonathan came to David at Horesh. He strengthened David's faith in the LORD.

¹⁷ "Don't be afraid," he told David, "my father Saul won't find you. You will rule Israel, and I will be your second-in-command. Even my father Saul knows this."

¹⁸ Both of them made a pledge in the LORD'S presence. David stayed in Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

¹⁹ Then the men of Ziph went to Saul in Gibeah. They said, "David is hiding with us in fortified camps at Horesh on the hills of Hachilah, south of Jeshimon.

²⁰ Come, Your Majesty, whenever you want. We will hand him over to you."

²¹ Saul responded, "The LORD bless you for feeling sorry for me!

²² Please make more plans, and watch where he goes. Who has seen him there? I'm told he's very clever.

²³ Watch and learn about all the hiding places where he may be hiding, and come back to me with the facts. Then I'll go with you, and if he's in the country, I'll search for him among all the families of Judah."

²⁴ They left for Ziph ahead of Saul.

David and his men were in the desert of Maon, in the plains south of Jeshimon.

²⁵ When Saul and his men came to look for him, David was told the news. So he went to his mountain stronghold in the desert of Maon. Saul heard about it and pursued David into the desert of Maon.

²⁶ Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men went on the other side of the mountain. David was hurrying to get away from Saul, and Saul and his men were going around the mountain toward David and his men, trying to capture them.

²⁷ Then a messenger came to Saul and said, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the country."

²⁸ Saul gave up pursuing David and went to fight the Philistines. So that place was called Slippery Rock.

²⁹ From there David went to stay in the fortified camps of En Gedi.

24 ¹ When Saul came back from fighting the Philistines, he was told "Now David is in the desert near En Gedi."

² Then Saul took 3,000 of the best-trained men from all Israel and went to search for David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

³ He came to some sheep pens along the road where there was a cave. Saul went into it to relieve himself while David and his men were sitting further back in the cave.

⁴ David's men told him, "Today is the day the LORD referred to when he said, 'I'm going to hand your enemy over to you. You will do to him whatever you think is right.'" David quietly got up and cut off the border of Saul's robe.

⁵ But afterward, David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the border of Saul's robe.

⁶ He said to his men, "It would be unthinkable for me to raise my hand against His Majesty, the LORD'S anointed king, since he is the LORD'S anointed."

⁷ So David stopped his men by saying this to them and didn't let them attack Saul. Saul left the cave and went out onto the road.

⁸ Later, David got up, left the cave, and called to Saul, "Your Majesty!" When Saul looked back, David knelt down with his face touching the ground.

⁹ David asked Saul, "Why do you listen to rumors that I am trying to harm you?"

¹⁰ Today you saw how the LORD handed you over to me in the cave. Although I was told to kill you, I spared you, saying, 'I will not raise my hand against Your

Majesty because you are the LORD'S anointed.'

¹¹ My master, look at this! The border of your robe is in my hand! Since I cut off the border of your robe and didn't kill you, you should know and be able to see I mean no harm or rebellion. I haven't sinned against you, but you are trying to ambush me in order to take my life.

¹² May the LORD decide between you and me. May the LORD take revenge on you for what you did to me. However, I will not lay a hand on you.

¹³ It's like people used to say long ago, 'Wickedness comes from wicked people.' But I will not lay a hand on you.

¹⁴ Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? One flea?

¹⁵ So the LORD must be the judge. He will decide between you and me. He will

watch and take my side in this matter and set me free from you."

¹⁶ When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that you speaking, my servant David?" and Saul cried loudly.

¹⁷ He told David, "You are more righteous than I. You treated me well while I treated you badly.

¹⁸ Today you have proved how good you've been to me. When the LORD handed me over to you, you didn't kill me.

¹⁹ When a person finds an enemy, does he send him away unharmed? The LORD will repay you completely for what you did for me today.

²⁰ Now I know that you certainly will rule as king, and under your guidance the kingdom of Israel will prosper.

²¹ Swear an oath to the LORD for me that you will not wipe out my

descendants or destroy my name in my father's family."

²² So David swore to Saul. Then Saul went home, and David and his men went to their fortified camp.

25 ¹ Samuel died, and all Israel gathered to mourn for him. They buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David went to the desert of Paran.

² Now, there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. He was a very rich man. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

³ This man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. She was sensible and beautiful, but he was harsh and mean. He was a descendant of Caleb.

⁴ While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep.

⁵ So David sent ten young men and told them, "Go to Carmel, visit Nabal, and greet him for me.

⁶ Say to him, 'May you live long! May you, your home, and all you have prosper!

⁷ I hear that your sheepshearers are with you. Your shepherds have been with us, and we have not mistreated them. Nothing of theirs has been missing as long as they've been in Carmel.

⁸ Ask your young men, and let them tell you. Be kind to my young men, since we have come on a special occasion. Please give us and your son David anything you can spare.'"

⁹ When David's young men came to Nabal, they repeated all of this to him for David, and then they waited.

¹⁰ "Who is David?" Nabal answered David's servants. "Who is Jesse's son?"

So many servants nowadays are leaving their masters.

¹¹ Should I take my bread, my water, and my meat that I butchered for my shearers and give them to men coming from who knows where?"

¹² David's young men returned and told him all this.

¹³ "Each of you put on your swords!" David told his men. And everyone, including David, put on his sword. About four hundred men went with David, while two hundred men stayed with the supplies.

¹⁴ One of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers from the desert to greet our master, who yelled at them.

¹⁵ Those men were very good to us. They didn't mistreat us, and we found that nothing was missing wherever we

went with them when we were in the fields.

¹⁶ They were a wall protecting us day and night as long as we were watching the sheep near them.

¹⁷ Now, consider what you should do because our master and his whole household are doomed. And he's such a worthless man that it's useless to talk to him."

¹⁸ So Abigail quickly took 200 loaves of bread, 2 full wineskins, 5 butchered sheep, a bushel of roasted grain, 100 bunches of raisins, and 200 fig cakes and loaded them on donkeys.

¹⁹ "Go on ahead," she told her young men, "and I'll follow you." But she didn't tell her husband Nabal about it.

²⁰ She was riding on her donkey down a hidden mountain path when she met David and his men coming toward her.

²¹ David had thought, "I guarded this man's stuff in the desert for nothing! Not one of his possessions was missing. Yet, he has paid me back with evil when I was good to him.

²² May God punish me if I leave even one of his men alive in the morning."

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got down from her donkey. She immediately bowed down in front of David with her face touching the ground.

²⁴ After she bowed at his feet, she said, "Sir, let me be held responsible for this wrong. Please let me speak with you. Please listen to my words.

²⁵ You shouldn't take this worthless person Nabal seriously. He is like his name. His name is Nabal [Godless Fool], and he's foolish. But I didn't see the young men you sent.

²⁶ "The LORD has kept you from spilling innocent blood and from getting a

victory by your own efforts. Now, sir, I solemnly swear, as the LORD and you live, may your enemies and those who are trying to harm you end up like Nabal.

²⁷ Here is a gift I am bringing to you. May it be given to the young men who are in your service.

²⁸ Please forgive my offense. The LORD will certainly give you, sir, a lasting dynasty, because you are fighting the LORD'S battles. May evil never be found in you as long as you live.

²⁹ Even though someone pursued you and sought your life, your life is wrapped in the bundle of life which comes from the LORD your God. But he will dispose of the lives of your enemies like stones thrown from a sling.

³⁰ When the LORD does all the good he promised and makes you ruler of Israel,

³¹ you shouldn't have a troubled conscience because you spilled blood for

no good reason and claimed your own victory. When the LORD has given you success, remember me."

³² David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you today to meet me.

³³ May your good judgment be blessed. Also, may you be blessed for keeping me from slaughtering people today and from getting a victory by my own efforts.

³⁴ But I solemnly swear—as the LORD God of Israel, who has kept me from harming you, lives—if you hadn't come to meet me quickly, Nabal certainly wouldn't have had one of his men left at dawn."

³⁵ Then David accepted what she brought him and told her, "Go home in peace. I've listened to what you've said and granted your request."

³⁶ When Abigail came to Nabal, he was holding a banquet in his home. It was

like a king's banquet. He was in a good mood and very drunk, so she didn't tell him anything until dawn.

³⁷ But in the morning, when the effects of the wine had worn off, his wife told him what had happened. Nabal's heart failed, and he could not move.

³⁸ About ten days later the LORD made him even more sick, and Nabal died.

³⁹ When David heard Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD, who defended me against the insults of Nabal and kept me from doing wrong. The LORD has turned Nabal's own wickedness back on him." Then David sent men on his behalf to propose marriage to Abigail.

⁴⁰ When David's servants came to Abigail at Carmel, they told her, "David has sent us to you so that we can take you to him to be his wife."

⁴¹ She bowed down with her face touching the ground. "I am ready to serve," she said. "I am ready to wash the feet of my master's servants."

⁴² Then Abigail quickly got up and rode on a donkey with five of her female servants following her. So she went with David's messengers and became his wife.

⁴³ David also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Both she and Abigail were his wives.

⁴⁴ Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Palti, Laish's son, who was from Gallim.

26 ¹ The people of Ziph came to Saul at Gibeah. "David is hiding at the hill of Hachilah near Jeshimon," they said.

² Saul went to the desert of Ziph, taking with him 3,000 of Israel's best-trained men to search for David.

³ Saul camped by the road at the hill of Hachilah near Jeshimon, but David stayed in the desert. When he realized Saul had come to the desert for him,

⁴ David sent spies to confirm that Saul had arrived.

⁵ Then David went to the place where Saul had camped. David saw the place where Saul and Ner's son Abner, the commander of the army, were lying. Saul was lying in the camp, and the troops were camped around him.

⁶ David asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai, who was Zeruah's son and Joab's brother, "Who will go with me to Saul in the camp?" Abishai answered, "I'll go with you."

⁷ So David and Abishai went among Saul's troops that night. Saul was lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.

⁸ Abishai said to David, "Today God has turned your enemy over to you. Please let me nail him to the ground with one stab of the spear. I won't have to do it twice!"

⁹ "Don't kill him!" David told Abishai. "No one has ever attacked the LORD'S anointed king and remained free of guilt.

¹⁰ I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives," David added, "the LORD will strike him. Either his time will come when he'll die naturally, or he'll go into battle and be swept away.

¹¹ It would be unthinkable for me to attack the LORD'S anointed king. But please take that spear near his head and that jar of water, and let's go."

¹² David took the spear and the jar of water near Saul's head, and they left. All of them were asleep. No one saw them, knew about it, or woke up. The LORD had made them fall into a deep sleep.

¹³ David went over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away. (There was a wide space between them.)

¹⁴ Then David called to the troops and to Ner's son Abner. "Won't you answer, Abner?" he asked. "Who is calling the king?" Abner asked.

¹⁵ David asked Abner, "Aren't you a man? Is there anyone like you in Israel? Then why didn't you guard your master, the king? Someone came to kill His Royal Majesty.

¹⁶ What you've done isn't good. I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, you are dead men. You didn't guard your master, the LORD'S anointed king. Look at the king's spear and the jar of water that were near his head."

¹⁷ Saul recognized David's voice. "Is that your voice, my servant David?" he asked.

"It is my voice, Your Royal Majesty," David answered.

¹⁸ "Why are you pursuing me?" he added. "What have I done? What crime have I committed?"

¹⁹ Your Majesty, please listen to my words. If the LORD has turned you against me, let him be satisfied with an offering. But if mere mortals have turned you against me, let them be cursed by the LORD. They have prevented me from having a share of the LORD'S inheritance. 'Go and serve other gods,' they tell me.

²⁰ Don't let my blood fall to the ground, away from the LORD'S presence. The king of Israel has come to search for one flea like someone hunting a partridge in the hills."

²¹ "My servant David," Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back. I will not harm you again, because you valued my life today.

I've acted like a fool and made a terrible mistake."

²² David responded, "Here's the king's spear. One of the young men should come over and get it.

²³ The LORD will reward any person who is righteous and faithful. The LORD handed you over to me today, but I refused to attack the LORD'S anointed king.

²⁴ As I placed great value on your life today, may the LORD place great value on my life and rescue me from all trouble."

²⁵ Then Saul said, "Blessed are you, my servant David. You will accomplish many things and certainly will succeed." So David went his way, while Saul returned home.

27 ¹ David said to himself, "One of these days Saul will sweep me away. The best thing for me to do is to

make sure that I escape to Philistine territory. Then Saul will give up looking all over Israel for me, and I'll escape from him."

² So David went with his 600 men to King Achish of Gath, Moach's son.

³ David and his men stayed with Achish in Gath. Each one had his family, and David had his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail (who had been Nabal's wife) from Carmel.

⁴ When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he didn't search for him anymore.

⁵ David said to Achish, "If you will permit me, let me have a place in one of the outlying towns so that I can live there. Why should I live in the royal city with you?"

⁶ So Achish immediately gave him Ziklag. (This is why Ziklag still belongs to the kings of Judah today.)

⁷ David stayed in Philistine territory for one year and four months.

⁸ Then David and his men went to raid the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. (They lived in the territory which extends from Telaim to Shur and Egypt.)

⁹ Whenever David attacked the territory, he left no man or woman alive. He also took sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and clothing and returned to Achish.

¹⁰ Achish would ask, "Whom did you raid today?" And David would answer, "the Negev in Judah," or "the portion of the Negev where the descendants of Jerahmeel live," or "the portion of the Negev where the Kenites live."

¹¹ He did not bring a single man or woman back to Gath alive. He thought, "They could tell Achish what I really did."

This was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory.

¹² And Achish believed David. Achish thought, "He has definitely made his own people in Israel despise him. He'll be my servant from now on."

28 ¹ At that time the Philistines had gathered their army to fight against Israel. Then Achish said to David, "You need to know that you and your men will be going with me into battle."

² "Very well," David responded to Achish, "you will then know what I can do." "Very well," Achish told David, "I will make you my bodyguard for life."

³ Meanwhile, Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his hometown Ramah. (Saul had rid the land of mediums and psychics.)

⁴ The Philistines assembled and camped in Shunem. Saul also assembled the

whole Israelite army, and they camped at Gilboa.

⁵ When Saul looked at the Philistine army, he was very afraid—terrified.

⁶ He prayed to the LORD, but the LORD didn't answer him through dreams, the Urim, or prophets.

⁷ Saul told his officers, "Find me a woman who conjures up the dead. Then I'll go to her and ask for her services." His officers told him, "There is a woman at Endor who conjures up the dead."

⁸ After disguising himself by putting on other clothes, Saul left with two men and came to the woman that night. He said to her, "Please consult with a dead person for me. Conjure up the person I request."

⁹ The woman told him, "You know that Saul rid the land of mediums and psychics. Why are you trying to trap me and have me killed?"

¹⁰ But Saul took an oath in the LORD'S name, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, you will not be harmed if you do this."

¹¹ "Whom should I conjure up for you?" the woman asked. "Conjure up Samuel for me," he answered.

¹² When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out loudly and asked, "Why did you deceive me? You're Saul!"

¹³ "Don't be afraid," the king said to her. "What do you see?" "I see a god rising from the ground," the woman answered.

¹⁴ "In what form?" he asked her. She answered, "An old man is coming up, and he's wearing a robe." Then Saul knew it was Samuel. Saul knelt down with his face touching the ground.

¹⁵ Samuel asked Saul, "Why did you disturb me by conjuring me up?" Saul answered, "I'm in serious trouble. The Philistines are at war with me, and

God has turned against me and doesn't answer me anymore—either by the prophets or in dreams. So I've called on you to tell me what to do."

¹⁶ Samuel said, "Why are you asking me when the LORD has turned against you and become your enemy?"

¹⁷ The LORD has done to you exactly what he spoke through me: The LORD has torn the kingship out of your hands and given it to your fellow Israelite David.

¹⁸ The LORD is doing this to you today because you didn't listen to him or unleash his burning anger on Amalek.

¹⁹ For the same reasons the LORD will hand you and Israel over to the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. And then the LORD will hand Israel's army over to the Philistines."

²⁰ Immediately, Saul fell flat on the ground. He was frightened by Samuel's words. He also had no strength left, because he hadn't eaten anything all day or all night.

²¹ The woman came over to Saul and saw that he was terrified. "I listened to you," she told him, "and I took my life in my hands when I did what you told me to do.

²² Now please listen to me. I will serve you something to eat. Eat it so that you will have strength when you leave."

²³ But he refused. "I don't want to eat," he said. Nevertheless, his officers and the woman kept urging him until he listened to them. So he got up from the ground and sat on the bed.

²⁴ The woman immediately butchered a fattened calf that she owned. She took flour, kneaded it, and baked some unleavened bread.

²⁵ Then she served it to Saul and his officers. They ate and left that same night.

29 ¹ The Philistines assembled their whole army at Aphek, and Israel camped at the spring in Jezreel.

² The Philistine leaders were marching by with their companies and regiments. David and his men were marching in the rear with Achish.

³ The Philistine officers asked, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" Achish asked the Philistine officers, "Isn't this David, the servant of King Saul of Israel, who has been with me now for a year or two? I've found nothing wrong with him from the day he defected until now."

⁴ But the Philistine officers were angry with Achish. "Send the man back," the Philistine officers told him. "Return him to the place you assigned him. He shouldn't go with us into battle. He

shouldn't be allowed to become our enemy during the battle. Is this man going to try to regain his master's favor? He'll do it with the lives of our men!

⁵ Isn't this David of whom people sing in dances: 'Saul has defeated thousands but David tens of thousands'?"

⁶ Then Achish called David and told him, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, you are a dependable man. I consider your campaigning with me a good thing, because I've never found anything wrong with you from the day you came to me until now. But the rulers don't approve of you.

⁷ So leave peacefully without doing anything to displease the Philistine rulers."

⁸ "What have I done?" David asked Achish. "What have you learned about me from the time I came to you

until now? Why shouldn't I fight your enemies, Your Majesty?"

⁹ Achish answered David, "I admit that in my judgment you're as good as God's Messenger. However, the Philistine officers said, 'He shouldn't go into battle with us.'

¹⁰ Get up early in the morning with Saul's servants who came with you, and go to the place I have assigned to you. Don't worry about the unkind words, because I still approve of you. Get up in the morning, and leave when it's light."

¹¹ Early the next morning David and his men returned to Philistine territory, while the Philistines went to Jezreel.

30 ¹ Two days later, when David and his men came to Ziklag, the Amalekites had raided the Negev, including Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it.

² Although they captured the young and old women who were there, they killed no one. Instead, they had taken the women and other prisoners and gone away.

³ By the time David and his men came to the town, it had been burned down, and their wives, sons, and daughters had been taken captive.

⁴ Then David and his men cried loudly until they didn't have the strength to cry anymore.

⁵ The Amalekites also captured David's two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail (who had been Nabal's wife) from Carmel.

⁶ David was in great distress because the people in their bitterness said he should be stoned. (They were thinking of their sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.)

⁷ David told the priest Abiathar, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring me the priestly ephod." So Abiathar brought David the ephod.

⁸ Then David asked the LORD, "Should I pursue these troops? Will I catch up with them?" "Pursue them," the LORD told him. "You will certainly catch up with them and rescue the captives."

⁹ So David and his 600 men went to the Besor Valley, where some were left behind.

¹⁰ David and 400 men went in pursuit, while 200 men who were too exhausted to cross the Besor Valley stayed behind.

¹¹ David's men found an Egyptian in the open country and took him to David. They gave him food to eat and water to drink.

¹² They gave him a slice of fig cake and two bunches of raisins. After he had eaten, he revived. (He hadn't eaten any

food or drunk any water for three whole days.)

¹³ David asked him, "To whom do you belong? Where do you come from?" "I'm an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite," the young man answered. "My master left me behind because I got sick three days ago.

¹⁴ We raided the portion of the Negev where the Cherethites live, the territory of Judah, the portion of the Negev where Caleb settled, and we burned down Ziklag."

¹⁵ "Will you lead me to these troops?" David asked him. He answered, "Take an oath in front of God that you won't kill me or hand me over to my master, and I'll lead you to these troops."

¹⁶ The Egyptian led him to them. They were spread out all over the land, eating, and drinking. They were celebrating because they had taken so much loot

from Philistine territory and from the land of Judah.

¹⁷ From dawn until evening the next day, David attacked them. No one escaped except 400 young men who rode away on camels.

¹⁸ David rescued everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives.

¹⁹ Nothing was missing—young or old, sons or daughters, the loot or anything else they had taken with them. David brought back everything.

²⁰ He took all the sheep and the cattle. His men drove the animals ahead of him and said, "This is David's loot."

²¹ David came to the 200 men who had been too exhausted to go with him and had stayed in the Besor Valley. They came to meet David and the people with him. As David approached the men, he greeted them.

²² Then every wicked and worthless man who had gone with David said, "Since they didn't go with us, they shouldn't be given any of the loot we recovered. Each of them should take only his wife and children and leave."

²³ But David said, "My brothers, don't do that with the things which the LORD has given us. He has protected us and handed the troops that attacked us over to us.

²⁴ Besides, who is going to pay attention to what you have to say in this matter? Certainly, the share of those who go into battle must be like the share of those who stay with the supplies. They will all share alike."

²⁵ From that time on he made this a rule and a custom in Israel as it is to this day.

²⁶ When David came to Ziklag, he sent part of the loot to his friends, the leaders

of Judah. He said, "Here is a gift for you from the loot taken from the LORD'S enemies."

²⁷ There were shares for those in Bethel, Ramoth in the Negev, Jattir,

²⁸ Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa,

²⁹ Racal, the cities belonging to the Jerahmeelites, the cities belonging to the Kenites,

³⁰ Hormah, Borashan, Athach,

³¹ Hebron, and to all the places David and his men visited from time to time.

31 ¹ When the Philistines were fighting against Israel, the men of Israel fled from the Philistines and were killed in battle on Mount Gilboa.

² The Philistines caught up to Saul and his sons. They killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

³ The heaviest fighting was against Saul. When the archers got him in their range, he was badly wounded by them.

⁴ Saul told his armorbearer, "Draw your sword! Stab me, or these godless men will come, stab me, and make fun of me." But his armorbearer refused because he was terrified. So Saul took the sword and fell on it.

⁵ When the armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him.

⁶ So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that day.

⁷ When the people of Israel on the other side of the valley and across the Jordan River saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities. So the Philistines came to live in these cities.

⁸ The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons lying on Mount Gilboa.

⁹ They cut off his head and stripped off his armor. Then they sent men throughout Philistine territory to tell the people this good news in their idols' temples.

¹⁰ They put his armor in the temple of their goddesses—the Asherahs—and fastened his corpse to the wall of Beth Shan.

¹¹ When the people living in Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul,

¹² all the fighting men marched all night and took the dead bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan. They came back to Jabesh and burned the bodies there.

¹³ They took the bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh. Then they fasted seven days.

2 Samuel

1 ¹ After Saul died and David returned from defeating the Amalekites, David stayed in Ziklag two days.

² On the third day a man came from Saul's camp. His clothes were torn, and he had dirt on his head. When he came to David, he immediately bowed down with his face touching the ground.

³ "Where did you come from?" David asked him. "I escaped from the camp of Israel," he answered.

⁴ "What happened?" David asked him. "Please tell me." The man answered, "The army fled from the battle, and many of the soldiers died. Saul and his son Jonathan are dead too."

⁵ "How do you know Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" David asked the

young man who had brought him the news.

⁶ The young man answered, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa. Saul was there leaning on his spear, and the chariots and horsemen were catching up with him.

⁷ When he looked back and saw me, he called to me, and I said, 'Yes?'"

⁸ "He asked me, 'Who are you?' "I said to him, 'I'm an Amalekite.'

⁹ "He said to me, 'Please stand over me and kill me. I'm alive, but I'm suffering.'

¹⁰ "So I stood over him and killed him, since I knew he couldn't survive after he had been wounded. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band that was on his arm and brought them here to you, sir."

¹¹ Then David grabbed his own clothes and tore them in grief. All the men with him did the same.

¹² They mourned, cried, and fasted until evening because Saul, his son Jonathan, the LORD'S army, and the nation of Israel had been defeated in battle.

¹³ David asked the young man who had brought him the news, "Where are you from?" And the young man answered, "I'm an Amalekite, the son of a foreign resident."

¹⁴ David asked, "Why weren't you afraid to take it upon yourself to destroy the LORD'S anointed king?"

¹⁵ Then David called one of his young men and told him, "Come here and attack him." David's young man executed him

¹⁶ while David said, "You are responsible for spilling your own blood. You testified against yourself when you said, 'I killed the LORD'S anointed king.'"

¹⁷ David wrote this song of mourning for Saul and his son Jonathan.

¹⁸ He said, "Teach this kesheth to the people of Judah." (It is recorded in the Book of Jashar.)

¹⁹ "Your glory, Israel, lies dead on your hills. See how the mighty have fallen!

²⁰ Don't tell the news in Gath. Don't announce the victory in the streets of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will be glad, and the daughters of godless men will celebrate.

²¹ You mountains in Gilboa, may there be no dew or rain on you or on your slopes, because warriors' shields were tarnished there. Saul's shield was never rubbed with olive oil.

²² From the blood of those killed and the fat of the warriors, Jonathan's bow did not turn away, nor did Saul's sword return unused.

²³ Saul and Jonathan were loved and well-liked while they were living. They were not separated even when they

died. They were swifter than eagles and stronger than lions.

²⁴ Daughters of Israel, cry over Saul, who dressed you in decorated, red clothes, who put gold jewelry on your clothes.

²⁵ See how the mighty have fallen in battle! On your hills Jonathan was killed!

²⁶ I am heartbroken over you, my brother Jonathan. You were my great delight. Your love was more wonderful to me than the love of women.

²⁷ See how the mighty have fallen! See how the weapons of war have been destroyed!"

2¹ After this, David asked the LORD, "Should I go to one of the cities of Judah?" "Go," the LORD answered him. "Where should I go?" David asked. "To Hebron," the LORD replied.

² David went there with his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail (who had been Nabal's wife) from Carmel.

³ David took his men and their families with him, and they settled in the towns around Hebron.

⁴ Then the people of Judah came to Hebron and anointed David to be king over the tribe of Judah. They told David, "The people of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who buried Saul."

⁵ So David sent messengers to the people of Jabesh Gilead. He said to them, "May the LORD bless you because you showed kindness to your master Saul by burying him.

⁶ May the LORD always show you kindness. I, too, will be good to you because you did this.

⁷ Now, be strong and courageous. Because your master Saul is dead, the

tribe of Judah has anointed me to be their king."

⁸ Ner's son Abner, commander of Saul's army, took Saul's son Ishbosheth and brought him to Mahanaim.

⁹ Abner made him king of Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin, that is, all Israel.

¹⁰ Saul's son Ishbosheth was 40 years old when he became king of Israel. He ruled for two years, but the tribe of Judah followed David.

¹¹ In Hebron David was king over the tribe of Judah for seven years and six months.

¹² Ner's son Abner and the officers of Saul's son Ishbosheth went from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

¹³ Zeruah's son Joab and David's officers also left Hebron. Both groups met at the pool of Gibeon. They sat down there, one group on one side of

the pool and the other group on the other side of the pool.

¹⁴ Abner said to Joab, "Let's have the young men hold a contest." Joab agreed.

¹⁵ The men got up and were counted as they passed by. Twelve were from the tribe of Benjamin (representing Saul's son Ishbosheth), and twelve were from David's officers.

¹⁶ Each one grabbed his opponent by the head, stuck his sword into his opponent's side, and they fell down together. Therefore, that place in Gibeon is called the Field of Enemies.

¹⁷ Fierce fighting broke out that day, and David's men defeated Abner and the men of Israel.

¹⁸ Zeruiah's three sons were there: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was as fast on his feet as a wild gazelle.

¹⁹ He chased Abner and refused to leave him alone.

²⁰ When Abner looked back, he asked, "Are you Asahel?" "Yes," Asahel answered.

²¹ Abner told him, "Leave me alone! Catch one of the young men, and take his weapon." But Asahel refused to turn away from him.

²² So Abner spoke again to Asahel. "Stop following me," he said. "Why should I kill you? How could I look your brother Joab in the face again?"

²³ But Asahel refused to turn away. So Abner struck him with the butt of the spear. The spear went into his belly and came out his back. He fell down there and died on the spot. And everyone who came to the place where Asahel fell and died stopped there.

²⁴ But Joab and Abishai chased Abner. When the sun went down, they came to the hill of Ammah, opposite Giah on the road from Gibeon to the desert.

²⁵ The men of Benjamin rallied behind Abner, banding together and taking their position on top of a hill.

²⁶ Then Abner called to Joab, "Should this slaughter go on forever? Don't you know this will end in bitterness? How long will it be before you will call off your troops from chasing their relatives?"

²⁷ Joab answered, "I solemnly swear, as God lives, if you had not spoken, the men would not have stopped chasing their relatives until morning."

²⁸ So Joab blew a ram's horn, and all the troops stopped. They didn't chase or fight Israel anymore.

²⁹ Abner and his men marched through the plains all that night. They crossed the Jordan River and passed through the entire Bithron until they came to Mahanaim.

³⁰ Joab returned from chasing Abner. When he had gathered all the troops,

only 19 of David's officers and Asahel were missing.

³¹ However, David's officers had killed 360 of the men of Benjamin under Abner's command.

³² They took Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched all night and arrived at Hebron by daybreak.

3 ¹ As the war between the royal families of Saul and David dragged on, David's family became stronger and stronger, and Saul's family became weaker and weaker.

² Sons were born to David while he was in Hebron. His first son was Amnon, born to Ahinoam from Jezreel.

³ The second was Chileab, born to Abigail (who had been Nabal's wife) from Carmel. The third was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah (the daughter of King Talmai) from Geshur.

⁴ The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith. The fifth was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital.

⁵ The sixth was Ithream, born to David's wife Eglah. These sons were born to David while he was in Hebron.

⁶ During the war between the families of Saul and David, Abner strengthened his position in Saul's royal family.

⁷ Saul had a concubine named Rizpah (Aiah's daughter). Ishbosheth asked Abner, "Why did you have sex with my father's concubine?"

⁸ Ishbosheth's question made Abner very angry. "Have I been behaving like some Judean dog?" he asked. "Until now I've been faithful to your father Saul's family, to his relatives and friends, and I haven't handed you over to David. But now you charge me with a crime because of this woman.

⁹ May God strike me dead unless I do for David what the LORD had promised him with an oath:

¹⁰ 'I, the LORD, will transfer the kingship from Saul's family and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba.'

¹¹ Ishbosheth couldn't respond to a single word, because he was afraid of Abner.

¹² Then Abner sent messengers to David to speak on his behalf. "Who owns this country?" he asked. "Make an agreement with me," he said. "I'll support you and bring all Israel to you."

¹³ "Good!" David answered. "I'll make an agreement with you. But there's one condition: You can't come to see me unless you bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come."

¹⁴ Then David sent messengers to Saul's son Ishbosheth to say, "Give me my

wife Michal. I made a payment of 100 Philistine foreskins for her."

¹⁵ So Ishbosheth sent men to take her from her husband Paltiel, son of Laish.

¹⁶ Her husband went with her and cried over her all the way to Bahurim. "Go home," Abner told him. So he went home.

¹⁷ Meanwhile, Abner sent the following message to the leaders of Israel: "For some time now you've wanted to make David your king.

¹⁸ Do it now, because the LORD said about David: 'I will save my people Israel from the Philistines and all their other enemies through my servant David.'"

¹⁹ Abner also spoke specifically to the people of Benjamin. Then Abner went directly to David in Hebron to tell him everything Israel and the entire tribe of Benjamin had approved.

²⁰ So Abner came with 20 men to David in Hebron, and David had a feast for Abner and his men.

²¹ Abner told David, "I must go now so that I can gather all Israel for you, Your Majesty. They will make a treaty with you, and you will rule everything your heart desires." Then David dismissed Abner, who left peacefully.

²² Just then David's men and Joab were coming home from a raid with a lot of goods. Abner had been dismissed, so he was no longer with David in Hebron.

²³ When Joab came back with the whole army, he was told, "Ner's son Abner came to the king, but David dismissed him, and Abner left peacefully."

²⁴ Then Joab went to the king and asked, "What have you done? Abner came to see you. Why did you dismiss him and let him get away?"

²⁵ Certainly you must know that Ner's son Abner came to deceive you, to find out about your movements and learn everything you're doing!"

²⁶ After leaving David, Joab sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the cistern of Sirah without David knowing about it.

²⁷ When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gateway as if to talk to him privately. There he stabbed Abner in the belly. Abner died because he spilled the blood of Joab's brother Asahel.

²⁸ Later when David heard about it, he said, "As far as the LORD is concerned, my kingdom and I are forever innocent of spilling the blood of Ner's son Abner.

²⁹ May the blame fall on the head of Joab and all of his family. May there always be members of Joab's family who have oozing sores and skin diseases,

who can only work a spindle, who die in battle, and who never have any food."

³⁰ (Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)

³¹ David told Joab and all the people with him, "Tear your clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourn for Abner." King David followed the open casket.

³² They buried Abner in Hebron. The king cried loudly at Abner's grave, and all the people cried.

³³ The king sang a funeral song for Abner: Should Abner die like a godless fool?

³⁴ Your hands were not tied. Your feet were not chained. You fell as one falls in front of wicked men. And all the people continued to cry for him.

³⁵ That entire day all the people tried to get David to eat some food. But David had taken an oath: "May God strike me

dead if I taste any food or anything else before the sun goes down."

³⁶ Then all the people understood and approved of this, as all the people approved of everything the king did.

³⁷ That day all the people of Israel knew the king wasn't responsible for killing Ner's son Abner.

³⁸ The king said to his officers, "Don't you know that today a leader, a great man, has fallen in Israel?"

³⁹ Today I'm weak, though I'm the anointed king. These men, Zeruah's sons, are too cruel for me. May the LORD repay this evildoer as his evil deeds deserve."

4 ¹ When Saul's son Ishbosheth heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost his courage, and all Israel was alarmed.

² Saul's son had two men who were captains of raiding parties. One was

named Baanah, and the other was named Rechab. They were the sons of Rimmon from Beeroth from the tribe of Benjamin. (Beeroth was considered a part of Benjamin,

³ even though the people of Beeroth had fled to Gittaim. They still live there today.

⁴ In addition, Saul's son Jonathan had a son who was crippled. When the boy was five years old, the news about the death of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled to Gittaim. She was in a hurry when she left, and he fell from her arms and became disabled. His name was Mephibosheth.)

⁵ Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon from Beeroth, came to Ishbosheth's home at the hottest time of the day. Ishbosheth was taking his midday nap

⁶ when they came into the house as though they were going to get some flour. Instead, they stabbed him in the belly. Then Rechab and his brother Baanah escaped.

⁷ (They had come into the house while Ishbosheth was sleeping on his bed in his bedroom. They stabbed him, killed him, and cut off his head.) They took his head and traveled all night along the road to the plains.

⁸ They brought Ishbosheth's head to David at Hebron. "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of your enemy Saul who tried to kill you," they told the king. "Today the LORD has given Your Royal Majesty revenge on Saul and his descendants."

⁹ David responded to Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon from Beeroth,

¹⁰ "I once seized a man who told me that Saul had died. He thought he was bringing good news. I killed him in Ziklag to reward him for his news.

¹¹ How much more should I reward wicked men who kill an innocent man on his own bed in his home? The LORD has rescued me from every trouble. I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, I'll now seek revenge for his murder and rid the land of you."

¹² So David gave an order to his young men, who executed Rechab and Baanah, cut off their hands and feet, and hung their dead bodies by the pond in Hebron. Then they took Ishbosheth's head and buried it in Abner's tomb in Hebron.

5 ¹ All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron. "We are your own flesh and blood," they said.

² "Even in the past when Saul ruled us, you were the one who led Israel in

battle. The LORD has said to you, 'You will be shepherd of my people Israel, the leader of Israel.'

³ All the leaders of Israel had come to Hebron. King David made an agreement with them at Hebron in front of the LORD. So they anointed David king of Israel.

⁴ David was 30 years old when he became king, and he ruled for 40 years.

⁵ In Hebron he ruled Judah for seven years and six months. In Jerusalem he ruled for 33 years over all Israel and Judah.

⁶ The king and his men went to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived in that region. The Jebusites told David, "You will never get in here. Even the blind and the lame could turn you away" (meaning that David could never get in there).

⁷ But David captured the fortress Zion (that is, the City of David).

⁸ That day David said, "Whoever wants to defeat the Jebusites must reach the lame and the blind who hate me by using the water shaft." So there is a saying, "The blind and the lame will not get into the palace."

⁹ David lived in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built the city of Jerusalem around it from the Millo to the palace.

¹⁰ David continued to grow more powerful because the LORD God of Armies was with him.

¹¹ Then King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedarwood, carpenters, and stonemasons. They built a palace for David.

¹² So David realized that the LORD had established him as king of Israel and

made his kingship famous for the sake of Israel, the LORD'S people.

¹³ David married more concubines and wives from Jerusalem after he had come there from Hebron, and he fathered more sons and daughters.

¹⁴ These are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

¹⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,

¹⁶ Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

¹⁷ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of Israel, all of them came to attack David. But David heard about it and went to the fortress.

¹⁸ The Philistines had come and overrun the valley of Rephaim.

¹⁹ David asked the LORD, "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The LORD answered

David, "Attack! I will certainly hand the Philistines over to you."

²⁰ So David went to Baal Perazim and defeated the Philistines there. He said, "The LORD has overwhelmed my enemies in front of me like an overwhelming flood." That is why that place is called Baal Perazim [The Lord Overwhelms].

²¹ The Philistines left their idols there, so David and his men carried the idols away.

²² The Philistines again attacked and overran the valley of Rephaim.

²³ David asked the LORD, and he answered, "Don't attack now, but circle around behind them, and come at them in front of the balsam trees.

²⁴ When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, act immediately because the LORD

has gone ahead of you to defeat the Philistine army."

²⁵ David did as the LORD ordered him and defeated the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.

6 ¹ David again assembled all the best soldiers in Israel, 30,000 men.

² He and all the people with him left Baalah in Judah to bring God's ark to Jerusalem. (The ark is called by the name of the LORD of Armies, who is enthroned over the angels.)

³ David and his men put God's ark on a new cart and brought it from Abinadab's home on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, Abinadab's sons, were guiding the new cart.

⁴ They brought it from Abinadab's home, with Ahio walking ahead of the ark.

⁵ David and the entire nation of Israel were celebrating in the LORD'S presence

with all kinds of instruments made from cypress wood and with lyres, harps, tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals.

⁶ But when they came to Nacon's threshing floor, the oxen stumbled. So Uzzah reached out for the ark of God and grabbed it.

⁷ The LORD became angry with Uzzah, so God killed him there for his lack of respect. He died beside the ark of God.

⁸ David was angry because the LORD had struck Uzzah so violently. (That place is still called Perez Uzzah [The Striking of Uzzah] today.)

⁹ David was afraid of the LORD that day. "How can the ark of the LORD come to my city?" he asked.

¹⁰ So David wouldn't bring the ark of the LORD with him to the City of David. Instead, he rerouted it to the home of Obed Edom, who was from Gath.

¹¹ The ark of the LORD stayed at the home of Obed Edom from Gath for three months, and the LORD blessed Obed Edom and his whole family.

¹² King David was told, "The LORD has blessed Obed Edom's home and everything he owns because of the ark of God." Then David joyfully went to get the ark of God from Obed Edom's house and bring it to the City of David.

¹³ When those who carried the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, David sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf.

¹⁴ Wearing a linen ephod, David danced in the LORD'S presence with all his might.

¹⁵ He and the entire nation of Israel brought the ark of the LORD with shouts of joy and the sounding of rams' horns.

¹⁶ When the ark of the LORD came to the City of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked out of a window and saw King

David leaping and dancing in the LORD'S presence, so she despised him.

¹⁷ The men carrying the ark set it in its place inside the tent David had put up for it. David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings in the LORD'S presence.

¹⁸ When David had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of Armies.

¹⁹ He also distributed to all the people—to the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women—one loaf of bread, one date cake, and one raisin cake. Then all the people went home.

²⁰ When David returned to bless his family, Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet him. "How dignified Israel's king was today! He was exposing himself before the eyes of the slave girls of his

palace staff—like a mindless fool might expose himself!"

²¹ David answered Michal, "I didn't dance in front of the slave girls but in front of the LORD. He chose me rather than your father or anyone in your father's house, and he appointed me leader of Israel, the LORD'S people. I will celebrate in the LORD'S presence,

²² and I will degrade myself even more than this. Even if I am humiliated in your eyes, I will be honored by these slave girls you speak about."

²³ So Saul's daughter Michal was childless her entire life.

7 ¹ While King David was living in his house, the LORD gave him peace with all his enemies around him.

² So the king said to the prophet Nathan, "Look, I'm living in a house made of cedar, while the ark of God remains in the tent."

³ Nathan told the king, "Do everything you have in mind, because the LORD is with you."

⁴ But that same night the LORD spoke his word to Nathan:

⁵ "Say to my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one who will build me a house to live in?'

⁶ I haven't lived in a house from the day I took Israel out of Egypt to this day. Instead, I moved around in a tent, the tent of meeting.

⁷ In all the places I've moved with all the Israelites, did I ever ask any of the judges of Israel whom I ordered to be shepherds of my people Israel why they didn't build me a house of cedar?'

⁸ "Now this is what you will say to my servant David: 'This is what the LORD of Armies says: I took you from the pasture where you followed sheep so that you could be the leader of my people Israel.'

⁹ I was with you wherever you went, and I destroyed all your enemies in front of you. I will make your name famous like the names of the greatest people on earth.

¹⁰ I will make a place for my people Israel and plant them there. They will live in their own place and not be troubled anymore. The wicked will no longer oppress them as they used to do

¹¹ ever since I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. So I will give you peace with all your enemies. I, the LORD, tell you that I will make a house for you.

¹² "When the time comes for you to lie down in death with your ancestors, I will send one of your descendants, one who will come from you. I will establish his kingdom.

¹³ He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

¹⁴ I will be his Father, and he will be my Son. If he sins, I will punish him with a rod and with blows inflicted by people.

¹⁵ But I will never stop showing him my love as I did to Saul, whom I took out of your way.

¹⁶ Your royal house will remain in my presence forever. Your throne will be established forever.'"

¹⁷ Nathan told David all these words and everything he had seen.

¹⁸ King David went into the tent and sat in front of the LORD. "Who am I, Almighty LORD," he asked, "and why is my house so important that you have brought me this far?"

¹⁹ And even this you consider to be a small act, Almighty LORD. You've also spoken about the distant future of my house. Almighty LORD, this is the teaching about the man.

²⁰ "What more can I, David, say to you, Almighty LORD, since you know me so well!

²¹ You've done this great thing because of your promise and your own desire. You made it known to me.

²² "That is why you are great, LORD God. There is no one like you, and there is no other god except you, as we have heard with our own ears.

²³ Who is like your people Israel? It is the one nation on earth that God came to free in order to make its people his own, to make his name known, and to do great and wonderful things for them. You forced nations and their gods out of the way of your people, whom you freed from Egypt to be your own.

²⁴ You created the people of Israel to be your people forever. And you, LORD, became their God.

²⁵ "Now, LORD God, keep the promise you made to me and my house forever. Do as you promised.

²⁶ Your name will be respected forever when people say, 'The LORD of Armies is God over Israel.' And the house of your servant David will be established in your presence.

²⁷ You, LORD of Armies, God of Israel, have revealed it especially to me, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' That is why I have found the courage to offer this prayer to you.

²⁸ "Almighty LORD, you are God, and your words are trustworthy. You promised me this good thing.

²⁹ Now, please bless my house so that it may continue in your presence forever. Indeed, you, Almighty LORD, have promised it. With your blessing my house will be blessed forever."

8 ¹ After this, David defeated and crushed the Philistines. He took control of the main Philistine city from them.

² He also defeated Moab, made the Moabites lie down on the ground, and measured them with a rope. He measured two lengths which were to be killed, and one length which was to be spared. So the Moabites became David's subjects and paid taxes to him.

³ When David went to restore his control over the territory along the Euphrates River, he defeated Zobah's King Hadadezer, son of Rehob.

⁴ David took 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers from him. David also disabled all but 100 of their horses so that they couldn't pull chariots.

⁵ When the Arameans from Damascus came to help King Hadadezer of Zobah, David killed 22,000 of them.

⁶ David put troops in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became his subjects and paid taxes to him. Everywhere David went, the LORD gave him victories.

⁷ David took the gold shields that belonged to Hadadezer's servants, and he brought them to Jerusalem.

⁸ King David also took a large quantity of bronze from Betah and Berothai, Hadadezer's cities.

⁹ When King Toi of Hamath heard that David had defeated Hadadezer's whole army,

¹⁰ he sent his son Joram to greet King David and congratulate him for fighting and defeating Hadadezer. (There had often been war between Hadadezer and Toi.) Joram brought articles of gold, silver, and bronze with him.

¹¹ King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, along with the silver and gold

he had dedicated from all the nations he conquered—

¹² from Edom, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines, Amalek, and from the goods taken from Zobah's King Hadadezer, son of Rehob.

¹³ David made a name for himself by killing 18,000 Edomites in the Dead Sea region as he returned to Jerusalem.

¹⁴ He put troops everywhere in Edom, and all the Edomites were David's subjects. Everywhere David went, the LORD gave him victories.

¹⁵ So David ruled all Israel. He did what was fair and right for all his people.

¹⁶ Zeruah's son Joab was in charge of the army. Ahilud's son Jehoshaphat was the royal historian.

¹⁷ Ahitub's son Zadok and Abiathar's son Ahimelech were priests. Seraiah was the royal scribe.

¹⁸ Jehoiada's son Benaiah was commander of the Cherethites and the Pelethites. And David's sons were priests.

9 ¹ David asked, "Is there anyone left in Saul's family to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

² Now, Saul's family had a servant whose name was Ziba. He was summoned to come to David. "Are you Ziba?" the king asked him. "Yes, I am," he answered.

³ David asked, "Is there someone left in Saul's family to whom I can show God's kindness?" "Jonathan has a son who is disabled," Ziba answered.

⁴ "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba replied, "He is at the home of Machir, Ammiel's son, in Lo Debar."

⁵ So King David sent men to get him from the home of Ammiel's son Machir in Lo Debar.

⁶ When Mephibosheth (son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul) came to David, he quickly bowed down with his face touching the ground. "Mephibosheth!" David said to him. "Yes, sir," he answered.

⁷ "Don't be afraid," David told him, "I will certainly show you kindness for your father Jonathan's sake. I will give back to you all the land of your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table."

⁸ Mephibosheth bowed down again and answered, "Who am I that you would look at a dead dog like me?"

⁹ Then the king called for Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family.

¹⁰ You, your sons, and your servants should farm the land for him and harvest the crops so that your master's family will have food to eat. However, your master's grandson Mephibosheth will

always eat at my table." (Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants.)

¹¹ Ziba responded, "I will do everything you've commanded, Your Majesty." From then on, Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons.

¹² Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. Everyone who lived at Ziba's home became Mephibosheth's servant.

¹³ However, Mephibosheth, who was disabled, lived in Jerusalem. He always ate at the king's table.

10 ¹ Later the king of Ammon died, and his son Hanun became king in his place.

² David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun as his father Nahash showed me kindness." So David sent his servants to comfort Hanun after his father's death. But when David's servants entered Ammonite territory,

³ the Ammonite princes asked their master Hanun, "Do you think David is honoring your father because he sent men to comfort you? Hasn't David sent his men to explore the city, spy on it, and destroy it?"

⁴ So Hanun took David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their clothes from the waist down, and sent them away.

⁵ After David was told what had happened, he sent someone to meet them because they were deeply humiliated. The king said to them, "Stay in Jericho until your beards have grown back, and then return to Jerusalem."

⁶ The Ammonites realized that they had made themselves offensive to David. So they hired the Arameans from Beth Rehob and Zobah(20,000 foot soldiers), the army of the king of Maacah(1,000 men), and the men of Tob(12,000 men).

⁷ After David heard about this, he sent Joab and all the elite troops.

⁸ The Ammonites formed a battle line at the entrance of the city gate, while the Arameans from Zobah and Rehob and the men from Tob and Maacah remained by themselves in the open country.

⁹ When Joab saw he was under attack in front and behind, he took the select troops of Israel and organized them for combat against the Arameans.

¹⁰ He put his brother Abishai in charge of the rest of the troops. Abishai organized them for combat against the Ammonites.

¹¹ Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for my troops, be ready to help me. And if the Ammonites are too strong for your troops, I'll come to help you.

¹² Be strong! Let's prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities

of our God, and the LORD will do what he considers right."

¹³ Then Joab and his troops advanced to fight the Arameans, and the Arameans fled.

¹⁴ When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, the Ammonites fled from Abishai and went into the city. So Joab stopped his campaign against the Ammonites and returned to Jerusalem.

¹⁵ Realizing that Israel had defeated them, the Arameans reassembled their troops.

¹⁶ Hadadezer sent messengers to get Arameans from beyond the Euphrates River. The Arameans came to Helam with Shobach, the commander of Hadadezer's army, leading them.

¹⁷ When David was told about this, he assembled Israel's army, crossed the Jordan River, and came to Helam. The

Arameans formed a battle line against David's troops and fought him.

¹⁸ The Arameans fled from Israel, and David killed 700 chariot drivers and 40,000 horsemen. David struck Shobach dead.

¹⁹ When all the kings who were subject to Hadadezer saw that Israel had defeated them, they made peace with Israel and became their subjects. And the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

11 ¹ In the spring, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, his mercenaries, and Israel's army to war. They destroyed the Ammonites and attacked Rabbah, while David stayed in Jerusalem.

² Now, when evening came, David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the royal palace. From the

roof he saw a woman bathing, and she was very pretty.

³ David sent someone to ask about the woman. The man said, "She's Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite."

⁴ So David sent messengers and took her. She came to him, and he went to bed with her. (She had just cleansed herself after her monthly period.) Then she went home.

⁵ The woman had become pregnant. So she sent someone to tell David that she was pregnant.

⁶ Then David sent a messenger to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David.

⁷ When Uriah arrived, David asked him how Joab and the troops were and how the war was going.

⁸ "Go home," David said to Uriah, "and wash your feet." Uriah left the royal

palace, and the king sent a present to him.

⁹ But Uriah slept at the entrance of the royal palace among his superior's mercenaries. He didn't go home.

¹⁰ When they told David, "Uriah didn't go home," David asked Uriah, "Didn't you just come from a journey? Why didn't you go home?"

¹¹ Uriah answered David, "The ark and the army of Israel and Judah are in temporary shelters, and my commander Joab and Your Majesty's mercenaries are living in the field. Should I then go to my house to eat and drink and go to bed with my wife? I solemnly swear, as sure as you're living, I won't do this!"

¹² David said to Uriah, "Then stay here today, and tomorrow I'll send you back." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next.

¹³ David summoned him, ate and drank with him, and got him drunk. But that evening Uriah went to lie down on his bed among his superior's mercenaries. He didn't go home.

¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah.

¹⁵ In the letter he wrote, "Put Uriah on the front line where the fighting is heaviest. Then abandon him so that he'll be struck down and die."

¹⁶ Since Joab had kept the city under observation, he put Uriah at the place where he knew the experienced warriors were.

¹⁷ The men of the city came out and fought Joab. Some of the people, namely, some of David's mercenaries, fell and died—including Uriah the Hittite.

¹⁸ Then Joab sent a messenger to report to David all the details of the battle.

¹⁹ And he commanded the messenger, "When you finish telling the king about the battle,

²⁰ the king may become angry. He might ask you, 'Why did you go so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot from the wall?

²¹ Who killed Jerubbesheth's son Abimelech? Didn't a woman on the wall of Thebez throw a small millstone at him and kill him? Why did you go so close to the wall?' If the king asks this, then say, 'Your man Uriah the Hittite is also dead.'"

²² The messenger left, and when he arrived, he reported to David everything Joab told him to say.

²³ The messenger said, "Their men overpowered us and came to attack us in the field. Then we forced them back to the entrance of the city gate.

²⁴ The archers on the wall shot down at your mercenaries, and some of Your Majesty's mercenaries died. Your man Uriah the Hittite also is dead."

²⁵ David said to the messenger, "This is what you are to say to Joab, 'Don't let this thing trouble you, because a sword can kill one person as easily as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and destroy it.' Say this to encourage him."

²⁶ When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she mourned for him.

²⁷ When her mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to his home, and she became his wife. Then she gave birth to a son. But the LORD considered David's actions evil.

12 ¹ So the LORD sent Nathan to David. Nathan came to him and said, "There were two men in a certain

city. One was rich, and the other was poor.

² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cows,

³ but the poor man had only one little female lamb that he had bought. He raised her, and she grew up in his home with his children. She would eat his food and drink from his cup. She rested in his arms and was like a daughter.

⁴ "Now, a visitor came to the rich man. The rich man thought it would be a pity to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler. So he took the poor man's lamb and prepared her for the traveler."

⁵ David burned with anger against the man. "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives," he said to Nathan, "the man who did this certainly deserves to die!"

⁶ And he must pay back four times the price of the lamb because he did this and had no pity."

⁷ "You are the man!" Nathan told David. "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I anointed you king over Israel and rescued you from Saul.

⁸ I gave you your master Saul's house and his wives. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if this weren't enough, I would have given you even more.

⁹ Why did you despise my word by doing what I considered evil? You had Uriah the Hittite killed in battle. You took his wife as your wife. You used the Ammonites to kill him.

¹⁰ So warfare will never leave your house because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.

¹¹ "This is what the LORD says: I will stir up trouble against you within your own household, and before your own eyes I will take your wives and give them to someone close to you. He will go to bed with your wives in broad daylight.

¹² You did this secretly, but I will make this happen in broad daylight in front of all Israel."

¹³ Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.

¹⁴ But since you have shown total contempt for the LORD by this affair, the son that is born to you must die."

¹⁵ Then Nathan went home. The LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had given birth to for David so that the child became sick.

¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child; he fasted and lay on the ground all night.

¹⁷ The older leaders in his palace stood beside him to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling. And he wouldn't eat with them.

¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. But David's officials were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. They thought, "While the child was alive, we talked to him, and he wouldn't listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may harm himself."

¹⁹ But when David saw that his officials were whispering to one another, he realized that the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" David asked them. "Yes, he is dead," they answered.

²⁰ So David got up from the ground, bathed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes. He went into the LORD'S house and worshiped. Then he went home and asked for food. They placed food in front of him, and he ate.

²¹ His officials asked him, "Why are you acting this way? You fasted and cried over the child when he was alive. But as soon as the child died, you got up and ate."

²² David answered, "As long as the child was alive, I fasted and cried. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.'

²³ But why should I fast now that he's dead? Can I bring him back? Someday I'll go to him, but he won't come back to me."

²⁴ Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba. He went to bed with her, and she later gave birth to a son. David named him Solomon. The LORD loved the child

²⁵ and sent a message through the prophet Nathan to name the baby Jedidiah [The LORD'S Beloved].

²⁶ Meanwhile, Joab fought against the Ammonite city of Rabbah and captured its royal fortress.

²⁷ So he sent messengers to tell David, "I fought against Rabbah and captured the fortress guarding its water supply.

²⁸ Gather the rest of the troops, surround the city, and capture it. Otherwise, I will capture the city, and it will be named after me."

²⁹ So David gathered all the troops and went to Rabbah. He fought against the city and captured it.

³⁰ He took the gold crown from the head of Rabbah's king and put it on his own head. (The crown weighed 75 pounds and contained a precious stone.) David also took a lot of goods from the city.

³¹ He brought out the troops who were there and put them to work with saws, hoes, and axes. He did the same to all

the Ammonite cities. Then David and all the troops returned to Jerusalem.

13 ¹ After this, David's son Amnon fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of David's son Absalom.

² Amnon was so obsessed with his half sister Tamar that he made himself sick. It seemed impossible for him to be alone with her because she was a virgin.

³ Amnon had a friend by the name of Jonadab, a son of David's brother Shimea. Jonadab was a very clever man.

⁴ He asked Amnon, "Why are you, the king's son, so worn out morning after morning? Won't you tell me?" "I'm in love with Absalom's sister Tamar," he answered.

⁵ Then Jonadab told him, "Lie down on your bed. Act sick, and when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come to feed me. She

can prepare a meal in front of me as I watch her, and she can feed me.'"

⁶ So Amnon lay down and acted sick, and the king came to see him. Amnon asked the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make some bread in front of me, and she can feed me."

⁷ David sent for Tamar at the palace. "Please go to your brother Amnon's home," he said, "and prepare some food for him."

⁸ So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's home. He was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made flat bread in front of him, and cooked it.

⁹ Then she took the pan and served him the bread. But he refused to eat. "Have everyone leave me," he said. So everyone left him.

¹⁰ Amnon told Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom so that you can feed me." Tamar took the bread she had

prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in the bedroom.

¹¹ When she handed it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, Tamar!"

¹² "No," she told him, "don't rape me! That shouldn't be done in Israel. Don't do this godless act!"

¹³ Where could I go in my disgrace? And you will be considered one of the godless fools in Israel! Speak to the king. He won't refuse your request to marry me."

¹⁴ But Amnon wouldn't listen to her. He grabbed his sister and raped her.

¹⁵ Now, Amnon developed an intense hatred for her. His hatred for her was greater than the lust he had felt for her. "Get out of here," he told her.

¹⁶ She said to him, "No, sending me away is a greater wrong than the other

thing you did to me!" But he wouldn't listen to her.

¹⁷ Then he called his personal servant and said, "Get rid of her. Put her out, and bolt the door behind her."

¹⁸ (She was wearing a long-sleeved gown. The king's virgin daughters wore this kind of robe.) So his servant took her out and bolted the door behind her.

¹⁹ Tamar put ashes on her head, tore the long-sleeved gown she had on, put her hands on her head, and went away crying.

²⁰ Her brother Absalom asked her, "Has your brother Amnon been with you? Sister, be quiet for now. He's your brother. Don't dwell on this matter." So Tamar stayed there at the home of her brother Absalom and was depressed.

²¹ When King David heard about this, he became very angry. But David didn't

punish his son Amnon. He favored Amnon because he was his firstborn son.

²² Absalom wouldn't speak at all to Amnon. He hated Amnon for raping his sister Tamar.

²³ Two years later Absalom had sheepshearers at Baal Hazor near Ephraim. He invited all the king's sons.

²⁴ Absalom went to the king and said, "Since I have sheepshearers, Your Majesty and your officials are invited to feast with me."

²⁵ "No, Son," the king answered Absalom. "If we all go, we'll be a burden to you." Even when Absalom continued to urge him, David did not want to go, though he did give Absalom his blessing.

²⁶ So Absalom said, "If you won't go, then please let my brother Amnon go with us." "Why should he go with you?" the king asked him.

²⁷ But when Absalom urged him, he let Amnon and all the rest of the king's sons go with him.

²⁸ Then Absalom gave an order to his servants. "Watch now," he said. "When Amnon begins to feel good from drinking too much wine, I'll tell you, 'Attack Amnon.' Then kill him. Don't be afraid. I've given you the order, haven't I? Be strong and courageous."

²⁹ Absalom's servants did to Amnon as Absalom had ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules, and fled.

³⁰ While they were on their way, David heard this rumor: "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and not a single one is left."

³¹ The king stood up, tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground. All his servants were standing beside him with their clothes torn to show their grief.

³² Then Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimea, said, "Sir, don't think that all the young men, all the king's sons, have been killed. Only Amnon is dead. Absalom decided to do this the day his half brother raped his sister Tamar.

³³ You shouldn't burden your heart with the idea that all the king's sons are dead, Your Majesty. Only Amnon is dead.

³⁴ Absalom has fled." When the servant who kept watch looked up, he saw many people coming down the road beside the mountain west of him.

³⁵ Then Jonadab told the king, "The king's sons have come. It's just as I said."

³⁶ When he finished speaking, the king's sons arrived and cried loudly. The king and all his men also cried very bitterly.

³⁷ Absalom, however, fled to Geshur's King Talmai, Ammihud's son. But the

king mourned for his son Amnon every day.

³⁸ Absalom, having fled to Geshur, stayed there three years.

³⁹ King David began to long for Absalom once people had consoled him over Amnon's death.

14 ¹ Joab, Zeruah's son, knew the king was still thinking about Absalom.

² So Joab sent someone to Tekoa to get a clever woman from there. He told her, "Please act like a mourner, and dress in mourning clothes. Don't rub olive oil on yourself, but act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time.

³ Go to the king, and tell him this...." Then Joab told her exactly what to say.

⁴ The woman from Tekoa came to the king and immediately bowed down with

her face touching the ground. "Help me, Your Majesty," she said.

⁵ The king asked her, "What can I do for you?" She answered, "I'm a widow; my husband is dead.

⁶ I had two sons who quarreled in the field, and there was no one to separate them. One killed the other.

⁷ Then the entire family turned against me. They said, 'Give us the man who killed his brother so that we can kill him because he took his brother's life. We're going to destroy the one who now would be the heir.' In this way they wish to extinguish the one burning coal that is left for me. They will not let my husband's name or descendants remain on the face of the earth."

⁸ "Go home," the king told the woman. "I will order someone to take care of this matter."

⁹ The woman from Tekoa said to the king, "Let me be held responsible for the sin, Your Majesty. Let my father's family be held responsible. Your Majesty and your throne are innocent."

¹⁰ The king said, "If anyone says anything against you, bring him to me. He'll never harm you again."

¹¹ She said, "Your Majesty, please pray to the LORD your God in order to keep an avenger from doing more harm by destroying my son." "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives," he said, "not a hair on your son's head will fall to the ground."

¹² The woman said, "Please let me say something else to you." "Speak," he said.

¹³ "Why have you devised something like this against God's people?" she said. "When you say this, you condemn yourself because you haven't brought back the one you banished!"

¹⁴ We are all going to die; we are all like water that is poured on the ground and can't be gathered up. But doesn't God forgive a person? He never plans to keep a banished person in exile.

¹⁵ "I've come to say this to you because the people have frightened me. So I thought, 'I will speak to the king about this. Maybe the king will do something for me, his subject.

¹⁶ Maybe the king will listen and rescue me, his subject, from the man who wants to cut off both me and my son from our God-given inheritance.'

¹⁷ I thought that you would reassure me. You are like God's Messenger, who is able to distinguish right from wrong. May the LORD your God be with you!"

¹⁸ The king said to the woman, "Please don't refuse to answer the question I'm going to ask you." The

woman responded, "Please speak, Your Majesty."

¹⁹ "Did Joab put you up to this?" the king asked. The woman answered, "I solemnly swear on your life, Your Majesty, you are absolutely right. Yes, your servant Joab ordered me to do this. He told me to say exactly what I said.

²⁰ Your servant Joab has done this to portray the matter in a different light. You are as wise as God's Messenger, who knows everything on earth."

²¹ Then the king told Joab, "This is what you'll do. Bring back the young man Absalom."

²² Joab quickly bowed down with his face touching the ground, and he blessed the king. He said, "Today I know that you have been kind to me because you have done what I wanted."

²³ So Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.

²⁴ But the king said, "Absalom should return to his own house. He will not see me." So Absalom returned to his house and didn't see the king.

²⁵ Now, no one in all Israel was praised for his good looks as much as Absalom was. He had no blemish from head to toe.

²⁶ At the end of every year, he used to cut his hair because it became heavy for him. When he cut the hair on his head and weighed it, it weighed five pounds according to the royal standard.

²⁷ Absalom had three sons and one daughter. His daughter Tamar was a beautiful woman.

²⁸ Absalom stayed in Jerusalem two full years without seeing the king.

²⁹ So Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come. Absalom sent for him a second time, but he still refused to come.

³⁰ So Absalom said to his servants, "Look, Joab's field is next to mine. He has barley in it. Go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set it on fire. Joab's servants came to him in grief and said, "Absalom's servants have set your field on fire."

³¹ Then Joab immediately went to Absalom at his home. "Why did your servants set my field on fire?" he asked.

³² Absalom answered Joab, "I sent someone to tell you to come here because I wanted to send you to the king to ask him why I had to come from Geshur. It would be better for me if I were still there. Let me see the king now! If I'm guilty of a sin, he should kill me."

³³ Joab went to the king and told him this. The king then called for Absalom, who came to the king and bowed down

with his face touching the ground. And the king kissed Absalom.

15 ¹ Soon after this, Absalom acquired a chariot, horses, and 50 men to run ahead of him.

² Absalom used to get up early and stand by the road leading to the city gate. When anyone had a case to be tried by King David, Absalom would ask, "Which city are you from?" After the person had told him which tribe in Israel he was from,

³ Absalom would say, "Your case is good and proper, but the king hasn't appointed anyone to hear it."

⁴ He would add, "I wish someone would make me judge in the land. Then anyone who had a case to be tried could come to me, and I would make sure that he got justice."

⁵ When anyone approached him and bowed down, Absalom would reach out, take hold of him, and kiss him.

⁶ This is what he did for all Israelites who came to the king to have him try their case. So Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

⁷ Four years later Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron and keep the vow I made to the LORD.

⁸ I made a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram. I said, 'If the LORD will bring me back to Jerusalem, I will serve the LORD.'"

⁹ "Go in peace," the king told him. So he went to Hebron.

¹⁰ But Absalom sent his loyal supporters to all the tribes of Israel and said, "When you hear the sound of the ram's horn, say, 'Absalom has become king in Hebron.'"

¹¹ Two hundred men invited from Jerusalem went with Absalom. They went innocently, knowing nothing about Absalom's plans.

¹² While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel, David's adviser, to come from his home in Giloh. Meanwhile, the conspiracy grew stronger, and the number of people siding with Absalom kept getting larger.

¹³ Someone came to tell David, "The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom."

¹⁴ David told all his men who were with him in Jerusalem, "Let's flee immediately, or none of us will escape from Absalom. Let's leave right away, or he'll catch up to us and bring disaster on us when he massacres the city."

¹⁵ The king's servants told him, "No matter what happens, we are Your Majesty's servants."

¹⁶ The king left on foot, and his whole household followed him except ten concubines whom the king left behind to take care of the palace.

¹⁷ As the king and his troops were leaving the city on foot, they stopped at the last house.

¹⁸ All his mercenaries passed by him; all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, Ittai, and all 600 men who had followed him from Gath were marching past the king.

¹⁹ The king asked Ittai from Gath, "Why should you go with us? Go back, and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland.

²⁰ You came to us just yesterday. Should I make you wander around with me when I don't even know where I'm going? Go back, and take your countrymen with you. May the LORD always show you kindness."

²¹ But Ittai answered the king, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD and the king live: Wherever you are, whether you're dead or alive, I'll be there."

²² So David told Ittai, "Go ahead and keep marching." So Ittai from Gath marched on with all his men and all the families who were with him.

²³ The whole country was crying loudly as all the troops were passing by. The king was crossing the Kidron Valley, and all the people were moving down the road toward the desert.

²⁴ Zadok and all the Levites with him were carrying the ark of God's promise. They set down the ark of God beside Abiathar until all the troops had withdrawn from the city.

²⁵ The king told Zadok, "Take God's ark back to the city. If the LORD looks favorably on me, he will allow me to

come back and see both it and its dwelling place again.

²⁶ But if he says, 'I'm not pleased with you,' let him do to me what he considers right."

²⁷ "Aren't you a seer?" the king asked Zadok the priest. "Go back to the city peacefully, and take your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan with you.

²⁸ I'll wait at the river crossings in the desert until I receive a message from you."

²⁹ So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

³⁰ David cried as he went up the Mount of Olives. He covered his head and walked barefoot. And all of the troops with him covered their heads and cried as they went.

³¹ Then David was told, "Ahithophel is among those conspiring with

Absalom." So David prayed, "LORD, make Ahithophel's advice foolish."

³² When David came to the top of the Mount of Olives where people worshiped God, Hushai from Archi's family was there to meet him. His clothes were torn, and he had dirt on his head.

³³ David told him, "If you go with me, you will only be a burden to me.

³⁴ But if you go back to the city and say to Absalom, 'Your Majesty, I'll be your servant. I was your father's servant in the past, but now I'll be your servant,' then you'll help me by undoing Ahithophel's advice.

³⁵ The priests Zadok and Abiathar will be with you there. When you hear anything from the royal palace, tell it to the priests Zadok and Abiathar.

³⁶ They have two sons with them: Zadok has Ahimaaz, and Abiathar has

Jonathan. Send them to report to me anything you hear."

³⁷ So Hushai, David's friend, went to the city as Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

16 ¹ When David had gone over the top of the Mount of Olives, Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, met him with a pair of saddled donkeys. They were loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 pieces of ripened fruit, and a full wineskin.

² "Why did you bring these?" David asked Ziba. "The donkeys are for the king's family to ride on," Ziba answered. "The bread and the ripe fruit are for your servants to eat. The wine is for those who become tired and thirsty in the desert."

³ "Where is your master Saul's grandson?" the king asked. "He's staying in Jerusalem," Ziba answered the king. "He said, 'Today the house of Israel

will give me back my grandfather's kingdom.'" "

⁴ The king told Ziba, "In that case everything that belonged to Mephibosheth now belongs to you." "I sincerely thank you," said Ziba. "I hope to remain in your good graces, Your Majesty."

⁵ When King David came to Bahurim, a man who was a distant cousin of Saul came out cursing. His name was Shimei, son of Gera.

⁶ He threw stones at David and David's servants, although all the people and all the warriors were shielding David.

⁷ Shimei cursed and said, "Get out! Get out, you bloodthirsty man! You worthless person!"

⁸ The LORD is paying you back for all the blood you spilled in the family of Saul, whom you succeeded as king. The LORD is giving the kingship to your son

Absalom. Now you're in trouble because you're a bloodthirsty man."

⁹ Abishai, Zeruiah's son, asked the king, "Why should this dead dog curse you, Your Majesty? Let me go over there and tear off his head."

¹⁰ But the king said, "You don't think like me at all, sons of Zeruiah. Let him curse. If the LORD has told him, 'Curse David,' should anyone ask, 'Why do you do that?'"

¹¹ David told Abishai and all his servants, "My own son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. Why, then, shouldn't this Benjaminite do this? Leave him alone. Let him curse, since the LORD has told him to do it.

¹² Maybe the LORD will see my misery and turn his curse into a blessing for me today."

¹³ As David and his men went along the road, Shimei was walking along the

hillside parallel to him. Shimei cursed, hurled stones, and threw dirt at David.

¹⁴ The king and all the people with him finally arrived at their destination and rested there.

¹⁵ Meanwhile, Absalom and all Israel's troops came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him.

¹⁶ When David's friend Hushai from Archi's family came to Absalom, he said, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

¹⁷ "Is that how loyal you are to your friend?" Absalom asked Hushai. "Why didn't you go with him?"

¹⁸ Hushai answered Absalom, "No, I want to be with the one whom the LORD, these people, and all Israel have chosen. I will be his friend and stay with him.

¹⁹ And besides, whom should I serve? Shouldn't it be his son? As I served your father, so I'll serve you."

²⁰ Then Absalom asked Ahithophel, "What's your advice? What should we do?"

²¹ Ahithophel told Absalom, "Sleep with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear about how you have made your father despise you. Everyone who is with you will support you even more."

²² So a tent was put up on the roof for Absalom, and he slept with his father's concubines in plain sight of Israel.

²³ In those days both David and Absalom thought that Ahithophel's advice was like getting an answer from God.

17 ¹ Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me choose 12,000 men and leave tonight to go after David.

² I'll attack him while he's tired and weak, and I'll cause him to panic. All the

people with him will flee, but I'll kill only him.

³ I'll return all the people to you as a bride is returned to her husband. Since you will be seeking the life of only one man, all the people will have peace."

⁴ Absalom and all the leaders of Israel approved this plan.

⁵ Absalom said, "Please call Hushai, who is descended from Archi's family, and let us hear what he, too, has to say."

⁶ When Hushai arrived, Absalom said to him, "Ahithophel has told us his plan. Should we do what he says? If not, tell us."

⁷ "This time Ahithophel's advice is no good," Hushai said to Absalom.

⁸ "You know your father and his men. They are warriors as fierce as a wild bear whose cubs have been stolen. Your father is an experienced soldier. He will not camp with the troops tonight.

⁹ He has already hidden in one of the ravines or some other place. If some of our soldiers are killed in the initial attack, others will definitely hear about it and say, 'The troops that support Absalom have been defeated.'

¹⁰ Even the bravest man with a heart like a lion would lose his courage, because all Israel knows that your father is a warrior and the men with him are brave.

¹¹ So my advice is to gather all Israel's troops from Dan to Beersheba, since they are as numerous as the sand on the seashore. Lead them into battle yourself.

¹² Then we'll attack him wherever we find him. We'll fall on him as dew falls on the ground. Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive.

¹³ If he retreats into a city, all Israel will bring ropes to that city and drag it into a

valley so that not even a pebble will be found there."

¹⁴ Absalom and all the people of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai from Archi's family is better than Ahithophel's advice." (The LORD had commanded Ahithophel's good advice to be defeated in order to ruin Absalom.)

¹⁵ Then Hushai told the priests Zadok and Abiathar, "Ahithophel advised Absalom and the leaders of Israel to do one thing, but I advised them to do something else.

¹⁶ Now send messengers quickly to tell David, 'Don't rest tonight in the river crossings in the desert, but make sure you cross the river, or Your Majesty and all the troops with him will be wiped out.'"

¹⁷ Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting at En Rogel. They could not risk being seen coming into the city, so a servant

girl was to go and tell them, and they were to go and tell King David.

¹⁸ But a young man saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz and told Absalom. So both of them left quickly and came to the home of a man in Bahurim who had a cistern in his courtyard, and they went down into it.

¹⁹ The man's wife took a cover, spread it over the top of the cistern, and scattered some grain over it so that no one could tell it was there.

²⁰ Absalom's servants came to the woman at her home. "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" they asked. The woman said, "They've crossed the stream." The servants looked for them but did not find them. So Absalom's servants returned to Jerusalem.

²¹ After Absalom's servants left, both men came out of the cistern and went and told King David. "Leave right away,"

they told David. "Cross the river quickly because this is what Ahithophel has advised against you...."

²² David and all the troops with him left to cross the Jordan River. When the dawn came, everyone had crossed the Jordan River.

²³ When Ahithophel saw that his advice hadn't been followed, he saddled his donkey, left, and went home to his own city. He gave instructions to his family. Then he hanged himself, died, and was buried in his father's tomb.

²⁴ David had already come to Mahanaim by the time Absalom and all the men of Israel with him crossed the Jordan River.

²⁵ Absalom appointed Amasa to take Joab's place as commander of the army. (Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra, a descendant of Ishmael. His mother was Abigail, the daughter of

Nahash and sister of Joab's mother Zeruah.)

²⁶ The Israelites and Absalom camped in the region of Gilead.

²⁷ When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi, son of Nahash from Rabbah in Ammon, and Machir, son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai from Rogelim in Gilead

²⁸ brought supplies and food for David and his troops: bedding, bowls, pots, wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils,

²⁹ honey, buttermilk, sheep, and calves. They brought these things because they thought, "The troops in the desert are hungry, exhausted, and thirsty."

18 ¹ David called together the troops that were with him. He appointed commanders in charge of regiments and battalions.

² David put a third of the troops under Joab's command, another third under Joab's brother Abishai (Zeruiah's son), and the last third under Ittai from Gath. "I am going into battle with you," the king said to the troops.

³ "You're not going with us," the troops said. "If we flee, they won't care about us, and if half of us die, they won't care either. But you're worth 10,000 of us. It's better for you to be ready to send us help from the city."

⁴ "I'll do what you think best," the king responded. So the king stood by the gate while all the troops marched out by battalions and regiments.

⁵ The king ordered Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "Treat the young man Absalom gently for my sake." All the troops heard him give all the commanders this order regarding Absalom.

⁶ So the troops went out to the country to fight Israel in the forest of Ephraim.

⁷ There David's men defeated Israel's army, and the massacre was sizable that day—20,000 men.

⁸ The fighting spread over the whole country. That day the woods devoured more people than the battle.

⁹ Absalom happened to come face to face with some of David's men. He was riding on a mule, and the mule went under the tangled branches of a large tree. Absalom's head became caught in the tree. So he was left hanging in midair when the mule that was under him ran away.

¹⁰ A man who saw this told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in a tree."

¹¹ "What! You saw that!" Joab said to the man who told him. "Why didn't you strike him to the ground? Then I would

have felt obligated to give you four ounces of silver and a belt."

¹² But the man told Joab, "Even if I felt the weight of 25 pounds of silver in my hand, I wouldn't raise my hand against the king's son. We heard the order the king gave you, Abishai, and Ittai: 'Protect the young man Absalom for my sake.'

¹³ If I had done something treacherous to him, would you have stood by me? Like everything else, it wouldn't stay hidden from the king."

¹⁴ Then Joab said, "I shouldn't waste time with you like this." He took three sharp sticks and plunged them into Absalom's heart while he was still alive in the tree.

¹⁵ Then ten of Joab's armorbearers surrounded Absalom, attacked him, and killed him.

¹⁶ Joab blew the ram's horn to stop their fighting, and the troops returned from pursuing Israel.

¹⁷ They took Absalom, threw him into a huge pit in the forest, and piled a large heap of stones over him. Meanwhile, all Israel fled and went back to their homes.

¹⁸ (While he was still living, Absalom had taken a rock and set it up for himself in the king's valley. He said, "I have no son to keep the memory of my name alive." He called the rock by his name, and it is still called Absalom's Monument today.)

¹⁹ Then Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, said, "Let me run and bring the king the good news that the LORD has freed him from his enemies."

²⁰ But Joab told him, "You won't be the man carrying good news today. You can carry the news some other day. You must

not deliver the news today because the king's son is dead."

²¹ Then Joab said to a man from Sudan, "Go, tell the king what you saw." The messenger bowed down with his face touching the ground in front of Joab and then ran off.

²² Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, spoke to Joab again, "Whatever may happen, I also want to run after the Sudanese messenger." "Now, son, why should you deliver the message?" Joab asked. "You won't be rewarded for this news."

²³ "Whatever happens, I'd like to run," replied Ahimaaz. "Run," Joab told him. So Ahimaaz ran along the valley road and got ahead of the Sudanese messenger.

²⁴ David was sitting between the two gates while the watchman walked along the roof of the gate by the wall. As he looked, he saw a man running alone.

²⁵ The watchman called and alerted the king. "If he's alone," the king said, "he has good news to tell." The runner continued to come closer.

²⁶ When the watchman saw another man running, the watchman called, "There's another man running alone." The king said, "This one is also bringing good news."

²⁷ The watchman said, "It seems to me that the first one runs like Ahimaaz, Zadok's son." "He's a good man," the king said. "He must be coming with good news."

²⁸ Then Ahimaaz came up to the king, greeted him, and bowed down in front of him. Ahimaaz said, "May the LORD your God be praised. He has handed over the men who rebelled against Your Majesty."

²⁹ "Is the young man Absalom alright?" the king asked. Ahimaaz answered, "I

saw a lot of confusion when Joab sent me away, but I didn't know what it meant."

³⁰ "Step aside, and stand here," the king said. He stepped aside and stood there.

³¹ Then the Sudanese messenger came. "Good news for Your Majesty!" he said. "Today the LORD has freed you from all who turned against you."

³² "Is the young man Absalom alright?" the king asked. The Sudanese messenger answered, "May your enemies and all who turned against you be like that young man!"

³³ The king was shaken by the news. He went to the room above the gate and cried. "My son Absalom!" he said as he went. "My son, my son Absalom! I wish I had died in your place! Absalom, my son, my son!"

19 ¹ Joab was told, "The king is crying and mourning for Absalom."

² The victory of that day was turned into mourning because all the troops heard that the king was grieving for his son.

³ That day the troops sneaked into the city as if they had fled from battle and were ashamed of it.

⁴ The king covered his face and cried loudly, "My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!"

⁵ Then Joab came into the house. "Today you have made all your men feel ashamed," he said. "They saved your life and the lives of your sons, daughters, wives, and concubines today.

⁶ You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. Today, you have made it clear that your commanders and servants mean nothing to you. I think you would be pleased if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead.

⁷ Now, get up, go out, and encourage your men. I swear to you by the LORD that if you don't go out, no one will stay with you tonight, and that will be worse than all the trouble you've had in your entire life."

⁸ The king sat in the gateway. When all the troops were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway," they came to the king. Meanwhile, Israel had fled and went back to their own homes.

⁹ All the people in all the tribes of Israel were arguing with one another, saying, "The king rescued us from our enemies and saved us from the Philistines, but now he has fled from Absalom and left the country.

¹⁰ However, Absalom, whom we anointed to rule us, has died in battle. Why is no one talking about bringing back the king?"

¹¹ What all Israel was saying reached the king at his house. So King David sent this message to the priests Zadok and Abiathar: "Ask the leaders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last tribe to bring the king back to his palace?

¹² You are my relatives, my own flesh and blood. Why should you be the last to bring back the king?'

¹³ And tell Amasa, 'Aren't you my flesh and blood? May God strike me dead unless you are given Joab's place to serve me always as the commander of the army.'"

¹⁴ All the people of Judah were in total agreement. So they sent the king this message: "Come back with all your servants."

¹⁵ The king came back to the Jordan River, and the people of Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and bring him across the Jordan River.

¹⁶ Shimei, Gera's son from the tribe of Benjamin and the town of Bahurim, hurried down with the people of Judah to meet King David.

¹⁷ One thousand people from Benjamin were with him. And Ziba, the servant of Saul's family, rushed to the Jordan River across from the king. Ziba brought his 15 sons and 20 servants.

¹⁸ They crossed the river to bring over the king's family and to do anything else the king wanted. Shimei, Gera's son, bowed down in front of the king as he was going to cross the Jordan River.

¹⁹ He pleaded with the king, "Don't remember the crime I committed the day you left Jerusalem. Don't hold it against me or even think about it, Your Majesty.

²⁰ I know I've sinned. Today I've come as the first of all the house of Joseph to meet you."

²¹ But Abishai, Zeruah's son, replied, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for cursing the LORD'S anointed king?"

²² David responded, "Are you sure we're from the same family, sons of Zeruah? You are my enemies today. Should anyone in Israel be killed today? Don't I know that I'm king of Israel again?"

²³ The king promised Shimei, "You won't die," and the king swore to it.

²⁴ Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, went to meet the king. He had not tended to his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes from the day the king left until he came home safely.

²⁵ When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?"

²⁶ He answered, "My servant deceived me, Your Majesty. Since I am disabled, I

said, 'Saddle the donkey for me, and I'll ride on it and go with the king.'

²⁷ He told you lies about me, Your Majesty. However, you are like God's Messenger. Do what you think is right.

²⁸ You could have killed anyone in my entire family, Your Majesty. Instead, you've seated me with those who eat at your table. So I no longer have the right to complain to the king."

²⁹ The king asked him, "Why do you keep talking about it? I've said that you and Ziba should divide the land."

³⁰ "Let him take it all," Mephibosheth told the king. "It's enough for me that you've come home safely."

³¹ Barzillai, the man from Gilead, came from Rogelim with the king to the Jordan River to send him on his way.

³² Barzillai was an elderly man, 80 years old. Because he was a very rich man, he

had provided the king with food while he was staying at Mahanaim.

³³ The king told Barzillai, "Cross the river with me. I'll provide for you in Jerusalem."

³⁴ Barzillai replied, "I don't have much longer to live. I shouldn't go with Your Majesty to Jerusalem.

³⁵ I'm 80 years old now. How can I tell what is pleasant and what is not? Can I taste what I eat or drink? Can I still hear the singing of men and women? Why should I now become a burden to you, Your Majesty?

³⁶ I'll just cross the Jordan River with you. Why should you give me such a reward?

³⁷ Please let me go back so that I can die in my city near the grave of my father and mother. But here is Chimham. Let him go across with you. And do for him what you think is right."

³⁸ "Chimham will go across with me," the king said. "I will do for him whatever you want. Anything you wish I'll do for you."

³⁹ All the troops crossed the Jordan River, and then the king crossed. The king kissed Barzillai and blessed him. Then Barzillai went back home.

⁴⁰ The king crossed the river to Gilgal, and Chimham went with him. All the troops from Judah and half of the troops from Israel brought the king across.

⁴¹ Then all the people of Israel kept coming to the king. They asked, "Why did our cousins, the people of Judah, kidnap you and bring Your Majesty and your family and men across the Jordan River?"

⁴² All the people of Judah answered the people of Israel, "Because the king is our relative. Why are you angry about this?"

Did we eat the king's food, or did he give us any gifts?"

⁴³ The people of Israel answered the people of Judah, "We have ten times your interest in the king and a greater claim on David than you have. Why, then, do you despise us? Weren't we the first to suggest bringing back our king?" But the people of Judah spoke even more harshly than the people of Israel.

20 ¹ A good-for-nothing man by the name of Sheba, Bichri's son, from the tribe of Benjamin happened to be at Gilgal. He blew a ram's horn to announce, "We have no share in David's kingdom. We won't receive an inheritance from Jesse's son. Everyone to his own tent, Israel!"

² So all the people of Israel left David to follow Sheba, Bichri's son. But the people of Judah remained loyal to their

king on his way from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

³ When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to look after the palace and put them in a house under guard. He provided for them but no longer slept with them. So they lived like widows in confinement until they died.

⁴ The king told Amasa, "Call the people of Judah together for me, and in three days be here yourself."

⁵ Amasa went to call Judah together, but he took longer to do it than David had given him.

⁶ David then told Abishai, "Sheba, son of Bichri, will do us more harm than Absalom. Take my men and go after him, or he will find some fortified cities and take the best ones for himself."

⁷ So Joab's men, the Cherethites, Pelethites, and all the soldiers went with

Abishai. They left Jerusalem to pursue Sheba, Bichri's son.

⁸ When they were at the large rock in Gibeon, Amasa met them there. Joab wore a military uniform, and strapped over it at his hip was a sword in a scabbard. As he stepped forward, the sword dropped into his hand.

⁹ "How are you, my brother?" Joab asked Amasa. He took hold of Amasa's beard with his right hand to kiss him.

¹⁰ Amasa wasn't on his guard against the sword in Joab's left hand. Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and his intestines poured out on the ground. (He died without being stabbed again.) Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba, son of Bichri.

¹¹ One of Joab's young men stood beside Amasa and said, "Anyone who favors Joab and is on David's side should follow Joab."

¹² Amasa was wallowing in his blood in the middle of the road. When the man saw that all the troops stopped as they came to the body, he carried Amasa from the road to the field and threw a sheet over him.

¹³ As soon as he was moved from the road, everyone followed Joab and pursued Sheba, Bichri's son.

¹⁴ Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel (Beth Maacah). All the Berites were gathered together and followed him to the city.

¹⁵ Joab's army came and attacked him in Abel (Beth Maacah). They put up a dirt ramp against the city, and it stood level with the outer wall. All the troops with Joab were trying to destroy the wall and tear it down.

¹⁶ Then a clever woman called from the city, "Listen, listen! Tell Joab to come here so that I can talk to him."

¹⁷ He came near, and she asked, "Are you Joab?" "I am," he answered. "Listen to what I have to say," she told him. "I'm listening," he answered.

¹⁸ So she said, "There's an old saying: 'Be sure to ask at Abel before doing anything. That's the way they settle matters.'

¹⁹ We are peaceful and faithful Israelites. Are you trying to destroy a mother city in Israel? Why should you swallow up what belongs to the LORD?"

²⁰ Joab answered, "That's unthinkable! I don't wish to swallow it up or destroy it.

²¹ That isn't the case. A man from the mountains of Ephraim by the name of Sheba, son of Bichri, has rebelled against King David. Give him to me, and I'll withdraw from the city." "That's fine," the woman told Joab. "His head will be thrown to you from the wall."

²² Then the woman went to all the people with her clever plan. They cut off Sheba's head and threw it to Joab. He blew the ram's horn, and everyone scattered and withdrew from the city and went home. Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

²³ Now, Joab was put in charge of Israel's whole army. Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, was in charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites.

²⁴ Adoram was in charge of forced labor. Jehoshaphat, son of Ahilud, was the royal historian.

²⁵ Sheva was the royal scribe. Zadok and Abiathar were priests.

²⁶ And Ira, a descendant of Jair, was a priest to David.

21 ¹ In the time of David, there was a famine for three successive years, and David asked the LORD'S advice about it. The LORD answered,

"It's because of Saul and his family. They are guilty of murder because they killed the people of Gibeon."

² (The Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were left over from the Amorites. Although the Israelites had sworn to spare them, Saul, in his eagerness, tried to destroy them for Israel and Judah.) The king called the Gibeonites

³ and asked them, "What can I do for you? What should I give you to make peace with you so that you will bless what belongs to the LORD?"

⁴ "We do not want silver or gold from Saul's family," the Gibeonites answered him. "And none of us wants to kill anyone in Israel." The king asked, "What are you saying that I should do for you?"

⁵ They answered the king, "Give us seven of the male descendants of the man who wanted to finish us off. He

planned to wipe us out to keep us from staying anywhere in Israel's territory.

⁶ We will execute them in the LORD'S presence at Saul's town Gibeah." (It was Saul whom the LORD had chosen.) "I will give them to you," the king said.

⁷ But the king spared Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson, because of the oath in the LORD'S name between David and Jonathan, son of Saul.

⁸ The king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons whom Rizpah (Aiah's daughter) gave birth to for Saul, and five sons whom Merab (Saul's daughter) gave birth to for Adriel, son of Barzillai from Meholah.

⁹ The king handed them over to the Gibeonites, who executed them on the mountain in the LORD'S presence. All seven died together. They were killed

at the beginning of the harvest, when people started harvesting barley.

¹⁰ Rizpah (Aiah's daughter) took sackcloth and stretched it out on the rock for herself from the beginning of the harvest until the sky rained on the dead bodies. She wouldn't let any birds land on them during the day or any wild animals come near them during the night.

¹¹ When David was told what Saul's concubine Rizpah (Aiah's daughter) had done,

¹² David went and took the bones of Saul and of his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. They had stolen them from the public square of Beth Shean, where the Philistines had hung them the day they killed Saul at Gilboa.

¹³ When David brought up the bones of Saul and Jonathan, his men gathered the bones of those who had been executed.

¹⁴ Then they buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the land of Benjamin, in Zela, in the tomb of Saul's father Kish. They did everything the king ordered. After that, God answered the prayers for the land.

¹⁵ Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. So David and his men went to fight the Philistines, but David became exhausted.

¹⁶ A descendant of Haraphah named Benob, who had a bronze spear weighing 7½ pounds which he wore on a new belt, captured David and intended to kill him.

¹⁷ But Abishai, son of Zeruah, came to help David. He attacked the Philistine and killed him. Then David's men swore an oath, saying, "You'll never go into

battle with us again. The lamp of Israel must never be extinguished."

¹⁸ After this, there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbecai from Hushah killed Saph, another descendant of Haraphah.

¹⁹ When more fighting broke out with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan, son of Jaare Oregim from Bethlehem, killed Goliath of Gath. (The shaft of Goliath's spear was like a beam used by weavers.)

²⁰ In another battle at Gath, there was a tall man who had a total of 24 fingers and toes: six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He also was a descendant of Haraphah.

²¹ When he challenged Israel, Jonathan, son of David's brother Shimei, killed him.

²² These four were descendants of Haraphah from Gath, and David and his men killed them.

22 ¹ David sang this song to the LORD when the LORD rescued him from all his enemies, especially from Saul.

² He said, The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my Savior,

³ my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, the strength of my salvation, my stronghold, my refuge, and my Savior who saved me from violence.

⁴ The LORD should be praised. I called on him, and I was saved from my enemies.

⁵ The waves of death had surrounded me. The torrents of destruction had overwhelmed me.

⁶ The ropes of the grave had surrounded me. The clutches of death had confronted me.

⁷ I called on the LORD in my distress. I called to my God for help. He heard my voice from his temple, and my cry for help reached his ears.

⁸ Then the earth shook and quaked. Even the foundations of the heavens trembled. They shook violently because he was angry.

⁹ Smoke went up from his nostrils, and a raging fire came out of his mouth. Glowing coals flared up from it.

¹⁰ He spread apart the heavens and came down with a dark cloud under his feet.

¹¹ He rode on one of the angels as he flew, and he soared on the wings of the wind.

¹² He surrounded himself with darkness. He made the dark rain clouds his covering.

¹³ Out of the brightness in front of him, he made lightning.

¹⁴ The LORD thundered from heaven. The Most High made his voice heard.

¹⁵ He shot arrows and scattered them. He flashed streaks of lightning and threw them into confusion.

¹⁶ Then the ocean floor could be seen. The foundations of the earth were laid bare at the LORD'S stern warning, at the blast of the breath from his nostrils.

¹⁷ He reached down from high above and took hold of me. He pulled me out of the raging water.

¹⁸ He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, because they were too strong for me.

¹⁹ On the day when I faced disaster, they confronted me, but the LORD became my defense.

²⁰ He brought me out to a wide-open place. He rescued me because he was pleased with me.

²¹ The LORD rewarded me because of my righteousness, because my hands are clean. He paid me back

²² because I have kept the ways of the LORD and I have not wickedly turned away from my God,

²³ because all his judgments are in front of me and I have not turned away from his laws.

²⁴ I was innocent as far as he was concerned. I have kept myself from guilt.

²⁵ The LORD paid me back because of my righteousness, because he can see that I am clean.

²⁶ In dealing with faithful people you are faithful, with innocent warriors you are innocent,

²⁷ with pure people you are pure. In dealing with devious people you are clever.

²⁸ You save humble people, but your eyes bring down arrogant people.

²⁹ O LORD, you are my lamp. The LORD turns my darkness into light.

³⁰ With you I can attack a line of soldiers. With my God I can break through barricades.

³¹ God's way is perfect! The promise of the LORD has proven to be true. He is a shield to all those who take refuge in him.

³² Who is God but the LORD? Who is a rock other than our God?

³³ God arms me with strength. His perfect way sets me free.

³⁴ He makes my feet like those of a deer and gives me sure footing on high places.

³⁵ He trains my hands for battle so that my arms can bend an archer's bow of bronze.

³⁶ You have given me the shield of your salvation. Your help makes me great.

³⁷ You make a wide path for me to walk on so that my feet do not slip.

³⁸ I chased my enemies and destroyed them. I did not return until I had ended their lives.

³⁹ I ended their lives by shattering them. They were unable to get up. They fell under my feet.

⁴⁰ You armed me with strength for battle. You made my opponents bow at my feet.

⁴¹ You made my enemies turn their backs to me, and I destroyed those who hated me.

⁴² They looked, but there was no one to save them. They looked to the LORD, but he did not answer them.

⁴³ I beat them into a powder as fine as the dust on the ground. I crushed them and stomped on them like the dirt on the streets.

⁴⁴ You rescued me from my conflicts with my people. You kept me as the

leader of nations. A people I did not know will serve me.

⁴⁵ Foreigners will cringe in front of me. As soon as they hear of me, they will obey me.

⁴⁶ Foreigners will lose heart, although they are armed in their fortifications.

⁴⁷ The LORD lives! Thanks be to my rock! May God, the rock of my salvation, be glorified.

⁴⁸ God gives me vengeance! He brings people under my authority.

⁴⁹ He frees me from my enemies. You lift me up above my opponents. You rescue me from violent people.

⁵⁰ That is why I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the nations and make music to praise your name.

⁵¹ He gives great victories to his king. He shows mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his descendant forever.

23 ¹ These are the last words of David: "Here is the declaration by David, son of Jesse—the declaration by the man whom God raised up, whom the God of Jacob anointed, the singer of Israel's psalms:

² "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me. His words were on my tongue.

³ The God of Israel spoke to them. The rock of Israel told me, 'The one who rules humans with justice rules with the fear of God.

⁴ He is like the morning light as the sun rises, like a morning without clouds, like the brightness after a rainstorm. The rain makes the grass grow from the earth.'

⁵ "Truly, God considers my house to be that way, because he has made a lasting promise to me, with every detail arranged and assured. He promised everything that helps me, everything

that pleases me. Truly, he makes these things happen.

⁶ "Worthless people are like thorns. All of them are thrown away, because they cannot be picked by hand.

⁷ A person who touches them uses iron tools or the shaft of a spear. Fire will burn them up completely wherever they are."

⁸ These are the names of David's fighting men: Josheb Basshebeth from Tahkemon's family was leader of the three. He used a spear to kill 800 men on one occasion.

⁹ Next in rank to him was Eleazar, another one of the three fighting men. He was the son of Dodo and grandson of Aho. Eleazar was with David at Pas Dammim when the Philistines gathered there for battle. When the soldiers from Israel retreated,

¹⁰ he attacked and killed Philistines until his hand got tired and stuck to his sword. So the LORD won an impressive victory that day. The army returned to Eleazar, but they only returned to strip the dead.

¹¹ Next in rank to him was Shammah, the son of Agee from Harar. The Philistines had gathered at Lehi, where there was a field of ripe lentils. When the troops fled from the Philistines,

¹² he stood in the middle of the field and defended it by killing Philistines. So the LORD won an impressive victory.

¹³ At harvest time three of the thirty leading men came to David at the cave of Adullam when a troop from the Philistine army was camping in the valley of Rephaim.

¹⁴ While David was in the fortified camp, Philistine troops were at Bethlehem.

¹⁵ When David became thirsty, he said, "I wish I could have a drink of water from the well at the city gate of Bethlehem."

¹⁶ So the three fighting men burst into the Philistine camp and drew water from the well. They brought it to David, but he refused to drink it. He poured it out as an offering to the LORD and said,

¹⁷ "It's unthinkable that I would do this, LORD. This is the blood of men who risked their lives!" So he refused to drink it. These are the things which the three fighting men did.

¹⁸ Joab's brother Abishai, Zeruiah's son, was the leader of the thirty. He used his spear to kill 300 men. He was as famous as the three

¹⁹ and was honored more than they were. So he became their captain, but he didn't become a member of the three.

²⁰ Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, was from Kabzeel and was a brave man who did

many things. He killed two distinguished soldiers from Moab. He also went into a pit and killed a lion on the day it snowed.

²¹ And he killed a handsome Egyptian. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand. Benaiah went to him with a club, grabbed the spear from him, and killed him with it.

²² These are the things that Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, did. He was as famous as the three fighting men.

²³ He was honored more than the thirty, but he was not a member of the three. David put him in charge of his bodyguards.

²⁴ One of the thirty was Joab's brother Asahel. The thirty leading men were Elhanan (son of Dodo) from Bethlehem,

²⁵ Shammah from Harod, Elikah from Harod,

²⁶ Helez the Paltite, Ira (son of Ikkesh) from Tekoa,

²⁷ Abiezer from Anathoth, Mebunnai (son of Hushai),

²⁸ Zalmon (descendant of Ahohi), Maharai from Netophah,

²⁹ Heleb (son of Baanah) from Netophah, Ittai (son of Ribai) from Gibeah in Benjamin,

³⁰ Benaiah from Pirathon, Hiddai from the Gaash ravines,

³¹ Abi Albon from Beth Arabah, Azmaveth from Bahurim,

³² Elihba from Shaalbon, Bene Jashen,

³³ Jonathan (son of Shammah the Hararite), Ahiam (son of Sharar the Hararite),

³⁴ Eliphelet (son of Ahasbai and grandson of a man from Maacah), EIAM (son of Ahithophel) from Gilo,

³⁵ Hezrai from Carmel, Paarai from Arabah,

³⁶ Igal (son of Nathan) from Zobah, Bani from the tribe of Gad,

³⁷ Zelek from Ammon, Naharai from Beeroth, armorbearer for Zeruah's son Joab,

³⁸ Ira (descendant of Ithra), Gareb (descendant of Ithra),

³⁹ Uriah the Hittite—37 in all.

24 ¹ The LORD became angry with Israel again, so he provoked David to turn against Israel. He said, "Go, count Israel and Judah."

² King David said to Joab, the commander of the army who was with him, "Go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and count the people. That way I will know how many there are."

³ Joab responded to the king, "May the LORD your God multiply the people a hundred times over, and may Your Majesty live to see it. But why does Your Majesty wish to do this?"

⁴ However, the king overruled Joab and the commanders of the army. So they left the king in order to count the people of Israel.

⁵ They crossed the Jordan River and camped at Aroer, south of the city in the middle of the valley. Then they went to Gad and to Jazer.

⁶ They went to Gilead and to Tahtim Hodshi and then to Dan Jaan and around toward Sidon.

⁷ They went to the fortified city of Tyre and all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went to Beersheba in the Negev of Judah.

⁸ When they had covered the whole country, they came to Jerusalem after 9 months and 20 days.

⁹ Joab reported the census figures to the king: In Israel there were 800,000 able-bodied men who could serve in the army, and in Judah there were 500,000.

¹⁰ After David counted the people, his conscience troubled him. David said to the LORD, "I have committed a terrible sin by what I have done. LORD, please forgive me because I have acted very foolishly."

¹¹ When David got up in the morning, the LORD spoke his word to the prophet Gad, David's seer.

¹² "Go and tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I'm offering you three choices. Choose the one you want me to do to you.'"

¹³ When Gad came to David, he told David this and asked, "Should seven years of famine come to you and your land, or three months during which you flee from your enemies as they pursue you, or should there be a three-day plague in your land? Think it over, and decide what answer I should give the one who sent me."

¹⁴ "I'm in a desperate situation," David told Gad. "Please let us fall into the LORD'S hands because he is very merciful. But don't let me fall into human hands."

¹⁵ So the LORD sent a plague among the Israelites from that morning until the time he had chosen. Of the people from Dan to Beersheba, 70,000 died.

¹⁶ But when the Messenger stretched out his arm to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD changed his mind about the disaster. "Enough!" he said to the Messenger who was destroying the people. "Put down your weapon." The Messenger of the LORD was at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁷ When David saw the Messenger who had been killing the people, he said to the LORD, "I've sinned. I've done wrong. What have these sheep done? Please

let your punishment be against me and against my father's family."

¹⁸ That day Gad came to David and said to him, "Go, set up an altar for the LORD at Araunah the Jebusite's threshing floor."

¹⁹ David went as Gad had told him and as the LORD had commanded him.

²⁰ When Araunah looked down and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down with his face touching the ground in front of the king.

²¹ "Why has Your Majesty come to me?" Araunah asked. David answered, "To buy the threshing floor from you and to build an altar for the LORD. Then the plague on the people will stop."

²² Araunah said to David, "Take it, Your Majesty, and offer whatever you think is right. There are oxen for the burnt

offering, and there are threshers and oxen yokes for firewood."

²³ All this Araunah gave to the king and said, "May the LORD your God accept you."

²⁴ And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy [it] of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

²⁵ And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

1 Kings

1 ¹ King David had grown old, and although he was covered with blankets, he couldn't get warm.

² His officials told him, "Your Majesty, let us search for a young woman who has never been married. She can stay with you and be your servant. She can lie in your arms and keep you warm."

³ So they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful, young woman. They found Abishag from Shunem and brought her to the king.

⁴ The woman was very beautiful. She became the king's servant and took care of him, but the king did not make love to her.

⁵ Adonijah, son of Haggith, was very handsome. His mother gave birth to him

after Maacah had Absalom. Adonijah was boasting that he was king. So he got a chariot and horses and 50 men to run ahead of him.

⁶ His father had never confronted him by asking why he was doing this.

⁷ But Adonijah had discussed his actions with Joab (son of Zeruah) and with the priest Abiathar, so they supported him.

⁸ But the priest Zadok, Benaiah (son of Jehoiada), the prophet Nathan, Shimei, Rei, and David's thirty fighting men did not join Adonijah.

⁹ Adonijah sacrificed sheep, cattle, and fattened calves at Zoheleth Rock near En Rogel. He had invited all his brothers, the king's other sons, all the men of Judah, and the king's officials.

¹⁰ But he didn't invite the prophet Nathan, Benaiah, the fighting men, or his brother Solomon.

¹¹ Then Nathan asked Solomon's mother Bathsheba, "Haven't you heard that Adonijah, Haggith's son, has become king, and our master David doesn't even know about it?"

¹² Bathsheba, let me give you some advice about how to save your life and your son's life.

¹³ Go to King David and ask him, 'Your Majesty, didn't you swear to me that my son Solomon will be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne? Why is Adonijah acting as king?'

¹⁴ And while you're still there talking to the king, I'll come in and confirm what you have said."

¹⁵ Bathsheba went to the king in his private room. The king was very old, and Abishag from Shunem was taking care of him.

¹⁶ Bathsheba knelt and bowed down in front of the king. "What do you want?" the king asked.

¹⁷ "Sir," she answered, "You took an oath to the LORD your God. You said that my son Solomon will be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne.

¹⁸ But now, you see, Adonijah has become king, and you don't even know anything about it, Your Majesty.

¹⁹ He has sacrificed many fattened calves, bulls, and sheep. He has invited all the king's sons, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army to his feast. But he hasn't invited your servant Solomon.

²⁰ All Israel is looking to you, Your Majesty, to tell them who should succeed you on your throne.

²¹ Otherwise, my son Solomon and I will be treated like criminals when you lie down in death with your ancestors."

²² While she was still talking to the king, the prophet Nathan arrived.

²³ The servants told the king, "The prophet Nathan is here." When he came to the king, he bowed down in front of him.

²⁴ Nathan said, "Your Majesty, you must have said that Adonijah will be king after you and that he will sit on your throne,

²⁵ because today he went and sacrificed many bulls, fattened calves, and sheep. He invited all the king's sons, the army's commanders, and the priest Abiathar to his feast. They are eating and drinking with him and saying, 'Long live King Adonijah!'

²⁶ But he didn't invite me or the priest Zadok or Benaiah, who is Jehoiada's son, or your servant Solomon.

²⁷ Did you allow this to happen without telling me who would sit on your throne next?"

²⁸ Then King David answered, "Call Bathsheba in here." So she stood in front of him,

²⁹ and he swore an oath. He said, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD who has saved my life from all trouble lives,

³⁰ I will do today exactly what I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel. Your son Solomon will be king after me. He will sit on my throne."

³¹ Then Bathsheba bowed down with her face touching the ground in front of the king. "May Your Majesty, King David, live forever!" she said.

³² King David said, "Summon the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, and Benaiah, son of Jehoiada." So they came to the king,

³³ and he said, "Take my officials with you. Put my son Solomon on my mule, and take him to Gihon.

³⁴ Have the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan anoint him king of Israel there. Then blow the ram's horn and say, 'Long live King Solomon!'

³⁵ Follow him back here when he comes to sit on my throne. He will be king in place of me. I have appointed him to be the leader of Israel and Judah."

³⁶ "So be it!" Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, answered the king. "The LORD your God says so too.

³⁷ As the LORD has been with you, so may he be with Solomon. May Solomon be an even greater king than you, King David."

³⁸ Then the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, Benaiah (son of Jehoiada), the Cherethites, and the Pelethites put Solomon on King David's mule and brought him to Gihon.

³⁹ The priest Zadok took the container of olive oil from the tent and anointed

Solomon. They blew the ram's horn, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!"

⁴⁰ All the people followed him, blew flutes, and celebrated so loudly that their voices shook the ground.

⁴¹ Adonijah and all his guests heard this as they finished eating. When Joab heard the sound of the horn, he asked, "What's the reason for the noise in the city?"

⁴² He was still speaking when Jonathan, son of the priest Abiathar, arrived. "Come in," Adonijah said. "You're an honorable man, so you must be bringing good news."

⁴³ "Not at all," Jonathan answered Adonijah. "His Majesty King David has made Solomon king.

⁴⁴ The king has sent the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, Benaiah (son of Jehoiada), the Cherethites, and the

Pelethites with him. They have put him on the king's mule.

⁴⁵ The priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan have anointed him king at Gihon. They have come from there celebrating, so the city is excited. That is the sound you heard.

⁴⁶ Solomon is now seated on the royal throne.

⁴⁷ Furthermore, the royal officials have come to congratulate His Majesty King David, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's name more famous than yours and his reign greater than your reign.' The king himself bowed down on his bed

⁴⁸ and said, 'Praise the LORD God of Israel who has let me see the heir to my throne.'

⁴⁹ Adonijah's guests were frightened, so they got up and scattered in all directions.

⁵⁰ Adonijah was afraid of Solomon. He got up, went to the tent of meeting, and took hold of the horns of the altar.

⁵¹ Someone told Solomon, "Adonijah is afraid of you, King Solomon. He is holding on to the horns of the altar and saying, 'Make King Solomon swear to me today that he will not have me killed.'"

⁵² Solomon said, "If he will behave like an honorable man, not one hair on his head will fall to the ground. But if he does anything wrong, he will die."

⁵³ King Solomon sent men to take him from the altar. Adonijah bowed down in front of King Solomon. "Go home," Solomon told him.

2 ¹ When David was about to die, he instructed his son Solomon,

² "I'm about to leave this world. Be strong and mature.

³ Fulfill your duty to the LORD your God. Obey his directions, laws, commands,

rules, and written instructions as they are recorded in Moses' Teachings. Then you'll succeed in everything you do wherever you may go.

⁴ You'll succeed because the LORD will keep the promise he made to me: 'If your descendants are faithful to me with all their hearts and lives, you will never fail to have an heir on the throne of Israel.'

⁵ "You know what Joab (Zeruiah's son) did to me and to the two commanders of Israel's army—Abner, son of Ner, and Amasa, son of Jether. Joab killed them. When there was peace, he shed blood as if it were wartime. With their blood he stained the belt around his waist and the shoes on his feet.

⁶ Use your wisdom. Don't let that gray-haired, old man go to his grave peacefully.

⁷ "Be kind to the sons of Barzillai from Gilead. Let them eat at your table. They helped me when I was fleeing from your brother Absalom.

⁸ "Shimei, son of Gera from Bahurim in Benjamin, is still with you. He cursed me repeatedly when I went to Mahanaim. But when he came to meet me at the Jordan River, I took an oath by the LORD and said, 'As long as I'm king, I won't have you killed.'

⁹ Now, don't let him go unpunished. You are wise and know what to do to him: Put that gray-haired, old man into his grave by slaughtering him."

¹⁰ David lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David.

¹¹ He ruled as king of Israel for 40 years. He ruled for 7 years in Hebron and for 33 years in Jerusalem.

¹² Solomon sat on his father David's throne, and his power was firmly established.

¹³ Then Adonijah, son of Haggith, went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. "Is this a friendly visit?" she asked. "Yes," he answered.

¹⁴ Then he added, "I have a matter to discuss with you." "What is it?" she asked.

¹⁵ He said, "You know the kingship was mine. All Israel expected me to be their king. But the kingship has been turned over to my brother because the LORD gave it to him.

¹⁶ Now I want to ask you for one thing. Don't refuse me." "What is it?" she asked.

¹⁷ He said, "Please ask King Solomon to give me Abishag from Shunem as my wife. He will not refuse you."

¹⁸ "Very well," Bathsheba answered. "I will talk to the king for you."

¹⁹ Bathsheba went to King Solomon to talk to him on Adonijah's behalf. The king got up to meet her and bowed down in front of her. Then he sat on his throne. He had a throne brought for his mother, and she sat at his right side.

²⁰ "I'm asking you for one little thing," she said. "Don't refuse me." "Ask, Mother," the king told her. "I won't refuse you."

²¹ She replied, "Let Abishag from Shunem be given to your brother Adonijah as his wife."

²² King Solomon then said, "Why do you ask that Abishag from Shunem be given to Adonijah? That would be the same as giving him the kingship. After all, he is my older brother. The priest Abiathar and Joab (Zeruiah's son) are supporting him."

²³ King Solomon took an oath by the LORD and said, "May God strike me dead if Adonijah doesn't pay with his life for this request!

²⁴ The LORD set me on my father David's throne and gave me a dynasty as he promised. So I solemnly swear, as the LORD who has established me lives, that Adonijah will be put to death today."

²⁵ King Solomon gave this task to Benaiah, son of Jehoiada. Benaiah attacked and killed Adonijah.

²⁶ The king told the priest Abiathar, "Go to your land in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I won't kill you at this time because you carried the ark of the Almighty LORD ahead of my father David and because you shared all my father's sufferings."

²⁷ So Solomon removed Abiathar as the LORD'S priest and fulfilled the LORD'S word spoken at Shiloh about Eli's family.

²⁸ The news reached Joab. (He had supported Adonijah, although he hadn't supported Absalom.) So Joab fled to the LORD'S tent and clung to the horns of the altar.

²⁹ After King Solomon heard that Joab had fled to the altar in the tent of the LORD, Solomon sent Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, to kill Joab.

³⁰ When Benaiah came to the tent of the LORD, he told Joab, "The king says, 'Come out.'" "No," Joab answered, "I'll die here." So Benaiah reported to the king what Joab had said and how he had answered.

³¹ The king answered, "Do as he said. Kill him, and bury him. You can remove the innocent blood—the blood which Joab shed—from me and my father's family.

³² The LORD will repay him for the slaughter he caused. Joab killed two

honorable men who were better than he was. He used his sword to kill Abner (who was the son of Ner and the commander of Israel's army) and Amasa (who was the son of Jether and the commander of Judah's army). Joab did this without my father's knowledge.

³³ The responsibility for their blood will fall on Joab and his descendants forever. But may David, his descendants, family, and throne always receive peace from the LORD."

³⁴ Then Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, went and attacked Joab, killed him, and buried him at his home in the desert.

³⁵ The king then appointed Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, to replace Joab as commander of the army. King Solomon also replaced Abiathar with the priest Zadok.

³⁶ The king summoned Shimei and said to him, "Build a house for yourself in

Jerusalem, and stay there. Don't leave the city to go anywhere else.

³⁷ But the day you leave and cross the brook in the Kidron Valley, you can be certain that you will die. You will be responsible for your own death."

³⁸ "Very well," Shimei answered. "I'll do just what Your Majesty said." So Shimei stayed in Jerusalem for a long time.

³⁹ But after three years, two of Shimei's slaves fled to Gath's King Achish, son of Maacah. Shimei was told that his slaves were in Gath,

⁴⁰ so he saddled his donkey and went to Achish in Gath to search for his slaves. Shimei went to Gath and got his slaves.

⁴¹ After Solomon heard that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and back,

⁴² he summoned Shimei. Solomon asked him, "Didn't I make you take an oath by the LORD? Didn't I warn you that if you left the city to go anywhere,

you could be certain that you would die? Didn't you say to me, 'Very well. I'll do just what you said'?

⁴³ Why didn't you keep your oath to the LORD and obey the command I gave you?

⁴⁴ Shimei, you know in your heart all the evil that you did to my father David. The LORD is going to pay you back for the evil you have done.

⁴⁵ But King Solomon is blessed, and David's dynasty will always be firmly established by the LORD."

⁴⁶ Then the king gave orders to Benaiah, son of Jehoiada. He went to attack and kill Shimei. Solomon's power as king was now firmly established.

3 ¹ Solomon became the son-in-law of Pharaoh (the king of Egypt). After marrying Pharaoh's daughter, Solomon brought her to the City of David until he finished building his own house,

the LORD'S house, and the wall around Jerusalem.

² The people were still sacrificing at other worship sites because a temple for the name of the LORD had not yet been built.

³ Solomon loved the LORD and lived by his father David's rules. However, he still sacrificed and burned incense at these other worship sites.

⁴ King Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice because it was the most important place of worship. Solomon sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings on that altar.

⁵ In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. He said, "What can I give you?"

⁶ Solomon responded, "You've shown great love to my father David, who was your servant. He lived in your presence with truth, righteousness, and

commitment. And you continued to show him your great love by giving him a son to sit on his throne today.

⁷ "LORD my God, although I'm young and inexperienced, you've made me king in place of my father David.

⁸ I'm among your people whom you have chosen. They are too numerous to count or record.

⁹ Give me a heart that listens so that I can judge your people and tell the difference between good and evil. After all, who can judge this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ The LORD was pleased that Solomon asked for this.

¹¹ God replied, "You've asked for this and not for a long life, or riches for yourself, or the death of your enemies. Instead, you've asked for understanding so that you can do what is right.

¹² So I'm going to do what you've asked. I'm giving you a wise and understanding heart so that there will never be anyone like you.

¹³ I'm also giving you what you haven't asked for—riches and honor—so that no other king will be like you as long as you live.

¹⁴ And if you follow me and obey my laws and commands as your father David did, then I will also give you a long life."

¹⁵ Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He went to Jerusalem and stood in front of the ark of the LORD'S promise. He sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings and held a banquet for all his officials.

¹⁶ A short time later two prostitutes came to the king and stood in front of him.

¹⁷ One woman said to him, "Sir, this woman and I live in the same house. I

gave birth to a son while she was with me in the house.

¹⁸ Two days later this woman also gave birth to a son. We were alone. No one else was with us. Just the two of us were in the house.

¹⁹ That night this woman's son died because she rolled over on top of him.

²⁰ So she got up during the night and took my son, who was beside me, while I was asleep. She held him in her arms. Then she laid her dead son in my arms.

²¹ When I got up in the morning to nurse my son, he was dead! I took a good look at him and realized that he wasn't my son at all!"

²² The other woman said, "No! My son is alive—your son is dead." The first woman kept on saying, "No! Your son is dead—my son is alive." So they argued in front of the king.

²³ The king said, "This one keeps saying, 'My son is alive—your son is dead,' and that one keeps saying, 'No! Your son is dead—my son is alive.'"

²⁴ So the king told his servants to bring him a sword. When they brought it,

²⁵ he said, "Cut the living child in two. Give half to the one and half to the other."

²⁶ Then the woman whose son was still alive was deeply moved by her love for the child. She said to the king, "Please, sir, give her the living child. Please don't kill him!" But the other woman said, "He won't be mine or yours. Cut him in two."

²⁷ The king replied, "Give the living child to the first woman. Don't kill him. She is his mother."

²⁸ All Israel heard about the decision the king made. They respected the king very highly, because they saw he

possessed wisdom from God to do what was right.

4¹ When King Solomon was the king of all Israel,

² these were his officials: Azariah, son of Zadok, was the chief priest.

³ Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, were scribes. Jehoshaphat, son of Ahilud, was the royal historian.

⁴ Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, was commander of the army. Zadok and Abiathar were priests.

⁵ Azariah, son of Nathan, was in charge of the district governors. Zabud, son of Nathan, was the king's adviser.

⁶ Ahishar was in charge of the palace. Adoniram, son of Abda, was in charge of forced labor.

⁷ Solomon appointed 12 district governors in Israel. They were to provide food for the king and his palace. Each

one had to supply food for one month every year.

⁸ Their names were Benhur, who was in charge of the hills of Ephraim,

⁹ Bendeker, who was in charge of Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Beth Hanan, and

¹⁰ Benhesed, who was in charge of Arubboth, Socoh, and the entire region of Hopher.

¹¹ Benabinadab had the entire region of Dor. (Solomon's daughter Taphath was his wife.)

¹² Baana, son of Ahilud, had Taanach, Megiddo, and all of Beth Shean. (This was near Zarethan, below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah and over to Jokmeam.)

¹³ Bengaber was in charge of Ramoth Gilead; he had the settlements of Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, in Gilead. He also had the territory of Argob in

Bashan, 60 large cities with walls and bronze bars across their gates.

¹⁴ Ahinadab, son of Iddo, was in charge of Mahanaim.

¹⁵ Ahimaaz was in charge of Naphtali. (He also married Solomon's daughter Basemath.)

¹⁶ Baana, son of Hushai, was in charge of Asher and Aloth.

¹⁷ Jehoshaphat, son of Paruah, was in charge of Issachar.

¹⁸ Shimei, son of Ela, was in charge of Benjamin.

¹⁹ Geber, son of Uri, was in charge of Gilead, the territory of King Sihon the Amorite and King Og of Bashan. (There was only one governor in that territory.)

²⁰ The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They ate and drank and lived happily.

²¹ Solomon ruled all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the country of the Philistines and as far as the Egyptian border. These kingdoms paid taxes and were subject to Solomon as long as he lived.

²² Solomon's food supply for one day was 180 bushels of flour, 360 bushels of coarse flour,

²³ 10 fattened cows, 20 cows from the pasture, and 100 sheep in addition to deer, gazelles, fallow deer, and fattened birds.

²⁴ He controlled all the territory west of the Euphrates River from Tiphseh to Gaza and all of its kings. So he lived in peace with all the neighboring countries.

²⁵ As long as Solomon lived, Judah and Israel (from Dan to Beersheba) lived securely, everyone under his own vine and fig tree.

²⁶ Solomon had stalls for 40,000 chariot horses. He also had 12,000 chariot soldiers.

²⁷ Each of the governors provided food for one month every year for King Solomon and all who ate at his table. The governors saw to it that nothing was in short supply.

²⁸ They brought their quota of barley and straw for the chariot horses to the proper places.

²⁹ God gave Solomon wisdom—keen insight and a mind as limitless as the sand on the seashore.

³⁰ Solomon's wisdom was greater than that of all the eastern people and all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

³¹ He was wiser than anyone, than Ethan the Ezrahite, or Heman, Calcol, or Darda, Mahol's sons. His fame spread to all the nations around him.

³² Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs.

³³ He described and classified trees—from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop growing out of the wall. He described and classified animals, birds, reptiles, and fish.

³⁴ People came from every nation to hear his wisdom; they came from all the kings of the earth who had heard about his wisdom.

5 ¹ King Hiram of Tyre sent his officials to Solomon when he heard that Solomon had been anointed king to succeed his father. Hiram had always been David's friend.

² Solomon sent word to Hiram, by saying,

³ "You know that my father David was surrounded by war. He couldn't build a temple for the name of the LORD our

God until the LORD let him defeat his enemies.

⁴ But the LORD my God has surrounded me with peace. I have no rival and no trouble.

⁵ Now I'm thinking of building a temple for the name of the LORD my God as the LORD spoke to my father David: 'Your son, whom I will put on your throne to succeed you, will build a temple for my name.'

⁶ So order men to cut down cedars from Lebanon for me. My workers will work with your workers. I will pay you whatever wages you ask for your workers. You know we don't have any skilled lumberjacks like those from Sidon."

⁷ Hiram was very glad to hear what Solomon had said. Hiram responded, "May the LORD be praised today. He has

given David a wise son to rule this great nation."

⁸ Hiram sent men to Solomon to say, "I've received the message you sent me. I will do everything you want in regard to the cedar and cypress logs.

⁹ My workers will bring logs from Lebanon to the sea, and I will have them make them into rafts to go by sea to any place you specify. There I will have them taken apart, and you can use them. You can pay me by providing food for my palace."

¹⁰ So Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and cypress wood he wanted.

¹¹ Solomon gave Hiram 120,000 bushels of wheat and 120,000 gallons of pure olive oil. Solomon paid Hiram this much every year.

¹² The LORD gave Solomon wisdom as he had promised. There was peace

between Hiram and Solomon, and they made a treaty with one another.

¹³ King Solomon forced 30,000 men from all over Israel to work for him.

¹⁴ He sent a shift of 10,000 men to Lebanon for a month. They would spend one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of forced labor.

¹⁵ Solomon had 70,000 men who carried heavy loads, 70,000 who quarried stone in the mountains,

¹⁶ and 3,300 foremen who were in charge of the workers.

¹⁷ The king commanded them to quarry large, expensive blocks of stone in order to provide a foundation of cut stone for the temple.

¹⁸ Solomon's workmen, Hiram's workmen, and men from Gebal quarried the stone and prepared the logs and stone to build the temple.

6¹ Solomon began to build the LORD'S temple 480 years after Israel left Egypt. He began building in the month of Ziv (the second month) of the fourth year of his reign over Israel.

² The temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

³ The entrance hall in front of the main room of the temple was the same length as the shorter side of the temple. It extended 15 feet in front of the temple.

⁴ He also made latticed windows for the temple.

⁵ He built an annex containing side rooms all around the temple. This annex was next to the walls of the main building and the inner sanctuary.

⁶ The interior of the lowest story of the annex was 7½ feet wide, the second story was 9 feet wide, and the third story was 10½ feet wide. Solomon made

ledges all around the temple so that this annex would not be fastened to the walls of the temple.

⁷ The temple was built with stone blocks that were finished at the quarry. No hammer, chisel, or any other iron tool made a sound at the temple construction site.

⁸ The entrance to the first story was on the south side of the temple. A staircase went up to the middle story and then to the third story.

⁹ When he had finished building the walls, he roofed the temple with rows of cedar beams and planks.

¹⁰ He built each story of the annex $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet high alongside the entire temple. Its cedar beams were attached to the temple.

¹¹ The LORD spoke to Solomon, saying,

¹² "This concerns the temple you are building: If you live by my laws, follow

my rules, and keep my commands, I will fulfill the promise I made about you to your father David.

¹³ I will live among the Israelites and never abandon my people."

¹⁴ When Solomon had finished building the temple's frame,

¹⁵ he began to line the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards. He paneled the inside of the temple with wood from floor to ceiling. He covered the floor of the temple with cypress planks.

¹⁶ He sectioned off a 30-foot-long room at the rear of the temple with cedar boards from the floor to the rafters. He built it to serve as an inner room, the most holy place.

¹⁷ The 60-foot-long room at the front of the temple served as the main hall.

¹⁸ Gourds and flowers were carved into the cedar paneling inside the temple.

Everything was covered with cedar. No stone could be seen.

¹⁹ He prepared the inner room of the temple in order to put the ark of the LORD'S promise there.

²⁰ The inner room was 30 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 30 feet high. Solomon covered it and the cedar altar with pure gold.

²¹ He covered the inside of the temple with pure gold. He put golden chains across the front of the inner room which was covered with gold.

²² He covered the entire inside of the temple with gold. He also covered the entire altar in the inner room with gold.

²³ In the inner room he made two 15-foot-tall angels out of olive wood.

²⁴ Each wing of the angels was 7½ feet long. The distance from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other was 15 feet.

²⁵ Both angels had a 15-foot wingspan. Both had the same measurements and the same shape.

²⁶ Each was 15 feet high.

²⁷ Solomon put the angels in the inner room of the temple. The wings of the angels extended so that the wing of one of the angels touched the one wall, and the wing of the other touched the other wall. Their remaining wings touched each other in the center of the room.

²⁸ He covered the angels with gold.

²⁹ He carved angels, palm trees, and flowers into the walls all around the inner and outer rooms of the temple.

³⁰ He covered the floor of the inner and outer rooms of the temple with gold.

³¹ He made doors for the entrance to the inner room out of olive wood. The doorposts had five sides.

³² The two doors were made out of olive wood. He carved angels, palm

trees, and flowers into them and covered them with gold. The gold was hammered onto the angels and the palm trees.

³³ In the same way he made square doorposts out of olive wood for the temple's entrance.

³⁴ He made two doors from cypress. Each of the doors had two folding panels.

³⁵ On them he carved angels, palm trees, and flowers. He evenly covered them with gold.

³⁶ He built the inner courtyard with three courses of finished stones and a course of finished cedar beams.

³⁷ In the month of Ziv of the fourth year of Solomon's reign, the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid.

³⁸ In the month of Bul (the eighth month) of the eleventh year of his reign, the temple was finished according to all its plans and specifications. He spent seven years building it.

7¹ Solomon took 13 years to finish building his palace.

² He built a hall named the Forest of Lebanon. It was 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. It had four rows of cedar pillars supporting cedar beams.

³ The hall was covered with cedar above the side rooms, which were supported by 45 pillars (15 per row).

⁴ The windows were in three rows facing each other on opposite sides of the palace.

⁵ All the doors and doorframes were square. There were three doors facing each other on opposite sides of the palace.

⁶ Solomon made the Hall of Pillars 75 feet long and 45 feet wide. In front of the hall was an entrance hall with pillars.

⁷ He made the Hall of Justice, where he sat on his throne and served as judge.

The hall was covered with cedar from floor to ceiling.

⁸ His own private quarters were in a different location than the Hall of Justice, but they were similar in design. Solomon also built private quarters like this for his wife, Pharaoh's daughter.

⁹ From the foundation to the roof, all these buildings, including the large courtyard, were built with high-grade stone blocks. The stone blocks were cut to size and trimmed with saws on their inner and outer faces.

¹⁰ The foundation was made with large, high-grade stones (some 12 feet long, others 15 feet long).

¹¹ Above the foundation were cedar beams and high-grade stone blocks, which had been cut to size.

¹² The large courtyard had three layers of cut stone blocks and a layer of cedar

beams, like the inner courtyard of the LORD'S temple and the entrance hall.

¹³ King Solomon had Hiram brought from Tyre.

¹⁴ Hiram was the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali. His father, a native of Tyre, was a skilled bronze craftsman. Hiram was highly skilled, resourceful, and knowledgeable about all kinds of bronze craftsmanship. He came to King Solomon and did all his bronze work.

¹⁵ He made two bronze pillars. Each was 27 feet high and 18 feet in circumference.

¹⁶ He made two capitals of cast bronze to put on top of the pillars. Each capital was 7½ feet high.

¹⁷ He also made seven rows of filigree and chains for each capital.

¹⁸ After he made the pillars, he made two rows of decorations around the filigree to cover the capitals which were

above the pillars. He made the capitals identical to each other.

¹⁹ The capitals on top of the pillars in the entrance hall were lily-shaped. Each was six feet high.

²⁰ Two hundred pomegranates in rows were directly above the bowl-shaped parts around the filigree on the capitals on both pillars.

²¹ Hiram set up the pillars in the temple's entrance hall. He set up the pillar on the right and named it Jachin [He Establishes]. Then he set up the pillar on the left and named it Boaz [In Him Is Strength].

²² There were lily-shaped capitals at the top of the pillars. He finished the work on the pillars.

²³ Hiram made a pool from cast metal. It was 15 feet in diameter. It was round, 7½ feet high, and had a circumference of 45 feet.

²⁴ Under the rim were two rows of gourds all around the 45-foot circumference of the pool. They were cast in metal when the pool was cast.

²⁵ The pool was set on 12 metal bulls. Three bulls faced north, three faced west, three faced south, and three faced east. The pool was set on them, and their hindquarters were toward the center of the pool.

²⁶ The pool was three inches thick. Its rim was like the rim of a cup, shaped like a lily's bud. It held 12,000 gallons.

²⁷ He made ten bronze stands. Each stand was 6 feet square and 4½ feet high.

²⁸ The stands were made this way: They had side panels set in frames.

²⁹ On the panels set in frames were lions, oxen, and angels. These were also on the frames. Above and below

the lions and the cattle were engraved designs.

³⁰ Each stand had four bronze wheels on bronze axles and four supports beneath the basin. The supports were made of cast metal with designs on the sides.

³¹ Each had a 1½-foot-deep opening in the center to the circular frame on top. The opening was round, formed like a pedestal, and was two feet wide. Around the opening there were engravings. But the panels were square, not round.

³² The four wheels were under the panels, and the axles were attached to the stand. Each wheel was two feet high.

³³ The wheels were made like chariot wheels. The axles, rims, spokes, and hubs were all cast metal.

³⁴ The four supports at the four corners of each stand were part of the stand.

³⁵ The top of each stand had a round, nine-inch-high band. Above the stand were supports which were part of the panels.

³⁶ Hiram engraved angels, lions, palm trees, and designs in every available space on the supports and panels.

³⁷ This is the way he made the ten stands. All of them were cast in the same mold, identical in size and shape.

³⁸ Hiram also made ten bronze basins. Each basin held 240 gallons. Every basin was six feet wide. There was one basin on each of the ten stands.

³⁹ He put five stands on the south side of the temple and five on the north side of the temple. He set the pool on the south side of the temple in the southeast corner.

⁴⁰ Hiram also made pots, shovels, and bowls. So Hiram finished all the work for King Solomon on the LORD'S temple:

⁴¹ 2 pillars, the bowl-shaped capitals on top of the 2 pillars, and 2 sets of filigree to cover the 2 bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars,

⁴² 400 pomegranates for the 2 sets of filigree (2 rows of pomegranates for each filigree to cover the 2 bowl-shaped capitals on the pillars),

⁴³ 10 stands and 10 basins on the stands,

⁴⁴ 1 pool, 12 bulls under the pool,

⁴⁵ pots, shovels, and bowls. Hiram made all these utensils out of polished bronze for the LORD'S temple at King Solomon's request.

⁴⁶ The king cast them in foundries in the Jordan Valley between Succoth and Zarethan.

⁴⁷ Solomon left all the products unweighed because so much bronze was used. No one tried to determine how much the bronze weighed.

⁴⁸ Solomon made all the furnishings for the LORD'S temple: the gold altar, the gold table on which the bread of the presence was placed,

⁴⁹ lamp stands of pure gold (five on the south side and five on the north in front of the inner room), flowers, lamps, gold tongs,

⁵⁰ dishes, snuffers, bowls, saucers, incense burners of pure gold, the gold sockets for the doors of the inner room (the most holy place), and the doors of the temple.

⁵¹ All the work King Solomon did on the LORD'S temple was finished. He brought the holy things that had belonged to his father David—the silver, gold, and utensils—and put them in the storerooms of the LORD'S temple.

8 ¹ Then Solomon assembled the respected leaders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes, and the leaders of

the Israelite families. They came to King Solomon in Jerusalem to take the ark of the LORD'S promise from the City of David (that is, Zion).

² All the people of Israel gathered around King Solomon at the Festival of Booths in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month.

³ When all the leaders of Israel had arrived, the priests picked up the LORD'S ark.

⁴ They brought the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy utensils in it to the temple. The priests and the Levites carried them

⁵ while King Solomon with the whole assembly from Israel were offering countless sheep and cattle sacrifices in front of the ark.

⁶ The priests brought the ark of the LORD'S promise to its place in the inner

room of the temple (the most holy place) under the wings of the angels.

⁷ When the angels' outstretched wings were over the place where the ark rested, the angels became a covering above the ark and its poles.

⁸ The poles were so long that their ends could be seen in the holy place by anyone standing in front of the inner room, but they couldn't be seen outside. (They are still there today.)

⁹ There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a promise to the Israelites after they left Egypt.

¹⁰ When the priests left the holy place, a cloud filled the LORD'S temple.

¹¹ The priests couldn't serve because of the cloud. The LORD'S glory filled his temple.

¹² Then Solomon said, "The LORD said he would live in a dark cloud.

¹³ I certainly have built you a high temple, a home for you to live in permanently."

¹⁴ Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel while they were standing.

¹⁵ "Thanks be to the LORD God of Israel. With his mouth he made a promise to my father David; with his hand he carried it out. He said,

¹⁶ 'Ever since I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I didn't choose any city in any of the tribes of Israel as a place to build a temple for my name. But now I've chosen David to rule my people Israel.'

¹⁷ "My father David had his heart set on building a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁸ However, the LORD said to my father David, 'Since you had your heart set on building a temple for my name, your intentions were good.

¹⁹ But you must not build the temple. Instead, your own son will build the temple for my name.'

²⁰ The LORD has kept the promise he made. I have taken my father David's place, and I sit on the throne of Israel as the LORD promised. I've built the temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

²¹ I've made a place there for the ark which contains the LORD'S promise that he made to our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt."

²² In the presence of the entire assembly of Israel, Solomon stood in front of the LORD'S altar. He stretched out his hands toward heaven

²³ and said, "LORD God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven above or on earth below. You keep your promise of mercy to your servants, who obey you wholeheartedly.

²⁴ You have kept your promise to my father David, your servant. With your mouth you promised it. With your hand you carried it out as it is today.

²⁵ "Now, LORD God of Israel, keep your promise to my father David, your servant. You said, 'You will never fail to have an heir sitting in front of me on the throne of Israel if your descendants are faithful to me as you have been faithful to me.'

²⁶ "So now, God of Israel, may the promise you made to my father David, your servant, come true.

²⁷ "Does God really live on earth? If heaven itself, the highest heaven, cannot hold you, then how can this temple that I have built?

²⁸ Nevertheless, my LORD God, please pay attention to my prayer for mercy. Listen to my cry for help as I pray to you today.

²⁹ Night and day may your eyes be on this temple, the place about which you said, 'My name will be there.' Listen to me as I pray toward this place.

³⁰ Hear the plea for mercy that your people Israel and I pray toward this place. Hear us when we pray to heaven, the place where you live. Hear and forgive.

³¹ "If anyone sins against another person and is required to take an oath and comes to take the oath in front of your altar in this temple,

³² then hear that person in heaven, take action, and make a decision. Condemn the guilty person with the proper punishment, but declare the innocent person innocent.

³³ "An enemy may defeat your people Israel because they have sinned against you. But when your people turn to you,

praise your name, pray, and plead with you in this temple,

³⁴ then hear them in heaven, forgive the sins of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land that you gave to their ancestors.

³⁵ "When the sky is shut and there's no rain because they are sinning against you, and they pray toward this place, praise your name, and turn away from their sin because you made them suffer,

³⁶ then hear them in heaven. Forgive the sins of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the proper way to live. Then send rain on the land, which you gave to your people as an inheritance.

³⁷ "There may be famine in the land. Plant diseases, heat waves, funguses, locusts, or grasshoppers may destroy crops. Enemies may blockade Israel's city gates. During every plague or sickness

³⁸ hear every prayer for mercy, made by one person or by all the people in Israel, whose consciences bother them, who stretch out their hands toward this temple.

³⁹ Hear them in heaven, where you live. Forgive them, and take action. Give each person the proper reply. (You know what is in their hearts, because you alone know what is in the hearts of all people.)

⁴⁰ Then, as long as they live in the land that you gave to our ancestors, they will fear you.

⁴¹ "People will hear about your great name, mighty hand, and powerful arm. So when people who are not Israelites come from distant countries because of your name

⁴² to pray facing this temple,

⁴³ hear them in heaven, the place where you live. Do everything they ask you so that all the people of the world

may know your name and fear you like your people Israel and learn also that this temple which I built bears your name.

⁴⁴ "When your people go to war against their enemies (wherever you may send them) and they pray to you, O LORD, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I built for your name,

⁴⁵ then hear their prayer for mercy in heaven, and do what is right for them.

⁴⁶ "They may sin against you. (No one is sinless.) You may become angry with them and hand them over to an enemy who takes them to another country as captives, whether it is far or near.

⁴⁷ If they come to their senses, are sorry for what they've done, and plead with you in the land where they are captives, saying, 'We have sinned. We have done wrong. We have been wicked,'

⁴⁸ if they change their attitude toward you in the land of their enemies where they are captives, if they pray to you toward the land that you gave their ancestors, and the city you have chosen, and the temple I have built for your name,

⁴⁹ then in heaven, the place where you live, hear their prayer for mercy. Do what is right for them.

⁵⁰ Forgive your people, who have sinned against you. Forgive all their wrongs when they rebelled against you, and cause those who captured them to have mercy on them

⁵¹ because they are your own people whom you brought out of Egypt from the middle of an iron smelter.

⁵² "May your eyes always see my plea and your people Israel's plea so that you will listen to them whenever they call on you.

⁵³ After all, you, LORD God, set them apart from all the people of the world to be your own as you promised through your servant Moses when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt."

⁵⁴ When Solomon finished praying this prayer for mercy to the LORD, he stood in front of the LORD'S altar, where he had been kneeling with his hands stretched out toward heaven.

⁵⁵ Then he stood and in a loud voice blessed the entire assembly of Israel,

⁵⁶ "Thanks be to the LORD! He has given his people Israel rest, as he had promised. None of the good promises he made through his servant Moses has failed to come true.

⁵⁷ May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors. May he never leave us or abandon us.

⁵⁸ May he bend our hearts toward him. Then we will follow him and keep his

commands, laws, and rules, which he commanded our ancestors to keep.

⁵⁹ May these words which I have prayed to the LORD be near the LORD our God day and night. Then he will give me and his people Israel justice every day as it is needed.

⁶⁰ In this way all the people of the world will know that the LORD is God and there is no other god.

⁶¹ May your hearts be committed to the LORD our God. Then you will live by his laws and keep his commands as you have today."

⁶² Then the king and all Israel offered sacrifices to the LORD.

⁶³ Solomon sacrificed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep as fellowship offerings to the LORD. So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the LORD'S temple.

⁶⁴ On that day the king designated the courtyard in front of the LORD'S temple

as a holy place. He sacrificed the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat from the fellowship offerings because the bronze altar in front of the LORD was too small to hold all of them.

⁶⁵ At that time Solomon and all Israel celebrated the Festival of Booths. A large crowd had come from the territory between the border of Hamath and the River of Egypt to be near the LORD our God for seven days.

⁶⁶ On the eighth day he dismissed the people. They blessed the king and went to their tents. They rejoiced with cheerful hearts for all the blessings the LORD had given his servant David and his people Israel.

9¹ Solomon finished building the LORD'S temple, the royal palace, and everything else he wanted to build.

² Then the LORD appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him in Gibeon.

³ The LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer for mercy that you made to me. I have declared that this temple which you have built is holy so that my name may be placed there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

⁴ "If you will be faithful to me as your father David was (with a sincere and upright heart), do everything I command, and keep my laws and rules,

⁵ then I will establish your royal dynasty over Israel forever as I promised your father David when I said, 'You will never fail to have an heir on the throne of Israel.'

⁶ But if you and your descendants dare to turn away from me and do not keep my commands and laws that I gave to

you, and follow and serve other gods and worship them,

⁷ then I will cut Israel out of the land I gave them. I will reject this temple that I declared holy for my name. Israel will be an example and an object of ridicule for all the people of the world.

⁸ Everyone passing by this temple, as impressive as it is, will be appalled. They will gasp and ask, 'Why did the LORD do these things to this land and this temple?'

⁹ They will answer themselves, 'They abandoned the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of Egypt. They adopted other gods, worshiped, and served them. That is why the LORD brought this disaster on them.'"

¹⁰ It took Solomon 20 years to build the two houses (the LORD'S house and the royal palace).

¹¹ When King Solomon had finished, he gave King Hiram of Tyre 20 cities in Galilee. (Hiram had supplied Solomon with as much cedar and cypress lumber and gold as he wanted.)

¹² Hiram left Tyre to see the cities Solomon gave him. However, they didn't please him.

¹³ "What kind of cities have you given me, brother?" he asked. So he named it the region of Cabul [Good for Nothing]. (They're still called that today.)

¹⁴ Hiram had sent the king 9,000 pounds of gold.

¹⁵ This is the record of the forced laborers whom King Solomon drafted to build the LORD'S house, his own house, the Millo, the walls of Jerusalem, and the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

¹⁶ (The king of Egypt captured Gezer, burned it down, and killed the Canaanites living there. Then he gave

it to his daughter, Solomon's wife, as a wedding present.)

¹⁷ So Solomon rebuilt Gezer, Lower Beth Horon,

¹⁸ Baalath, Tadmor in the desert (inside the country), and

¹⁹ all the storage cities that he owned. He also built cities for his chariots, cities for his war horses, and whatever else he wanted to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, or the entire territory that he governed.

²⁰ The Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites had been left in the land because the Israelites had not been able to claim them for God by destroying them. They were not Israelites,

²¹ but they had descendants who were still in the land. Solomon drafted them for slave labor. (They are still slaves today.)

²² But Solomon didn't make any of the Israelites slaves. Instead, they were soldiers, officials, officers, generals, and commanders of his chariot and cavalry units.

²³ These were the officers in charge of Solomon's projects: 550 foremen for the people who did the work.

²⁴ Pharaoh's daughter moved from the City of David to the palace that Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

²⁵ Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he built for the LORD. He burnt them on the altar that was in the LORD'S presence. And he finished the temple.

²⁶ King Solomon also built a fleet near the Red Sea coast at Ezion Geber by Elath in Edom.

²⁷ Hiram sent his own servants who were experienced seamen with the fleet. Along with Solomon's servants

²⁸ they went to Ophir, got 31,500 pounds of gold, and brought it to King Solomon.

10 ¹ The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's reputation. (He owed his reputation to the name of the LORD.) So she came to test him with riddles.

² She arrived in Jerusalem with a large group of servants, with camels carrying spices, a very large quantity of gold, and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she talked to him about everything she had on her mind.

³ Solomon answered all her questions. No question was too difficult for the king to answer.

⁴ When the queen of Sheba saw all of Solomon's wisdom, the palace he built,

⁵ the food on his table, his officers' seating arrangement, the organization of his officials and the uniforms they wore, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings that he sacrificed at the LORD'S temple, she was breathless.

⁶ She told the king, "What I heard in my country about your words and your wisdom is true!

⁷ But I didn't believe the reports until I came and saw it with my own eyes. I wasn't even told half of it. Your wisdom and wealth surpass the stories I've heard.

⁸ How blessed your men must be! How blessed these servants of yours must be because they are always stationed in front of you, listening to your wisdom!

⁹ Thank the LORD your God, who is pleased with you. He has put you on the throne of Israel. Because of your God's eternal love for the people of Israel, he

has made you king so that you would maintain justice and righteousness."

¹⁰ She gave the king 9,000 pounds of gold, a very large quantity of spices, and precious stones. Never again was such a large quantity of spices brought into Israel as those that the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon.

¹¹ Hiram's fleet that brought gold from Ophir also brought a large quantity of sandalwood and precious stones from Ophir.

¹² With the sandalwood the king made supports for the LORD'S temple and the royal palace, and lyres and harps for the singers. Never again was sandalwood like this imported into Israel, nor has any been seen there to this day.

¹³ King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba anything she wanted, whatever she asked for, besides what he had given her out of his royal generosity. Then

she and her servants went back to her country.

¹⁴ The gold that came to Solomon in one year weighed 49,950 pounds,

¹⁵ not counting the gold which came from the merchants, the traders' profits, all the Arab kings, and the governors of the country.

¹⁶ King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold, using 15 pounds of gold on each shield.

¹⁷ He also made 300 small shields of hammered gold, using four pounds of gold on each shield. The king put them in the hall which he called the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁸ The king also made a large ivory throne and covered it with fine gold.

¹⁹ Six steps led to the throne. Carved into the back of the throne was a calf's head. There were armrests on both sides

of the seat. Two lions stood beside the armrests.

²⁰ Twelve lions stood on six steps, one on each side. Nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom.

²¹ All King Solomon's cups were gold, and all the utensils for the hall which he called the Forest of Lebanon were fine gold. (Nothing was silver, because it wasn't considered valuable in Solomon's time.)

²² The king had a fleet headed for Tarshish with Hiram's fleet. Once every three years the Tarshish fleet would bring gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.

²³ In wealth and wisdom King Solomon was greater than all the other kings of the world.

²⁴ The whole world wanted to listen to the wisdom that God gave Solomon.

²⁵ So everyone who came brought him gifts: articles of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, spices, horses, and mules. This happened year after year.

²⁶ Solomon built up his army with chariots and war horses. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 war horses. He stationed some in chariot cities and others with himself in Jerusalem.

²⁷ The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as fig trees in the foothills.

²⁸ Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and Kue. The king's traders bought them from Kue for a fixed price.

²⁹ Each chariot was imported from Egypt for 15 pounds of silver and each horse for 6 ounces of silver. For the same price they obtained horses to export to all the Hittite and Aramean kings.

11 ¹ King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter. He loved Hittite women and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Sidon.

² They came from the nations about which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "Never intermarry with them. They will surely tempt you to follow their gods." But Solomon was obsessed with their love.

³ He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 wives who were concubines.

⁴ In his old age, his wives tempted him to follow other gods. He was no longer committed to the LORD his God as his father David had been.

⁵ Solomon followed Astarte (the goddess of the Sidonians) and Milcom (the disgusting idol of the Ammonites).

⁶ So Solomon did what the LORD considered evil. He did not

wholeheartedly follow the LORD as his father David had done.

⁷ Then Solomon built an illegal worship site on the hill east of Jerusalem for Chemosh (the disgusting idol of Moab) and for Molech (the disgusting idol of the Ammonites).

⁸ He did these things for each of his foreign wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

⁹ So the LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

¹⁰ God had given him commands about this. He told him not to follow other gods. But Solomon did not obey God's command.

¹¹ The LORD told Solomon, "Because this is your attitude and you have no respect for my promises or my laws that I commanded you to keep, I will certainly

tear the kingdom away from you. I will give it to one of your servants.

¹² But I will not do it in your lifetime because of your father David. I will tear it away from the hands of your son.

¹³ However, I will not tear the whole kingdom away from you. I will give your son one tribe for my servant David's sake and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I chose."

¹⁴ The LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite as a rival to Solomon. Hadad was from the Edomite royal family.

¹⁵ When David had conquered Edom, Joab, the commander of the army, went to bury those killed in battle and killed every male in Edom.

¹⁶ (Joab and all Israel stayed there six months until they had destroyed every male in Edom.)

¹⁷ Hadad was a young boy at the time. He and some of his father's Edomite servants fled to Egypt.

¹⁸ They left Midian and went to Paran. Taking some men from Paran with them, they went to Pharaoh (the king of Egypt). Pharaoh gave Hadad a home, a food allowance, and land.

¹⁹ Pharaoh approved of Hadad. So he gave Hadad his sister-in-law, the sister of Queen Tahpenes, to be Hadad's wife.

²⁰ Tahpenes' sister had a son named Genubath. Tahpenes presented the boy to Pharaoh in the palace, and Genubath lived in the palace among Pharaoh's children.

²¹ When Hadad heard in Egypt that David had lain down in death with his ancestors and that Joab, the commander of the army, had died, he said to Pharaoh, "Let me go to my own country."

²² Pharaoh asked him, "What don't you have here that makes you eager to go home?" "Nothing," he said. "But let me leave anyway."

²³ God also raised up Rezon, son of Eliada, as a rival to Solomon. Rezon fled from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah,

²⁴ after David killed the men of Zobah. Rezon gathered men and became the leader of a troop of warriors. They went to Damascus, settled there, and ruled a kingdom in Damascus.

²⁵ In addition to the trouble that Hadad caused, Rezon was Israel's rival as long as Solomon lived. He ruled Aram and despised Israel.

²⁶ There was also Jeroboam, who was the son of Nebat and an Ephrathite from Zeredah. His mother Zeruah was a widow. He was one of Solomon's officers, but he rebelled against the king.

²⁷ This was the situation when he rebelled against the king: Solomon was building the Millo and repairing a break in the wall of the City of David.

²⁸ Solomon saw that Jeroboam was a very able and hard-working man. So he put Jeroboam in charge of all forced labor from the tribes of Joseph.

²⁹ At that time Jeroboam left Jerusalem. The prophet Ahijah from Shiloh met him on the road. The two of them were alone in the open country, and Ahijah had on new clothes.

³⁰ Ahijah took his new garment and tore it into 12 pieces.

³¹ He told Jeroboam, "Take 10 pieces because this is what the LORD God of Israel says: I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hands and give ten tribes to you.

³² He will have one tribe left because of my servant David and Jerusalem, the

city I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel.

³³ I will do this because he has abandoned me and worshiped Astarte (the goddess of the Sidonians), Chemosh (the god of Moab), and Milcom (the god of Ammon). He has not followed my ways. He did not do what I consider right or keep my laws and decrees as his father David did.

³⁴ "I will not take the whole kingdom from him. Instead, I will allow him to be ruler as long as he lives because of my servant David whom I chose, who obeyed my commands and laws.

³⁵ But I will take the kingdom away from his son and give you ten tribes.

³⁶ I will give his son one tribe so that my servant David will always have a lamp in my presence in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to place my name.

³⁷ "I will choose you so that you can rule everything you desire. You will be king of Israel.

³⁸ If you will do all I command you, follow my ways, and do what I consider right by obeying my laws and commands as my servant David did, then I will be with you. I will build a permanent dynasty for you as I did for David. And I will give you Israel.

³⁹ I will make David's descendants suffer for this, but not always."

⁴⁰ Then Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to King Shishak of Egypt. He stayed in Egypt until Solomon died.

⁴¹ Aren't the rest of Solomon's acts—everything he did—and his wisdom written in the records of Solomon?

⁴² The length of Solomon's reign in Jerusalem over all Israel was 40 years.

⁴³ Solomon lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. His son Rehoboam succeeded him as king.

12 ¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem because all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king.

² Jeroboam (Nebat's son) was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon. When he heard about Rehoboam, he returned from Egypt.

³ Israel sent for Jeroboam and invited him back. Jeroboam and the entire assembly of Israel went to speak to Rehoboam. They said,

⁴ "Your father made us carry a heavy burden. Reduce the hard work and lighten the heavy burden he put on us, and we will serve you."

⁵ He said to them, "Leave and come back the day after tomorrow." So the people left.

⁶ King Rehoboam sought advice from the older leaders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive. He asked, "What do you advise? How should I respond to these people?"

⁷ They told him, "If you will serve these people today, humble yourself, and speak gently, then they will always be your servants."

⁸ But he ignored the advice the older leaders gave him. He sought advice from the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.

⁹ He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we respond to these people who are asking me to lighten the burden my father put on them?"

¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him answered, "This is what you should tell them: 'My little finger is heavier than my father's whole body.

¹¹ If my father put a heavy burden on you, I will add to it. If my father punished you with whips, I will punish you with scorpions.'"

¹² So Jeroboam and all the people came back to Rehoboam two days later, as the king had instructed them.

¹³ The king answered the people harshly. He ignored the advice the older leaders gave him.

¹⁴ He spoke to them as the young men advised. He said, "If my father made your burden heavy, I will add to it. If my father punished you with whips, I will punish you with scorpions."

¹⁵ The king refused to listen to the people because the LORD was directing these events to carry out the promise he had made to Jeroboam (Nebat's son) through Ahijah from Shiloh.

¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, the people

answered the king, "What share do we have in David's kingdom? We won't receive an inheritance from Jesse's son. To your own tents, Israel! Now look after your own house, David!" So Israel went home to their own tents.

¹⁷ But Rehoboam ruled the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸ Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram to Israel. He was in charge of forced labor, but they stoned him to death. So King Rehoboam got on his chariot as fast as he could and fled to Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Israel has rebelled against David's dynasty to this day.

²⁰ When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent men to invite him to the assembly. They made him king of all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to David's dynasty.

²¹ When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he gathered all the people of Judah and

the tribe of Benjamin, 180,000 of the best soldiers, to fight against the people of Israel and return the kingdom to Rehoboam, son of Solomon.

²² But God spoke his word to Shemaiah, the man of God. He said,

²³ "Speak to Judah's King Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and all the people of Judah and Benjamin, and the rest of the people.

²⁴ This is what the LORD says: Don't wage war against your relatives from Israel. Everyone, go home. What has happened is my doing." So they obeyed the word of the LORD. They returned home, as the LORD told them.

²⁵ Jeroboam rebuilt Shechem in the hills of Ephraim and lived there. Then he left that place and built Penuel.

²⁶ He said to himself, "The kingdom will probably return to David's dynasty now.

²⁷ King Rehoboam of Judah, the former master of these people, will regain popularity if they go to sacrifice in the LORD'S temple in Jerusalem. Then they will kill me and return to King Rehoboam of Judah."

²⁸ After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said, "You've been worshiping in Jerusalem long enough. Israel, here are your gods who brought you out of Egypt."

²⁹ He put one in Bethel and the other in Dan.

³⁰ Worshiping them became Israel's sin. The people went as far as Dan to worship the one calf.

³¹ Jeroboam built worship sites on hilltops. He appointed men who were not descended from Levi to be priests.

³² Jeroboam appointed a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, just like the festival in Judah. He went to the

altar in Bethel to sacrifice to the calves he had made. He appointed priests from the illegal worship sites to serve in Bethel.

³³ He went to his altar in Bethel to burn an offering on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, the festival he had invented for the Israelites.

13 ¹ A man of God from Judah had come to Bethel. When he arrived, Jeroboam was standing at the altar to offer a sacrifice.

² By a command of the LORD, this man condemned the altar. "Altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: There will be a son born in David's family line. His name will be Josiah. Here on you Josiah will sacrifice the priests from the illegal worship sites who offer sacrifices on you. Human bones will be burned on you."

³ That day the man of God also gave them a miraculous sign, saying, "This is

the sign that the LORD will give you: You will see the altar torn apart. The ashes on it will be poured on the ground."

⁴ When King Jeroboam heard the man of God condemning the altar in Bethel, he pointed to the man across the altar. "Arrest him," he said. But the arm that he used to point to the man of God was paralyzed so that he couldn't pull it back.

⁵ The altar was torn apart, and the ashes from the altar were poured on the ground. This was the miraculous sign the man of God performed at the LORD'S command.

⁶ Then the king asked the man of God, "Please make an appeal to the LORD your God, and pray for me so that I can use my arm again." So the man of God made an appeal to the LORD, and the king was able to use his arm again, as he had earlier.

⁷ The king told the man of God, "Come home with me; have something to eat and drink, and I will give you a gift."

⁸ The man of God told the king, "Even if you gave me half of your palace, I would never go with you to eat or drink there."

⁹ When the LORD spoke to me, he commanded me not to eat or drink or go back on the same road I took."

¹⁰ So the man of God left on another road and didn't go back on the road he had taken to Bethel.

¹¹ An old prophet was living in Bethel. His sons told him everything the man of God did in Bethel that day and the exact words he had spoken to the king. When they told their father,

¹² he said to them, "Which road did he take?" (His sons had seen which road the man of God from Judah had taken.)

¹³ The old prophet told his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." After they

had saddled the donkey for him, he got on it.

¹⁴ He went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak tree. The old prophet asked him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" "Yes," he answered.

¹⁵ "Come home with me, and eat a meal," the old prophet replied.

¹⁶ The man of God said, "I'm not allowed to go back with you. I'm not allowed to eat or drink with you.

¹⁷ When the LORD spoke to me, he told me not to eat or drink there or go back on the road I took to get there."

¹⁸ The old prophet said, "I'm also a prophet, like you. An angel spoke the word of the LORD to me. He said, 'Bring him home with you so that he may have something to eat and drink.'" (But the old prophet was lying.)

¹⁹ The man of God went back with him and ate and drank in his home.

²⁰ When they were sitting at the table, the LORD spoke his word to the old prophet who had brought back the man of God.

²¹ The LORD also called to the man of God. He said, "This is what the LORD says: You rebelled against the words from the LORD'S mouth and didn't obey the command that the LORD your God gave you.

²² You came back, ate, and drank at this place about which he told you, 'Don't eat or drink there.' That is why your dead body will not be allowed to be placed in the tomb of your ancestors."

²³ After the old prophet had something to eat and drink, he saddled the donkey for the prophet whom he had brought back.

²⁴ The man of God left. A lion found him as he traveled on the road and killed him. His dead body was thrown on the road. The donkey and the lion were standing by the body.

²⁵ People who passed by saw the body lying on the road and the lion standing by the body. They talked about it in the city where the old prophet was living.

²⁶ When the old prophet who had brought the man of God back from the road heard about it, he said, "It's the man of God who rebelled against the words from the LORD'S mouth! The LORD gave him to the lion. It tore him to pieces and killed him as the word of the LORD had told him."

²⁷ Then the old prophet told his sons to saddle his donkey for him. So they did.

²⁸ He found the body of the man thrown on the road. He also found the donkey and the lion standing beside it.

The lion had not eaten the body, nor had it torn the donkey to pieces.

²⁹ The old prophet picked up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. He came to his own city to mourn for him and to bury him.

³⁰ He laid the body of the man of God in his own tomb and mourned over the man, saying, "Oh no, my brother, my brother!"

³¹ After he had buried the man of God, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the tomb where the man of God was buried. Lay my bones beside his bones.

³² The things that he announced by a command of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and all the illegal worship sites in the cities of Samaria will happen."

³³ Even after this, Jeroboam didn't change his evil ways, but he once again made some men priests for the illegal worship sites. He took all who were

willing and appointed them to be priests at the worship sites.

³⁴ Appointing illegal priests became the sin of Jeroboam's family so that it had to be destroyed and wiped off the face of the earth.

14 ¹ At that time Abijah, son of Jeroboam, got sick.

² Jeroboam told his wife, "Go to Shiloh, but disguise yourself so that people will not recognize you as my wife. The prophet Ahijah, who told me I would be king of these people, is there.

³ Take ten loaves of bread, some raisins, and a jar of honey with you, and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy."

⁴ Jeroboam's wife did this. She left, went to Shiloh, and came to the home of Ahijah. Ahijah couldn't see. His eyesight had failed because he was old.

⁵ However, the LORD had told Ahijah, "Jeroboam's wife is coming to ask you about her son who is sick. When she comes, she will pretend to be someone else." He also told Ahijah what to say to her.

⁶ Ahijah heard her footsteps when she came into the room. He said, "Come in. You're Jeroboam's wife. Why are you pretending to be someone else? I've been told to give you some terrible news.

⁷ Tell Jeroboam, 'This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I picked you out of the people and made you a leader over my people Israel.

⁸ I tore the kingdom away from David's heirs and gave it to you. But you have not been like my servant David. He obeyed my commands and faithfully followed me by doing only what I considered right.

⁹ You have done more evil things than everyone before you. You made other gods, metal idols, for yourself. You made me furious and turned your back to me.

¹⁰ "That is why I will bring disaster on Jeroboam's house. I will destroy every male in his house, whether slave or freeman in Israel. I will burn down Jeroboam's house. It will burn like manure until it is gone.

¹¹ If anyone from Jeroboam's house dies in the city, dogs will eat him. If anyone dies in the country, birds will eat him.' The LORD has said this!

¹² "Get up, and go home. The moment you set foot in the city the child will die.

¹³ All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one of Jeroboam's family who will be properly buried. He was the only one in Jeroboam's house in whom the LORD God of Israel found anything good.

¹⁴ The LORD will appoint a king over Israel. That king will destroy Jeroboam's house. This will happen today. It will happen right now.

¹⁵ "The LORD will strike Israel like cattails which shake in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which he gave their ancestors. He will scatter them beyond the Euphrates River because they dedicated poles to the goddess Asherah and made the LORD furious.

¹⁶ So the LORD will desert Israel because of Jeroboam's sins, the sins which he led Israel to commit."

¹⁷ Jeroboam's wife got up, left, and went to Tirzah. When she walked across the threshold of her home, the boy died.

¹⁸ All Israel buried him and mourned for him as the LORD had said through his servant, the prophet Ahijah.

¹⁹ Everything else concerning Jeroboam, his wars, and his reign is written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

²⁰ Jeroboam ruled for 22 years. Then he lay down in death with his ancestors. His son Nadab succeeded him as king.

²¹ Rehoboam, son of Solomon, ruled Judah. He was 41 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 17 years in Jerusalem, the city that the LORD chose from all the tribes of Israel, the city where the LORD put his name. Rehoboam's mother was an Ammonite woman named Naamah.

²² The people of Judah did what the LORD considered evil. Their sins made him more angry than anything their ancestors had done.

²³ They built worship sites for themselves and put up large stones and

Asherah poles to worship on every high hill and under every large tree.

²⁴ There were even male prostitutes in the temples of idols throughout the land. The people of Judah did all the disgusting practices done by the nations that the LORD had forced out of the Israelites' way.

²⁵ In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem.

²⁶ He took the treasures from the LORD'S temple and the royal palace. He took them all. He took all the gold shields Solomon had made.

²⁷ So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and put them by the entrance to the royal palace, where the captains of the guards were stationed.

²⁸ Whenever the king went into the LORD'S temple, guards carried the

shields and then returned them to the guardroom.

²⁹ Isn't everything else concerning Rehoboam—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

³⁰ There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam as long as they lived.

³¹ Rehoboam lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. (His mother was an Ammonite woman named Naamah.) His son Abijam succeeded him as king.

15 ¹ In the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam (Nebat's son), Abijam began to rule Judah.

² He ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother was named Maacah, daughter of Abishalom.

³ He followed the sinful example his father had set and wasn't committed to

the LORD his God as his ancestor David had been.

⁴ But for David's sake the LORD his God made Abijam a lamp in Jerusalem. He appointed David's descendant to rule after him and protected Jerusalem.

⁵ The LORD did this because David did what the LORD considered right: David never failed to do anything the LORD commanded him to do his entire life (except in the matter concerning Uriah the Hittite).

⁶ There was war between Abijam and Rehoboam throughout their lives.

⁷ Isn't everything else about Abijam—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah? There was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

⁸ Abijam lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. His son Asa succeeded him as king.

⁹ In Jeroboam's twentieth year as king of Israel, Asa began to rule as king of Judah.

¹⁰ He ruled 41 years in Jerusalem. His grandmother was named Maacah, daughter of Abishalom.

¹¹ Asa did what the LORD considered right, as his ancestor David had done.

¹² He forced the male temple prostitutes out of the land and got rid of the idols his father had made.

¹³ He also removed his grandmother Maacah from the position of queen mother because she made a statue of the repulsive goddess Asherah. Asa cut the statue down and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

¹⁴ Although the illegal worship sites were not torn down, Asa remained committed to the LORD his entire life.

¹⁵ He brought into the LORD'S temple the silver, the gold, and the utensils he and his father had set apart as holy.

¹⁶ There was war between Asa and King Baasha of Israel as long as they lived.

¹⁷ King Baasha of Israel invaded Judah and fortified Ramah to keep anyone from going to or coming from King Asa of Judah.

¹⁸ Then Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the LORD'S temple and the royal palace and turned them over to his officials. King Asa sent them to Damascus to Aram's King Benhadad, son of Tabrimmon and grandson of Hezion.

¹⁹ He said, "There's a treaty between you and me as there was between your father and my father. I'm sending you a present of silver and gold. Now break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel so that he will leave me alone."

²⁰ Benhadad did what King Asa requested. He sent his generals and their armies to attack the cities of Israel. He conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacah, and the entire area around Chinneroth with the entire territory of Naphtali.

²¹ When Baasha heard the news, he stopped fortifying Ramah and lived in Tirzah.

²² Then King Asa drafted everyone in Judah and excused no one. He made them carry the stones and lumber from Ramah. Baasha had been using those to fortify the city. King Asa used the materials to fortify Geba in Benjamin and Mizpah.

²³ Isn't everything else about Asa—all his heroic acts, everything he did, and the cities he fortified—written in the official records of the kings of Judah? But when he was old, he had a foot disease.

²⁴ Asa lay down in death with his ancestors. He was buried with his ancestors in the city of his ancestor, David. His son Jehoshaphat succeeded him as king.

²⁵ Nadab, son of Jeroboam, began to rule Israel in Asa's second year as king of Judah. He ruled for two years.

²⁶ He did what the LORD considered evil, living as his father did, leading Israel into the same sins.

²⁷ Then Baasha, son of Ahijah from the tribe of Issachar, plotted against Nadab. Baasha assassinated him in the Philistine city of Gibbethon while Nadab and the Israelite forces were attacking it.

²⁸ The assassination happened in Asa's third year as king of Judah. Baasha succeeded Nadab as king of Israel.

²⁹ As soon as he was king, he killed everyone else in Jeroboam's family. He did not spare a soul, as the LORD had

spoken through his servant Ahijah from Shiloh.

³⁰ This was because of Jeroboam's sins and the sins which he led Israel to commit. Those sins made the LORD God of Israel furious.

³¹ Isn't everything else about Nadab—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

³² There was war between Asa and Baasha as long as they lived.

³³ In Asa's third year as king of Judah, Baasha, son of Ahijah, began to rule Israel in Tirzah. He ruled for 24 years.

³⁴ He did what the LORD considered evil. He lived like Jeroboam and led Israel into committing the same sins.

16 ¹ The LORD spoke his word to Jehu, Hanani's son, against Baasha.

² He said, "I raised you from the dust and made you leader of my people

Israel. But you have lived like Jeroboam. You have led my people to sin, and their sins make me furious.

³ So I will destroy Baasha and his family. I will make his family like the family of Jeroboam (Nebat's son).

⁴ Dogs will eat anyone from Baasha's family who dies in the city. Birds will eat anyone from his family who dies in the country."

⁵ Isn't everything else about Baasha—what he did and his heroic acts—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

⁶ Baasha lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah succeeded him as king.

⁷ In addition, the LORD spoke his word to the prophet Jehu, Hanani's son, against Baasha and his family because of all the things Baasha did which the LORD considered evil. Baasha's actions, which

made the LORD furious, were like the sin of Jeroboam's family. The LORD was also furious because Baasha destroyed Jeroboam's family.

⁸ Elah, son of Baasha, began to rule Israel in Asa's twenty-sixth year as Judah's king. He ruled in Tirzah for two years.

⁹ But Zimri, the general who commanded half of Elah's chariots, plotted against him. Elah was getting drunk in Tirzah at Arza's house. (Arza was in charge of the palace in Tirzah.)

¹⁰ Zimri entered Arza's house, attacked Elah, and killed him in Asa's twenty-seventh year as king of Judah. Zimri succeeded Elah as king of Israel.

¹¹ At the beginning of Zimri's reign, as soon as he was on his throne, he killed Baasha's entire family. He didn't spare any of Baasha's male relatives or friends.

¹² So Zimri destroyed Baasha's entire family, as the LORD had spoken through the prophet Jehu.

¹³ This was for all the sins committed by Baasha and his son Elah. They sinned, led Israel to sin, and made the LORD God of Israel furious because of their worthless idols.

¹⁴ Isn't everything else about Elah—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

¹⁵ In Asa's twenty-seventh year as Judah's king, Zimri ruled for seven days in Tirzah while the army was camped near the Philistine city of Gibbethon.

¹⁶ When the army heard that Zimri had plotted against the king and killed him, the Israelite troops in the camp made Omri, the commander of the army, king of Israel.

¹⁷ Omri and the Israelite troops with him left Gibbethon and attacked Tirzah.

¹⁸ When Zimri saw that the city had been captured, he went into the stronghold in the royal palace and burned down the palace over his own head. He died

¹⁹ because of the sins he had committed—the things the LORD considered evil. Zimri lived like Jeroboam and led Israel to sin.

²⁰ Isn't everything else about Zimri and his plot written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

²¹ Then the army of Israel was divided into two factions. Half of the army followed Tibni, son of Ginath, and wanted to make him king. The other half followed Omri.

²² But the half which followed Omri was stronger than the half which followed Tibni, Ginath's son. Tibni died, and Omri became king.

²³ Omri began to rule Israel in Asa's thirty-first year as king of Judah. He ruled for 12 years, 6 of them in Tirzah.

²⁴ Omri bought a hill from Shemer for 150 pounds of silver. He fortified the hill and built the city of Samaria on it. He named the city after its former owner, Shemer.

²⁵ Omri did what the LORD considered evil. He did more evil things than all the kings before him.

²⁶ He lived exactly like Jeroboam (Nebat's son). He sinned and led Israel to sin with worthless idols, and the Israelites made the LORD God of Israel furious.

²⁷ Isn't everything else about Omri—what he did and his heroic acts—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

²⁸ Omri lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab succeeded him as king.

²⁹ Ahab, son of Omri, began to rule Israel in Asa's thirty–eighth year as king of Judah. He ruled for 22 years in Samaria.

³⁰ Ahab, son of Omri, did what the LORD considered evil. He was worse than all the kings who were before him.

³¹ It wasn't enough that he committed the same sins as Jeroboam (Nebat's son). He also married Jezebel, daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon. Ahab then served and worshiped Baal.

³² He built the temple of Baal in Samaria and set up an altar there.

³³ Ahab made poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah. He did more to make the LORD God of Israel furious than all the kings of Israel who came before him.

³⁴ In Ahab's time Hiel from Bethel rebuilt Jericho. Laying the foundation cost him his firstborn son, Abiram. Setting up the city doors cost him his youngest son, Segub. The LORD had spoken this through Joshua, son of Nun.

17 ¹ Elijah, who was from Tishbe but had settled in Gilead, said to Ahab, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD God of Israel whom I serve lives, there will be no dew or rain during the next few years unless I say so."

² Then the LORD spoke his word to Elijah:

³ "Leave here, turn east, and hide beside the Cherith River, which is east of the Jordan River.

⁴ You can drink from the stream, and I've commanded ravens to feed you there."

⁵ Elijah left and did what the word of the LORD had told him. He went to live

by the Cherith River, which is east of the Jordan River.

⁶ Ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening. And he drank from the stream.

⁷ But after some time the stream dried up because no rain had fallen in the land.

⁸ Then the LORD spoke his word to Elijah:

⁹ "Get up, go to Zarephath (which belongs to Sidon), and stay there. I've commanded a widow there to feed you."

¹⁰ He got up and went to Zarephath. As he came to the town's entrance, a widow was gathering wood. He called to her, "Please bring me a drink of water."

¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called to her again, "Please bring me a piece of bread too."

¹² She said, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD your God lives, I didn't bake any bread. I have one handful of flour in a

jar and a little oil in a jug. I'm gathering wood. I'm going to prepare something for myself and my son so that we can eat it and then die."

¹³ Then Elijah told her, "Don't be afraid. Go home, and do as you've said. But first make a small loaf and bring it to me. Then prepare something for yourself and your son.

¹⁴ This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Until the LORD sends rain on the land, the jar of flour will never be empty and the jug will always contain oil."

¹⁵ She did what Elijah had told her. So she, Elijah, and her family had food for a long time.

¹⁶ The jar of flour never became empty, and the jug always contained olive oil, as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

¹⁷ Afterwards, the son of the woman who owned the house got sick. He got so sick that finally no life was left in him.

¹⁸ The woman asked Elijah, "What do you and I have in common, man of God? Did you come here to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

¹⁹ He said to her, "Give me your son." Elijah took him from her arms, carried him to the upstairs room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.

²⁰ Then he called to the LORD, "LORD my God, have you brought misery on the widow I'm staying with by killing her son?"

²¹ Then Elijah stretched himself over the boy three times and called to the LORD, "LORD my God, please make this child's life return to him."

²² The LORD heard Elijah's request, and the child's life returned to him. He was alive again.

²³ Elijah took the child, brought him down from the upstairs room of the

house, and gave him to his mother. He said, "Look! Your son is alive."

²⁴ The woman said to Elijah, "Now I'm convinced that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is true."

18 ¹ A while later in the third year of the drought, the LORD spoke his word to Elijah: "Present yourself to Ahab. I will allow rain to fall on the ground."

² So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. The famine was particularly severe in Samaria.

³ Ahab sent for Obadiah, who was in charge of the palace. Obadiah was a devout worshiper of the LORD.

⁴ (When Jezebel was killing the LORD'S prophets, Obadiah had hidden 100 prophets in caves. He put 50 prophets in each cave and kept them alive by providing bread and water for them.)

⁵ Ahab told Obadiah, "Let's go throughout the countryside to every spring and stream. If we can find grass, then we can keep the horses and mules alive and not lose any animals."

⁶ So they split up in order to cover the entire countryside. Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went the other way by himself.

⁷ Obadiah was on the road when he met Elijah. Obadiah recognized him and immediately bowed down to the ground. "Is it you, my master Elijah?" he asked.

⁸ "Yes," Elijah answered him. "Tell your master that Elijah is here."

⁹ Obadiah asked, "What have I done wrong to make you hand me over to Ahab to be killed?"

¹⁰ I solemnly swear, as the LORD your God lives, my master has searched for you in every region and kingdom. When people would say, 'He isn't here,' my

master made that kingdom or region take an oath that they hadn't found you.

¹¹ "Now you say, 'Tell your master that Elijah is here.'

¹² This is what will happen: When I leave you, the LORD'S Spirit will take you away to some unknown place. I'll tell Ahab, but he won't be able to find you. Then he will kill me. "I have been faithful to the LORD since I was a child.

¹³ Haven't you heard what I did when Jezebel killed the LORD'S prophets? Haven't you heard how I hid 100 of the LORD'S prophets in caves? I hid 50 prophets in each cave and provided bread and water for them.

¹⁴ Now you say that I should tell my master that Elijah is here. He will kill me."

¹⁵ Elijah said, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD of Armies whom I serve lives, I will present myself to Ahab."

¹⁶ So Obadiah went to tell Ahab. Ahab went to meet Elijah.

¹⁷ When he saw Elijah, Ahab said, "Is that you, you troublemaker of Israel?"

¹⁸ Elijah answered, "I haven't troubled Israel. You and your father's family have done it by disobeying the LORD'S commands and following the various Baal gods.

¹⁹ Order all Israel to gather around me on Mount Carmel. And bring the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

²⁰ Ahab sent word to all the Israelites and brought the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

²¹ Elijah stood up in front of all the people and asked them, "How long will you try to have it both ways? If the LORD is God, follow him; if Baal is God, follow him." The people didn't say a word.

²² So Elijah told the people, "I'm the only surviving prophet of the LORD, but there are 450 prophets of Baal.

²³ Give us two bulls. Let the prophets of Baal choose one for themselves, cut it into pieces, lay it on the wood, but not set it on fire. I'll do the same with the other bull.

²⁴ "You call on the name of your gods, but I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire is the real God." All the people answered, "That's fine."

²⁵ Elijah told the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves. Prepare yours first, because there are more of you. Call on the name of your god, but don't set the wood on fire."

²⁶ They took the bull he gave them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon. They said, "Baal, answer us!" But there wasn't a

sound or an answer. So they danced around the altar they had made.

²⁷ At noon Elijah started to make fun of them. "Shout louder, since he is a god. Maybe he's thinking, relieving himself, or traveling! Maybe he's sleeping, and you have to wake him!"

²⁸ So they shouted louder. They also cut themselves with swords and spears until their blood flowed. (This is what their ritual called for.)

²⁹ In the afternoon they continued to rant and rave until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no sound, no answer, no attention given to them.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come over here." So all the people came to him. He rebuilt the LORD'S altar that had been torn down.

³¹ Elijah took 12 stones, one for each of the tribes named after Jacob's sons.

(The LORD had spoken his word to Jacob: "Your name will be Israel.")

³² Elijah built an altar in the LORD'S name with those stones. He also made a trench that could hold 12 quarts of grain around the altar.

³³ He arranged the wood, cut up the bull, and put it on the wood.

³⁴ He said, "Fill four jars with water. Pour the water on the offering and on the wood." Then he said, "Do it again," and they did it again. Then he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time.

³⁵ The water flowed around the altar, and even the trench was filled with water.

³⁶ When it was time to offer the sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward. He said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, make known today that you are God in Israel and that

I'm your servant and have done all these things by your instructions.

³⁷ Answer me, LORD! Answer me! Then these people will know that you, LORD, are God and that you are winning back their hearts."

³⁸ So a fire from the LORD fell down and consumed the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dirt. The fire even dried up the water that was in the trench.

³⁹ All the people saw it and immediately bowed down to the ground. "The LORD is God!" they said. "The LORD is God!"

⁴⁰ Elijah told them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let any of them escape." The people seized them, and Elijah took them to the Kishon River and slaughtered them there.

⁴¹ Then Elijah told Ahab, "Get up, eat, and drink. It sounds like a heavy rain is coming."

⁴² Ahab got up to eat and drink. Elijah went to the top of Carmel and bowed down on the ground to pray.

⁴³ He said to his servant, "Please go back to Mount Carmel, and look toward the sea." He went up, looked, came back, and said, "There's nothing." Seven times Elijah told him, "Go back."

⁴⁴ After the seventh time the servant said, "A little cloud like a man's hand is coming from the sea." Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and leave before the rain delays you.'"

⁴⁵ Gradually, the sky grew darker with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. Ahab got into his chariot to go back to Jezreel.

⁴⁶ The LORD'S power was on Elijah. He hiked up his robe and ran ahead of Ahab until they came to Jezreel.

19 ¹ Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including how he had executed all the prophets.

² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah. She said, "May the gods strike me dead if by this time tomorrow I don't take your life the way you took the lives of Baal's prophets."

³ Frightened, Elijah fled to save his life. He came to Beersheba in Judah and left his servant there.

⁴ Then he traveled through the wilderness for a day. He sat down under a broom plant and wanted to die. "I've had enough now, LORD," he said. "Take my life! I'm no better than my ancestors."

⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom plant. An angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat."

⁶ When he looked, he saw near his head some bread baked on hot stones and a

jar of water. So he ate, drank, and went to sleep again.

⁷ The angel of the LORD came back and woke him up again. The angel said, "Get up and eat, or your journey will be too much for you."

⁸ He got up, ate, and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled for 40 days and nights until he came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night. Then the LORD spoke his word to Elijah. He asked, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ He answered, "LORD God of Armies, I have eagerly served you. The Israelites have abandoned your promises, torn down your altars, and executed your prophets. I'm the only one left, and they're trying to take my life."

¹¹ God said, "Go out and stand in front of the LORD on the mountain." As the

LORD was passing by, a fierce wind tore mountains and shattered rocks ahead of the LORD. But the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the LORD wasn't in the earthquake.

¹² After the earthquake there was a fire. But the LORD wasn't in the fire. And after the fire there was a quiet, whispering voice.

¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his coat, went out, and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then the voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴ He answered, "LORD God of Armies, I have eagerly served you. The Israelites have abandoned your promises, torn down your altars, and executed your prophets. I'm the only one left, and they're trying to take my life."

¹⁵ The LORD told him, "Go back to the wilderness near Damascus, the same way you came. When you get there, anoint Hazael as king of Aram.

¹⁶ Anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, as king of Israel. And anoint Elisha, son of Shaphat, from Abel Meholah as prophet to take your place.

¹⁷ If anyone escapes from Hazael's sword, Jehu will kill him. And if anyone escapes from Jehu's sword, Elisha will kill him.

¹⁸ But I still have 7,000 people in Israel whose knees have not knelt to worship Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

¹⁹ Elijah found Elisha, son of Shaphat. Elisha was plowing behind 12 pairs of oxen. He was using the twelfth pair. Elijah took off his coat and put it on Elisha.

²⁰ So Elisha left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and mother goodbye. Then I will follow you." "Go back," Elijah answered him. "I'm not stopping you."

²¹ Elisha left him, took two oxen, and butchered them. He boiled the meat, using the oxen's yoke for firewood. He gave the meat to the people to eat. Then he left to follow and assist Elijah.

20 ¹ King Benhadad of Aram gathered together his whole army. With him were 32 kings along with their horses and chariots. He went to blockade Samaria and fight against it.

² He sent messengers into the city to King Ahab of Israel. They told Ahab, "This is what Benhadad says:

³ Your silver and gold are mine. Your beloved wives and children are mine."

⁴ The king of Israel answered, "As you say, Your Majesty. I and everything I have are yours."

⁵ But Benhadad sent messengers back to Ahab. They said, "Benhadad has sent this message to you: 'Your silver, gold, wives, and children are mine. Give them to me."

⁶ At this time tomorrow I'm going to send my servants to search your palace and your servants' houses. They will take anything that you consider valuable.'"

⁷ Then the king of Israel called for all the leaders of the country. He said, "You can see how this man is looking for trouble. When he sent for my wives, children, silver, and gold, I didn't refuse him."

⁸ All the leaders and all the people told him, "Don't listen to him. Don't agree to his demands."

⁹ Ahab told Benhadad's messengers, "Tell His Majesty, 'I did everything your

messengers told me the first time, but I can't do this.'" The messengers left to take back his answer.

¹⁰ Then Benhadad sent Ahab the following message: "May the gods strike me dead if there will be enough dust left from Samaria to give a handful to each soldier who follows me."

¹¹ The king of Israel answered, "The saying goes, 'Don't brag about a victory before you have even dressed for battle.'"

¹² Benhadad heard this as he and his allies were drinking in their tents. He told his officers to get ready. So they got ready to attack the city.

¹³ Then a prophet came to King Ahab of Israel and said, "This is what the LORD says: Have you seen this large army? I will hand it over to you today. Then you will know that I am the LORD."

¹⁴ Ahab asked, "How will this be done?" The prophet answered, "This is what the LORD says: by using the young officers of the district governors." "Who will start the battle?" Ahab asked. "You will," the prophet answered.

¹⁵ Ahab counted the young officers of the district governors. There were 232. After counting them, he counted all the Israelite soldiers. There were 7,000.

¹⁶ They attacked at noon, when Benhadad was in his tent getting drunk with the 32 kings who were his allies.

¹⁷ The young officers of the district governors went out first. Benhadad had sent men to watch the city. They informed him that some men had come out of Samaria.

¹⁸ He said, "Take them alive, whether they have come out to make peace or to fight."

¹⁹ The young officers of the district governors led an attack, and the troops followed them.

²⁰ Each officer killed his opponent. The Arameans fled, and Israel pursued them. King Benhadad of Aram escaped on a horse with the cavalry.

²¹ The king of Israel went out and destroyed the horses and chariots and decisively defeated the Arameans.

²² Then the prophet came to the king of Israel and said, "Reinforce your army. Consider what you have to do. When spring comes, the king of Aram will attack again."

²³ Meanwhile, the officers of King Benhadad of Aram told him, "Their god is a god of the hills. That is why they were stronger than we were. However, if we fight them on the plain, we will be stronger than they are.

²⁴ This is what we must do: Remove all of the kings from their positions, and substitute governors for them.

²⁵ Recruit an army with as many horses and chariots as the one which was defeated. Then, if we fight them on the plain, we will be stronger than they are." He took their advice and followed it.

²⁶ Spring came, and Benhadad organized the Aramean army and went to Aphek to fight Israel.

²⁷ When the Israelite troops had been organized and given provisions, they went to meet the enemy. The Israelites, while camped opposite the Arameans who filled the country, seemed like two newborn goats.

²⁸ The man of God came again. He said to the king of Israel, "This is what the LORD says: Because the Arameans said that the LORD is a god of the hills but not a god of the valleys, I will hand over

their entire army to you. Then you will know that I am the LORD."

²⁹ They camped facing one another for seven days, and on the seventh day the battle started. The Israelites killed 100,000 Aramean foot soldiers in one day.

³⁰ The survivors fled to Aphek, the city where the wall fell on 27,000 of them. Benhadad had also fled. He came to the city and hid in an inner room.

³¹ His officers told him, "We have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. Allow us to dress in sackcloth, put ropes around our necks, and go to the king of Israel. Maybe he'll let you live."

³² So they dressed in sackcloth and put ropes around their necks. They went to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Benhadad says, 'Please let me live.'" Ahab asked, "He's still alive? He's my brother."

³³ The men, watching for a good sign, were quick to take him at his word.

"Benhadad is your brother," they said.

Ahab said, "Bring him here." When Benhadad arrived, Ahab had him come up on the chariot with him.

³⁴ Benhadad told him, "I will give back the towns my father took from your father. You may set up trading centers in Damascus as my father did in Samaria."

Ahab said, "If you will put this into a treaty, I will let you go." So Ahab made a treaty with Benhadad and let him go.

³⁵ A disciple of the prophets spoke to a friend as the word of the LORD had told him. The disciple said, "Punch me," but the man refused to punch him.

³⁶ The disciple said, "Since you didn't obey the LORD, a lion will kill you when you leave me." When the friend left, a lion found him and killed him.

³⁷ Then the disciple found another man. He said, "Punch me." The man punched him hard and wounded him.

³⁸ Then the prophet, disguised with a bandage over his eyes, waited for the king by the road.

³⁹ When the king passed by, the disciple called to him. "I went to fight in the battle. A man turned around and brought a prisoner to me. He said, 'Guard this prisoner. If he gets away, you will pay for his life with your own life or be fined 75 pounds of silver.'

⁴⁰ But while I was busy doing other things, he got away." The king of Israel told him, "That's your own penalty. You have determined it yourself."

⁴¹ Then he quickly took the bandage off his eyes. The king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets.

⁴² The prophet told him, "This is what the LORD says: You let the man go. He

was claimed by God and should have been killed. For that reason your life will be taken in place of his life and your people in place of his people."

⁴³ Resentful and upset, the king of Israel went home to Samaria.

21 ¹ This is what happened next. Naboth from Jezreel had a vineyard in Jezreel next to the palace of King Ahab of Samaria.

² Ahab told Naboth, "Give me your vineyard. It will become my vegetable garden because it is near my house. I will give you a better vineyard for it. Or if you prefer, I will pay you a fair price for it."

³ Naboth told Ahab, "The LORD has forbidden me to give you what I inherited from my ancestors."

⁴ Resentful and upset, Ahab went home because of what Naboth from Jezreel had told him. (Naboth had said, "I will not give you what I inherited from my

ancestors.") So Ahab lay on the couch, turned his face from everyone, and refused to eat.

⁵ His wife Jezebel came to him and asked, "Why are you so resentful of everything? Why don't you eat?"

⁶ He told her, "I talked to Naboth from Jezreel. I said to him, 'Sell me your vineyard. Or, if you like, I'll give you another vineyard for it.' But he said, 'I won't give you my vineyard.'"

⁷ His wife Jezebel said to him, "Aren't you king of Israel? Get up, eat, and cheer up. I'll give you the vineyard belonging to Naboth from Jezreel."

⁸ So Jezebel wrote letters, signed them with Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal. She sent them to the respected leaders and nobles living in Naboth's city.

⁹ In these letters she wrote: "Announce a fast. Seat Naboth as leader of the people.

¹⁰ Have two good-for-nothing men sit opposite him and accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then stone him to death outside the city."

¹¹ The men in Naboth's city—the respected leaders and nobles who lived there—did what Jezebel asked them to do. They did just as she had written in the letters she sent.

¹² They announced a fast and had Naboth seated as the leader of the people.

¹³ The two good-for-nothing men came in and sat opposite him. In front of the people, these men accused Naboth of cursing God and the king. So the people stoned him to death outside the city.

¹⁴ Then the leaders sent this message to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned to death."

¹⁵ Jezebel received the message and said to Ahab, "Get up! Confiscate the vineyard which Naboth from Jezreel refused to sell you. He's dead now."

¹⁶ When he heard about Naboth's death, Ahab went to confiscate the vineyard.

¹⁷ Then the LORD spoke his word to Elijah from Tishbe:

¹⁸ "Go, meet King Ahab of Israel, who lives in Samaria. He went to confiscate Naboth's vineyard.

¹⁹ Tell him, 'This is what the LORD asks: Have you murdered someone just to confiscate a vineyard?' Then tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: At the place where the dogs licked up Naboth's blood, the dogs will lick up your blood.'"

²⁰ Ahab asked Elijah, "So you've found me, my enemy?" Elijah answered, "I found you. Because you sold yourself to do what the LORD considers evil.

²¹ So I am going to bring evil on you. I will destroy your descendants. I will destroy every male in Ahab's house, whether slave or freeman in Israel.

²² I will make your family like the family of Jeroboam (Nebat's son) and like the house of Baasha, son of Ahijah, because you made me furious. You led Israel to sin."

²³ Then the LORD also spoke through Elijah about Jezebel: "The dogs will eat Jezebel inside the walls of Jezreel.

²⁴ If anyone from Ahab's house dies in the city, dogs will eat him. If anyone dies in the country, birds will eat him."

²⁵ There was no one else like Ahab. At the urging of his wife, he sold himself to do what the LORD considered evil.

²⁶ He did many disgusting things as a result of worshiping idols as the Amorites had done. (The LORD confiscated their land for Israel.)

²⁷ When Ahab heard these things, he tore his clothes in distress and dressed in sackcloth. He fasted, lay in sackcloth, and walked around depressed.

²⁸ Then the LORD spoke his word to Elijah from Tishbe:

²⁹ "Do you see how Ahab is humbling himself in my presence? Because he's humbling himself in my presence, I will not let any evil happen to his family while he is alive. I will bring evil on it during his son's lifetime."

22 ¹ For three years there was no war between Aram and Israel.

² In the third year King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit the king of Israel.

³ The king of Israel asked his staff, "Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead belongs

to us, and we are doing nothing to take it back from the king of Aram?"

⁴ Then he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth in Gilead?" Jehoshaphat told the king of Israel, "I will do what you do. My troops will do what your troops do. My horses will do what your horses do."

⁵ Then Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "But first, find out what the word of the LORD is in this matter."

⁶ So the king of Israel called 400 prophets together. He asked them, "Should I go to war against Ramoth in Gilead or not?" "Go," they said. "The Lord will hand over Ramoth to you."

⁷ But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD whom we could ask?"

⁸ The king of Israel told Jehoshaphat, "We can ask the LORD through Micaiah, son of Imlah, but I hate him. He doesn't

prophecy anything good about me, only evil." Jehoshaphat answered, "The king must not say that."

⁹ The king of Israel called for an officer and said, "Quick! Get Micaiah, son of Imlah!"

¹⁰ The king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah were dressed in royal robes and seated on thrones. They were on the threshing floor at the entrance to the gate of Samaria. All the prophets were prophesying in front of them.

¹¹ Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, made iron horns and said, "This is what the LORD says: With these horns you will push the Arameans to their destruction."

¹² All the other prophets made the same prophecy. They said, "Attack Ramoth in Gilead, and you will win. The LORD will hand it over to you."

¹³ The messenger who went to call Micaiah told him, "The prophets have all told the king the same good message. Make your message agree with their message. Say something good."

¹⁴ Micaiah answered, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, I will tell him whatever the LORD tells me."

¹⁵ When he came to the king, the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth in Gilead or not?" Micaiah said to him, "Attack and you will win. The LORD will hand it over to you."

¹⁶ The king asked him, "How many times must I make you take an oath in the LORD'S name to tell me nothing but the truth?"

¹⁷ So Micaiah said, "I saw Israel's troops scattered in the hills like sheep without a shepherd. The LORD said, 'These sheep have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'"

¹⁸ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you he wouldn't prophesy anything good about me, only evil?"

¹⁹ Micaiah added, "Then hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and the entire army of heaven was standing near him on his right and his left.

²⁰ The LORD asked, 'Who will deceive Ahab so that he will attack and be killed at Ramoth in Gilead?' Some answered one way, while others said something else.

²¹ "Then the Spirit stepped forward, stood in front of the LORD, and said, 'I will deceive him.' "'How?' the LORD asked.

²² "The Spirit answered, 'I will go out and be a spirit that tells lies through the mouths of all of Ahab's prophets.' "The LORD said, 'You will succeed in deceiving him. Go and do it.'

²³ "So, the LORD has put into the mouths of all these prophets of yours a spirit that makes them tell lies. The LORD has spoken evil about you."

²⁴ Then Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, went to Micaiah and struck him on the cheek. "How did the LORD'S Spirit leave me to talk to you?" he asked.

²⁵ Micaiah answered, "You will find out on the day you go into an inner room to hide."

²⁶ The king of Israel then said, "Send Micaiah back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the prince.

²⁷ Say, 'This is what the king says: Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing but bread and water until I come home safely.'"

²⁸ Micaiah said, "If you really do come back safely, then the LORD wasn't speaking through me. Pay attention to this, everyone!"

²⁹ So the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to Ramoth in Gilead.

³⁰ The king of Israel told Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you should wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

³¹ The king of Aram had given orders to the 32 chariot commanders. He said, "Don't fight anyone except the king of Israel."

³² When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "He must be the king of Israel." So they turned to fight him. But when Jehoshaphat cried out,

³³ the chariot commanders realized that he wasn't the king of Israel. They turned away from him.

³⁴ One man aimed his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between his scale armor and his breastplate. Ahab

told his chariot driver, "Turn around, and get me away from these troops. I'm badly wounded."

³⁵ But the battle got worse that day, and the king was kept propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans. He died that evening. The blood from the wound had flowed into the chariot.

³⁶ At sundown a cry went through the army, "Every man to his own city! Every man to his own property!"

³⁷ When the king was dead, he was brought to Samaria to be buried.

³⁸ His chariot was washed at the pool of Samaria, where the prostitutes bathed. The dogs licked up his blood, as the LORD had predicted.

³⁹ Isn't everything else about Ahab—everything he did, the ivory palace he built, and all the cities he fortified—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

⁴⁰ Ahab lay down in death with his ancestors. His son Ahaziah succeeded him as king.

⁴¹ Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, became king of Judah in Ahab's fourth year as king of Israel.

⁴² Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah, daughter of Shilhi.

⁴³ Jehoshaphat carefully followed the example his father Asa had set and did what the LORD considered right.

⁴⁴ But the illegal worship sites were not torn down. The people continued to sacrifice and burn incense at these worship sites. Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵ Isn't everything else about Jehoshaphat—the heroic acts he did and the wars he fought—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

⁴⁶ He rid the land of the male temple prostitutes who were left there from the time of his father Asa.

⁴⁷ There was no king in Edom; instead, a deputy ruled.

⁴⁸ Jehoshaphat made Tarshish-style ships to go to Ophir for gold. But they didn't go because the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber.

⁴⁹ Then Ahaziah, son of Ahab, said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat refused.

⁵⁰ Jehoshaphat lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of his ancestor David. His son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

⁵¹ Ahaziah, son of Ahab, became king of Israel in Samaria during Jehoshaphat's seventeenth year as king of Judah. Ahaziah ruled Israel for two years.

⁵² He did what the LORD considered evil. He followed the example of his father and mother and of Jeroboam (Nebat's son) who led Israel to sin.

⁵³ Ahaziah served Baal, worshiped him, and made the LORD God of Israel furious, as his father had done.

2 Kings

1 ¹ After Ahab died, Moab rebelled against Israel.

² During the rebellion King Ahaziah fell through a window lattice in his upstairs room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers to Ekron. He had told them, "Go ask Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, if I will recover from this injury."

³ Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah from Tishbe, "Meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and ask them, 'Do you seek advice from Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, because you think there is no God in Israel?'"

⁴ This is what the LORD says: You will not get up from the bed you are lying on. Instead, you will die there.'" Then Elijah left.

⁵ When the messengers returned, the king asked them, "Why have you come back so soon?"

⁶ They told him that a man came to meet them and said to them, "Go back to the king who sent you. Tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: Do you send messengers to seek advice from Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, because you think there is no God in Israel? You will not get up from the bed you are lying on. Instead, you will die there.'"

⁷ The king asked them, "What was the man who told you this like?"

⁸ They replied, "He was hairy and had a leather belt around his waist." "That's Elijah from Tishbe," the king answered.

⁹ The king sent an army officer with 50 men to Elijah. When the officer found Elijah sitting on top of a hill, he told Elijah, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'"

¹⁰ Elijah answered the officer, "If I'm a man of God, fire will come from heaven and burn up you and your 50 men." Then fire came from heaven and burned up the officer and his 50 men.

¹¹ The king sent another officer with 50 men to Elijah. The officer said, "Man of God, this is what the king says: Come here right away!"

¹² Elijah answered the officer, "If I'm a man of God, fire will come from heaven and burn up you and your 50 men." Then God's fire came from heaven and burned up the officer and his 50 men.

¹³ The king sent a third officer with 50 men. The officer of the third group went up the hill and knelt in front of Elijah. The officer begged him, "Man of God, please treat my life and the lives of these 50 servants of yours as something precious.

¹⁴ Fire has come from heaven and burned up the first two officers and their

100 men. But treat my life as something precious."

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD told Elijah, "Go with him. Don't be afraid of him." So Elijah got up and went with him to the king.

¹⁶ Elijah told the king, "This is what the LORD says: You sent messengers to seek advice from Baalzebub, the god of Ekron. Is this because you think there is no God in Israel whose word you can seek? You will not get up from the bed you are lying on. Instead, you will die there."

¹⁷ So Ahaziah died as the LORD had predicted through Elijah. Joram succeeded him as king because Ahaziah had no son.

¹⁸ Isn't everything else about Ahaziah—the things he did—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

2¹ When the LORD was going to take Elijah to heaven in a windstorm, Elijah and Elisha left Gilgal.

² Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here because the LORD is sending me to Bethel." Elisha answered, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not abandon you." So they went to Bethel.

³ Some of the disciples of the prophets at Bethel came to Elisha. They asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" He answered, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

⁴ Elijah said, "Elisha, please stay here because the LORD is sending me to Jericho." Elisha answered, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not abandon you." So they went to Jericho.

⁵ Then some of the disciples of the prophets who were in Jericho

approached Elisha. They asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" He answered, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

⁶ Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here because the LORD is sending me to the Jordan River." Elisha answered, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not abandon you."

⁷ Fifty disciples of the prophets stood at a distance as Elijah and Elisha stood by the Jordan River.

⁸ Elijah took his coat, rolled it up, and struck the water with it. The water divided to their left and their right, and the two men crossed the river on dry ground.

⁹ While they were crossing, Elijah asked Elisha, "What should I do for you before I'm taken from you?" Elisha answered, "Let me inherit a double share of your spirit."

¹⁰ Elijah said, "You have asked for something difficult. If you see me taken from you, it will be yours. Otherwise, it will not."

¹¹ As they continued walking and talking, a fiery chariot with fiery horses separated the two of them, and Elijah went to heaven in a windstorm.

¹² When Elisha saw this, he cried out, "Master! Master! Israel's chariot and horses!" When he couldn't see Elijah anymore, he grabbed his own garment and tore it in two to show his grief.

¹³ Then he picked up Elijah's coat (which had fallen off Elijah), went back, and stood on the bank of the Jordan River.

¹⁴ He took the coat and struck the water with it. He asked, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" As he struck the water, it divided to his left and his right, and Elisha crossed the river.

¹⁵ The disciples of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him from a distance. They said, "Elijah's spirit rests on Elisha!" Then they went to meet him and bowed in front of him with their faces touching the ground.

¹⁶ They said to him, "There are 50 strong men here with us. Please let them go and search for your master. Maybe the LORD'S Spirit lifted him up and dropped him on one of the hills or in one of the valleys." Elisha answered, "Don't send them to look."

¹⁷ But the disciples kept urging him to send the men until he was embarrassed. So he said, "Send them." They sent 50 men who searched for three days without finding him.

¹⁸ They returned to Elisha in Jericho, where he was waiting. He said, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"

¹⁹ The people of the city of Jericho told Elisha, "This city's location is as good as you will ever find. But the water is bad, and the land cannot grow crops."

²⁰ Elisha said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." They brought it to him.

²¹ He went to the spring and threw the salt into it. Then he said, "This is what the LORD says: I have purified this water. No more deaths or crop failures will come from this water."

²² To this day the water is still pure, as Elisha had said.

²³ From there he went to Bethel. As he walked along the road, some boys came out of the city and mocked him. They said, "Go away, baldy! Go away!"

²⁴ Looking back, he saw them and cursed them in the LORD'S name. Two bears came out of the woods and tore 42 of these youths apart.

²⁵ He left that place, went to Mount Carmel, and returned to Samaria.

3 ¹ Joram, son of Ahab, became king of Israel in Samaria during Jehoshaphat's eighteenth year as king of Judah. He ruled for 12 years.

² He did what the LORD considered evil, but he didn't do what his father or mother had done. He put away the sacred stone that his father had set up and dedicated to Baal.

³ But he would not give up the sins that Jeroboam (Nebat's son) led Israel to commit. Joram would not turn away from those sins.

⁴ King Mesha of Moab raised sheep. Each year he had to pay the king of Israel 100,000 male lambs and the wool from 100,000 rams.

⁵ But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the new king of Israel.

⁶ King Joram immediately left Samaria to prepare Israel's army for war.

⁷ He sent this message to King Jehoshaphat of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you fight Moab with me?" Jehoshaphat answered, "I'll go. I will do what you do. My troops will do what your troops do. My horses will do what your horses do."

⁸ Joram asked, "Which road should we take?" Jehoshaphat answered, "The road through the desert of Edom."

⁹ So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the king of Edom took an indirect route to Moab. After seven days they ran out of water for the army and the animals.

¹⁰ The king of Israel said, "Oh no! The LORD has put the three of us at the mercy of the people of Moab."

¹¹ But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD whom we could

ask?" One of the officials of the king of Israel answered, "Elisha, the son of Shaphat, is here. He used to be Elijah's assistant."

¹² Jehoshaphat said, "The LORD'S word is with him." So King Jehoshaphat of Judah, the king of Israel, and the king of Edom went to Elisha.

¹³ Elisha asked the king of Israel, "Why did you come to me? Go to your father's prophets or your mother's prophets." The king of Israel answered him, "No. The LORD has called the three of us in order to put us at Moab's mercy."

¹⁴ Elisha answered, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD of Armies whom I serve lives, I wouldn't even bother to look at you or notice you if it weren't for my respect for King Jehoshaphat of Judah.

¹⁵ But get me someone to play some music." While the musician was playing, the LORD'S power came over Elisha.

¹⁶ He said, "This is what the LORD says: Make this valley full of ditches.

¹⁷ You will not see wind or rain, but this valley will be filled with water. You, your cattle, and your other animals will drink.

¹⁸ The LORD considers that an easy thing to do. In addition, he will put Moab at your mercy.

¹⁹ You will defeat every walled city and every important city. You will cut down every good tree, seal all the wells, and use rocks to ruin every good piece of land."

²⁰ That is what happened in the morning. At the time of the grain offering, water flowed from Edom and filled the countryside.

²¹ All the people of Moab heard that the kings had come to fight them. So all men old enough to bear arms were called to fight. They stood at the border.

²² When the Moabites got up early in the morning as the sun was rising over the water, they saw the water from a distance. It was as red as blood.

²³ They said, "It's blood! The kings have been fighting one another and have killed each other. Now, Moabites, let's take their goods!"

²⁴ So when the Moabites came to Israel's camp, the Israelites attacked them, and they fled from the Israelites. Israel went after the Moabites and defeated them.

²⁵ Then Israel tore down the cities, each man throwing rocks on every good field until it was covered. They sealed every well and cut down every good tree. Only the stones in the walls of Kir Hareseth were left. Soldiers surrounded Kir Hareseth and attacked it with slings and stones.

²⁶ When the king of Moab saw he was losing the battle, he took 700 swordsmen to try to break through to the king of Edom. But they couldn't do it.

²⁷ Then he took his firstborn son, who would have succeeded him as king, and sacrificed him on the wall as a burnt offering. There was bitter anger against the Israelites. So they went home to their own country.

4 ¹ One of the wives of a disciple of the prophets called to Elisha, "Sir, my husband is dead! You know how he feared the LORD. Now a creditor has come to take my two children as slaves."

² Elisha asked her, "What should I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" She answered, "I have nothing in the house except a jar of olive oil."

³ Elisha said, "Borrow many empty containers from all your neighbors.

⁴ Then close the door behind you and your children, and pour oil into all those containers. When one is full, set it aside."

⁵ So she left him and closed the door behind her and her children. The children kept bringing containers to her, and she kept pouring.

⁶ When the containers were full, she told her son, "Bring me another container." He told her, "There are no more containers." So the olive oil stopped flowing.

⁷ She went and told the man of God. He said, "Sell the oil, and pay your debt. The rest is for you and your children."

⁸ One day Elisha was traveling through Shunem, where a rich woman lived. She had invited him to eat with her. So whenever he was in the area, he stopped in to eat.

⁹ She told her husband, "I know he's a holy man of God. And he regularly travels past our house.

¹⁰ Let's make a small room on the roof and put a bed, table, chair, and lamp stand there for him. He can stay there whenever he comes to visit us."

¹¹ One day he came to their house, went into the upstairs room, and rested there.

¹² He told his servant Gehazi, "Call this Shunem woman." Gehazi called her, and she stood in front of him.

¹³ Elisha said to Gehazi, "Ask her what we can do for her, since she has gone to a lot of trouble for us. Maybe she would like us to speak to the king or the commander of the army for her." She answered, "I'm already living among my own people."

¹⁴ "What should we do for her?" Elisha asked. Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old."

¹⁵ Elisha said, "Call her." So Gehazi called her, and she stood in the doorway.

¹⁶ Elisha said, "At this time next spring, you will hold a baby boy in your arms." She answered, "Don't say that, sir. Don't lie to me. You're a man of God."

¹⁷ But the woman became pregnant and had a son at that time next year, as Elisha had told her.

¹⁸ Several years later the boy went to his father, who was with the harvest workers.

¹⁹ Suddenly, he said to his father, "My head! My head!" The father told his servant, "Carry him to his mother."

²⁰ The servant picked him up and brought him to his mother. The boy sat on her lap until noon, when he died.

²¹ She took him upstairs and laid him on the bed of the man of God, left the room, and shut the door behind her.

²² She called her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys. I will go quickly to the man of God and come back again."

²³ Her husband asked, "Why are you going to him today? It isn't a New Moon Festival or a day of worship." But she said goodbye to him.

²⁴ She saddled the donkey. Then she told her servant, "Lead on. Don't slow down unless I tell you."

²⁵ So she came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When he saw her coming at a distance, he told his servant Gehazi, "There is the woman from Shunem.

²⁶ Run to meet her and ask her how she, her husband, and the boy are doing." "Everyone's fine," she answered.

²⁷ When she came to the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi went to push her away. But the man of God said, "Leave her alone. She is bitter. The LORD has hidden the reason from me. He hasn't told me."

²⁸ The woman said, "I didn't ask you for a son. I said, 'Don't raise my hopes.'"

²⁹ The man of God told Gehazi, "Put on a belt, take my shepherd's staff in your hand, and go. Whenever you meet anyone, don't stop to greet him. If he greets you, don't stop to answer him. Lay my staff on the boy's face."

³⁰ The boy's mother said, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD and you live, I will not leave without you." So Elisha got up and followed her.

³¹ Gehazi went ahead of them and put the staff on the boy's face, but there was no sound or sign of life. So Gehazi came

back to meet the man of God. Gehazi told him, "The boy didn't wake up."

³² When Elisha came to the house, the dead boy was lying on Elisha's bed.

³³ He went into the room, closed the door, and prayed to the LORD.

³⁴ Then he lay on the boy, putting his mouth on the boy's mouth, his eyes on the boy's eyes, his hands on the boy's hands. He crouched over the boy's body, and it became warm.

³⁵ Elisha got up, walked across the room and came back, and then got back on the bed and crouched over him. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

³⁶ Elisha called Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunem woman." Gehazi called her. When she came to him, he said, "Take your son."

³⁷ Then she immediately bowed at his feet. She took her son and left.

³⁸ When Elisha went back to Gilgal, there was a famine in the country. One day, while the disciples of the prophets were meeting with him, he told his servant, "Put a large pot on the fire, and cook some stew for the disciples of the prophets."

³⁹ One of them went into the field to gather vegetables and found a wild vine. He filled his clothes with wild gourds. Then he cut them into the pot of stew without knowing what they were.

⁴⁰ They dished out the food for the men to eat. As they were eating the stew, they cried out, "There's death in the pot, man of God!" So they couldn't eat it.

⁴¹ Elisha said, "Bring some flour." He threw it into the pot and said, "Dish it out for the people to eat." Then there was nothing harmful in the pot.

⁴² A man from Baal Shalisha brought bread made from the first harvested

grain, 20 barley loaves, and fresh grain to the man of God. The man of God said, "Give it to the people to eat."

⁴³ But his servant asked, "How can I set this in front of a hundred people?" "Give it to the people to eat," the man of God said. "This is what the LORD says: They will eat and even have some left over."

⁴⁴ The servant set it in front of them. They ate and had some left over, as the LORD had predicted.

5 ¹ Naaman, the commander of the Aramean king's army, was respected and highly honored by his master. The LORD had given Aram a victory through Naaman. This man was a good soldier, but he had a skin disease.

² Once, when the Arameans went on raids, they had brought back a little girl from Israel. She became the servant of Naaman's wife.

³ The girl told her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet in Samaria. Then the prophet could cure him of his skin disease."

⁴ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said.

⁵ The king of Aram said, "You may go. I will also send a letter to the king of Israel." When Naaman left, he took 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and 10 sets of clothing with him.

⁶ He brought the letter to the king of Israel. It read, "I'm sending my officer Naaman with this letter. Cure him of his skin disease."

⁷ When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in distress. He asked, "Am I God? Can I kill someone and then bring him back to life? This man sends someone to me so that I can cure his skin disease! All of you should realize

and understand that he's trying to pick a fight with me."

⁸ But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a messenger to the king. He asked, "Why did you tear your clothes? Please let Naaman come to me and find out that there is a prophet in Israel."

⁹ Naaman came with his horses and chariot and stopped at the entrance to Elisha's home.

¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to him. He said, "Wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River, and your skin will be healthy and clean."

¹¹ But Naaman became angry and left. He said, "I thought he would at least come out of his house, stand somewhere, call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the infected place, and heal the skin disease.

¹² The Abana and Pharpar Rivers in Damascus have better water than any of the rivers in Israel. Couldn't I wash in them and be clean?" So he turned around and left in anger.

¹³ But Naaman's servants went to him and said, "Master, if the prophet had asked you to do some extraordinary act, wouldn't you have done it? Why shouldn't you do as he said: 'Wash and be clean'?"

¹⁴ So he went to dip himself in the Jordan River seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. His skin became healthy again like a little child's skin.

¹⁵ Then he and all his men returned to the man of God. Naaman stood in front of Elisha and said, "Now I know that there's no god in the whole world, except the God of Israel. So please accept a present from me."

¹⁶ Elisha said, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD whom I serve lives, I will not accept it." Naaman urged him to take it, but he refused.

¹⁷ So Naaman said, "If you won't take it, please have someone give me as much dirt as a pair of mules can carry. From now on I will sacrifice to the LORD alone. I will not offer any burnt offering or sacrifice to any other gods.

¹⁸ May the LORD forgive me when my master goes to the temple of Rimmon to worship, leans on my arm, and I have to bow down in the temple of Rimmon. When I do this, may the LORD forgive me for this one thing."

¹⁹ Elisha told Naaman, "Go in peace." After Elisha had left him and gone some distance,

²⁰ Gehazi, the servant of Elisha (the man of God), thought, "My master let this Aramean Naaman go without

accepting what he had brought. As sure as the LORD lives, I'll run after Naaman and get something from him."

²¹ So Gehazi went after Naaman. When Naaman saw Gehazi running after him, he got down from his chariot to speak to him. "Is something wrong?" he asked.

²² Gehazi answered, "No. My master has sent me. He says, 'Just now two young men from the disciples of the prophets in the hills of Ephraim have arrived. Please give them 75 pounds of silver and two sets of clothing.'"

²³ Naaman replied, "Please let me give you 150 pounds of silver." Naaman urged him to take the silver. Naaman tied up 150 pounds of silver in two bags with two sets of clothing. He gave them to a couple of his own servants to carry in front of Gehazi.

²⁴ When Gehazi came to the Ophel in Samaria, he took these things and

put them away in the house. Then he dismissed the men, and they left.

²⁵ He went and stood in front of his master. Elisha asked him, "Where were you, Gehazi?" "I didn't go anywhere," he answered.

²⁶ Then Elisha said to him, "I went with you in spirit when the man turned around in his chariot to speak to you. How could you accept silver, clothes, olive orchards, vineyards, sheep, cattle, or slaves?"

²⁷ Naaman's skin disease will cling to you and your descendants permanently!" When he left Elisha, Gehazi had a disease that made his skin as flaky as snow.

6 ¹ The disciples of the prophets said to Elisha, "The place where we're staying is too small for us.

² Let's go to the Jordan River. Each of us can get some logs and make a place for us to live there." Elisha said, "Go ahead."

³ Then one of the disciples asked, "Won't you please come with us?" Elisha answered, "I'll go."

⁴ So he went with them. They came to the Jordan River and began to cut down trees.

⁵ As one of them was cutting down a tree, the ax head fell into the water. He cried out, "Oh no, master! It was borrowed!"

⁶ The man of God asked, "Where did it fall?" When he showed Elisha the place, Elisha cut off a piece of wood. He threw it into the water at that place and made the ax head float.

⁷ Elisha said, "Pick it up." The disciple reached for it and picked it up.

⁸ Whenever the king of Aram was fighting against Israel, he asked for

advice from his officers about where they were to camp.

⁹ So the man of God would send a message to the king of Israel, "Be careful not to go by that place. The Arameans are hiding there."

¹⁰ Then the king of Israel would send someone to the place that the man of God told him about. Elisha warned them so that they would be on their guard. He did this repeatedly.

¹¹ The king of Aram was very angry about this. He called his officers and asked them, "Won't you tell me who among us is a spy for the king of Israel?"

¹² One of his officers answered, "No one, Your Majesty. Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel everything you say—even what you say in your bedroom."

¹³ The king said, "Find out where he is. Then I will send men to capture him." The king was told, "He is in Dothan."

¹⁴ So the king sent horses and chariots and a large fighting unit there. They came at night and surrounded the city.

¹⁵ When the servant of the man of God got up in the morning and went outside, he saw troops, horses, and chariots surrounding the city. Elisha's servant asked, "Master, what should we do?"

¹⁶ Elisha answered, "Don't be afraid. We have more forces on our side than they have on theirs."

¹⁷ Then Elisha prayed, "LORD, please open his eyes so that he may see." The LORD opened the servant's eyes and let him see. The mountain around Elisha was full of fiery horses and chariots.

¹⁸ As the Arameans came down to get him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Please strike these people with blindness." The

LORD struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.

¹⁹ Elisha told them, "This isn't the way! This isn't the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you're looking for." So he led them into Samaria.

²⁰ When they came into Samaria, Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these men, and let them see." The LORD opened their eyes and let them see that they were in the middle of Samaria.

²¹ When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, "Master, should I kill them? Should I kill them?"

²² Elisha answered, "Don't kill them. Do you kill everyone you take captive in combat? Give them food and water. Let them eat and drink. Then let them go back to their master."

²³ So the king prepared a great feast for them. They ate and drank, and then he sent them back to their master. After

this, Aramean troops didn't raid Israel's territory anymore.

²⁴ Later King Benhadad of Aram assembled his whole army. They went to Samaria and blockaded it.

²⁵ The shortages caused by the blockade of Samaria became so severe that a donkey's head sold for two pounds of silver and a half-pint of dove manure for two ounces of silver.

²⁶ As the king of Israel was walking on the city wall, a woman cried to him, "Help me, Your Majesty!"

²⁷ He answered, "If the LORD doesn't help you, how can I help you? I can't give you something from the threshing floor or the winepress."

²⁸ Then the king asked her, "What's the matter?" She answered, "This woman told me, 'Give up your son. Let's eat him today. We'll eat my son tomorrow.'

²⁹ So we boiled my son and ate him. The next day I told her, 'Give up your son. We'll eat him,' but she hid her son."

³⁰ When the king heard the woman say this, he tore his clothes in distress. As he was walking on the city wall, the people saw that he was wearing sackcloth under his clothes.

³¹ He said, "May God strike me dead if the head of Elisha, son of Shaphat, stays on his body today."

³² Elisha was sitting in his home with the city's leaders. The king had sent one of his men ahead of him to Elisha's house. But before the messenger arrived, Elisha asked the leaders, "Do you see how this murderer has sent someone to tear off my head? When the messenger comes, close the door. Hold it shut because the king will be following him."

³³ While he was still talking to them, the messenger arrived. He said to Elisha,

"This severe famine is from the LORD. Why should I wait any longer for the LORD to help us?"

7¹ Elisha answered, "Listen to the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says: About this time tomorrow 24 cups of the best flour will sell for half an ounce of silver in the gateway to Samaria. And 48 cups of barley will sell for half an ounce of silver."

² The servant on whose arm the king was leaning answered the man of God, "Could this happen even if the LORD poured rain through windows in the sky?" Elisha replied, "You will see it with your own eyes, but you won't eat any of it."

³ Four men with skin diseases were at the entrance of the city gate. One of them asked, "Why are we sitting here waiting to die?"

⁴ If we go into the city, the famine is also there, and we'll still die. But if we stay here, we'll die. So let's go to the Aramean camp. If they give us something to keep us alive, we'll live. But if they kill us, we'll die anyway."

⁵ So they started out at dusk to go into the Aramean camp. When they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there.

⁶ (The LORD had made the Aramean army hear what sounded like chariots, horses, and a large army. The Aramean soldiers said to one another, "The king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!")

⁷ So at dusk they fled. They abandoned the camp as it was with its tents, horses, and donkeys and ran for their lives.)

⁸ When the men with skin diseases came to the edge of the camp, they went into a tent, ate and drank, and carried off the silver, gold, and clothes they found in

that tent. They went away and hid them. Then they came back, went into another tent, carried off its contents, went away, and hid them.

⁹ Then they said to one another, "What we're doing is not right. This is a day of good news, and we're not telling anyone about it. If we wait until morning when it's light out, we'll be punished. Let's bring the news to the royal palace."

¹⁰ So they called the city gatekeepers and told them, "We went into the Aramean camp, and we didn't see or hear anyone. The horses and donkeys were still tied up. Even the tents were left exactly as they were."

¹¹ The gatekeepers announced the news to the royal palace.

¹² So the king got up at night and told his officers what the Arameans had planned for them. He said, "They know we're starving, so they've left the camp

to hide in the countryside. They're thinking, 'When they've left the city, we'll capture them alive and get into the city.'"

¹³ One of his officers replied, "Please let some men take five of the horses that are left here. Those men will be no worse off than the rest of the Israelites who are dying. Let's send them to take a look."

¹⁴ So they took two chariots with horses, and the king sent them to follow the Aramean army and told them to find out what happened.

¹⁵ They followed them as far as the Jordan River and saw how the whole road was littered with clothes and equipment that the Arameans had thrown away in their hurry. The messengers returned and told the king about it.

¹⁶ So the people went out and looted the Aramean camp. Then 24 cups of the best flour sold for half an ounce of silver, and 48 cups of barley sold for half an ounce of silver, as the LORD had predicted.

¹⁷ The king appointed the servant on whose arm he used to lean to be in charge of the gate. But the people trampled him to death in the gateway, as the man of God had predicted when the king came to him.

¹⁸ (It happened exactly as the man of God told the king, "Forty-eight cups of barley will sell for half an ounce of silver. And twenty-four cups of the best flour will sell for half an ounce of silver. This will happen about this time tomorrow in the gateway to Samaria.")

¹⁹ Then the servant answered the man of God, "Could this happen even if the LORD poured rain through windows in

the sky?" Elisha answered, "You will see it with your own eyes, but you won't eat any of it.")

²⁰ So this is what happened to the king's servant: The people trampled him to death in the gateway.

8 ¹ Elisha had told the woman whose son he had brought back to life, "Go away with your family. Stay wherever you can. The LORD has decided to send a famine on this country, and it will last seven years."

² The woman did what the man of God told her. She and her family went to live in Philistine territory for seven years.

³ At the end of seven years, the woman came home from Philistine territory but left again to make an appeal to the king about her house and land.

⁴ The king was talking to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. He said,

"Please tell me about all the great things Elisha has done."

⁵ While Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha brought a dead child back to life, the mother came to make an appeal to the king about her house and land. Gehazi said, "Your Majesty, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha brought back to life."

⁶ When the king asked the woman about this, she told him the story. So the king assigned to her an attendant to whom he said, "Restore all that is hers, including whatever her property produced from the day she left the country until now."

⁷ Elisha went to Damascus. King Benhadad of Aram, who was sick, was told, "The man of God has come here."

⁸ The king told Hazael, "Take a present, and meet the man of God. Ask the LORD

through him, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"

⁹ Hazael went to meet Elisha. He took with him a present and all kinds of goods from Damascus. He had loaded the goods on 40 camels. He stood in front of Elisha and said, "Your humble servant King Benhadad of Aram has sent me to you. He asks whether he will recover from this illness."

¹⁰ Elisha replied, "Tell him that he will get better, although the LORD has shown me that he is actually going to die."

¹¹ He stared at him until he became embarrassed. Then the man of God began to cry.

¹² "Sir, why are you crying?" Hazael asked. Elisha answered, "I know the evil you will do to the Israelites: You will set their fortresses on fire, kill their best young men, smash their little children, and rip open their pregnant women."

¹³ But Hazael asked, "How can a dog like me do such a significant thing?" Elisha answered, "The LORD has shown me that you will become king of Aram."

¹⁴ Hazael left Elisha and went to his master Benhadad, who asked him what Elisha had said. Hazael answered, "He told me that you will get better."

¹⁵ But the next day Hazael took a blanket, soaked it in water, and smothered the king with it. Hazael ruled as king in his place.

¹⁶ Joram (Ahab's son) was in his fifth year as king of Israel when Jehoram, son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, began to rule. Jehoram ruled while Jehoshaphat was still king of Judah.

¹⁷ He was 32 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 8 years in Jerusalem.

¹⁸ He followed the ways of the kings of Israel, as Ahab's family had done,

because his wife was Ahab's daughter. So he did what the LORD considered evil.

¹⁹ But for David's sake the LORD didn't want to destroy Judah. The LORD had told David that he would always give him and his descendants a shining lamp.

²⁰ During Jehoram's time Edom rebelled against Judah and chose its own king.

²¹ Jehoram took all his chariots to attack Zair. The Edomites and their chariot commanders surrounded him, but he got up at night, broke through their lines, and his troops fled home.

²² So Edom rebelled against Judah's rule and is still independent today. At that time Libnah also rebelled.

²³ Isn't everything else about Jehoram—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

²⁴ Jehoram lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with them

in the City of David. His son Ahaziah succeeded him as king.

²⁵ Joram (Ahab's son) was in his twelfth year as king of Israel when Jehoram's son Ahaziah became king of Judah.

²⁶ Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for one year in Jerusalem. His mother was Athaliah, the granddaughter of King Omri of Israel.

²⁷ Ahaziah followed the ways of Ahab's family. He did what the LORD considered evil, as Ahab's family had done, because he was related to Ahab's family by marriage.

²⁸ Ahaziah went with Ahab's son Joram to fight against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. There the Arameans wounded Joram.

²⁹ King Joram returned to Jezreel to let his wounds heal. (He had been wounded by the Arameans at Ramah when he fought against King Hazael of Aram.)

Then Jehoram's son Ahaziah went to Jezreel to see Ahab's son Joram, who was sick.

9¹ The prophet Elisha called one of the disciples of the prophets. He said, "Put on your belt. Take this flask of olive oil, and go to Ramoth Gilead.

² When you arrive there, look for Jehu, son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi. Go inside, and have him get up and leave his companions. Take him into an inner room.

³ Take the flask of oil, pour it on his head, and say, 'This is what the LORD says: I have anointed you king of Israel.' Then open the door and leave immediately."

⁴ The young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead.

⁵ When he arrived there, the army's generals were sitting together. He said, "I have something to tell you, General."

Jehu asked, "Which one of us?" He answered, "You, General!"

⁶ Jehu got up and went into the house. The prophet poured olive oil on his head and told him, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I have anointed you king of the LORD'S people, king of Israel.

⁷ You will destroy the family of your master Ahab. I will get revenge on Jezebel for shedding the blood of my servants the prophets and all the LORD'S other servants.

⁸ Ahab's entire family will die. I will destroy every male from Ahab's family, whether slave or freeman in Israel.

⁹ I will make Ahab's family like the family of Jeroboam (Nebat's son) and like the family of Baasha, son of Ahijah.

¹⁰ Dogs will eat Jezebel inside the walls of Jezreel, and no one will bury her." Then he opened the door and left.

¹¹ Jehu came out to his master's officials. One of them asked him, "Is everything alright? Why did this lunatic come to you?" He answered, "You know the man and the kind of things he says."

¹² They said, "That's not an answer. Please tell us." Jehu replied, "We talked for a while, and he said to me, 'This is what the LORD says: I have anointed you king of Israel.'"

¹³ Then each one of them immediately took off his coat and laid it on the stairs below him. They blew a ram's horn and said, "Jehu is king!"

¹⁴ So Jehu, son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi, plotted against Joram. (Joram and all Israel were guarding Ramoth Gilead against King Hazael of Aram.

¹⁵ But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he received while fighting King Hazael of

Aram.) Then Jehu said, "If you want me to be king, don't let anyone escape from the city to take the news to Jezreel."

¹⁶ So Jehu got on his chariot and drove to Jezreel because Joram was lying in bed there. (King Ahaziah of Judah had come to see Joram.)

¹⁷ The watchman standing on the tower in Jezreel saw Jehu's troops coming. He said, "I see some troops." So Joram said, "Take a chariot driver, send him to meet them, and ask, 'Is everything alright?'"

¹⁸ So a chariot driver rode off, met Jehu, and said, "The king asks, 'Is everything alright?'" Jehu replied, "Why should that matter to you? Follow me." So the watchman announced, "The messenger you sent has reached them, but he isn't coming back."

¹⁹ Then Joram sent out a second driver. When he came to them, he said, "The king asks, 'Is everything alright?'" Jehu

replied, "Why should that matter to you? Follow me."

²⁰ So the watchman announced, "He has reached them, but he isn't coming back. The troop's leader is driving like a lunatic, like Jehu, grandson of Nimshi."

²¹ "Hitch the horses to the chariot," Joram ordered. When that was done, King Joram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah went to meet Jehu, each in his own chariot. They found him in the field that belonged to Naboth from Jezreel.

²² When Joram saw Jehu, he asked, "Is everything alright, Jehu?" Jehu answered, "How can everything be alright as long as your mother continues her idolatry and witchcraft?"

²³ As Joram turned his chariot around and tried to flee, he said to Ahaziah, "It's a trap, Ahaziah!"

²⁴ But Jehu took his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow came

out of his chest, and he slumped over in his chariot.

²⁵ Then Jehu said to his attendant Bidkar, "Take him away, and throw him into the field that belonged to Naboth from Jezreel. Remember when you and I were driving our chariots behind his father Ahab? The LORD revealed this prophecy about him:

²⁶ 'Just as I saw the blood of Naboth and his sons yesterday, I will pay you back in this field,' declares the LORD. Now take him and throw him into the field as the LORD predicted."

²⁷ When King Ahaziah of Judah saw this, he fled on the road leading to Beth Haggan. Jehu pursued him and ordered, "Shoot him down in his chariot." They shot him at Gur Pass, which is near Ibleam. Ahaziah continued to flee until he got to Megiddo, where he died.

²⁸ His servants brought him in a chariot to Jerusalem. They buried him in a tomb with his ancestors in the City of David.

²⁹ (Ahaziah had become king of Judah in the eleventh year that Joram, Ahab's son, was king of Israel.)

³⁰ When Jehu arrived in Jezreel, Jezebel heard about it. She put on eye shadow, fixed her hair, and looked out of a second-story window.

³¹ When Jehu entered the gateway, she asked, "Is everything alright, Zimri, murderer of your master?"

³² Looking up at the window, he asked, "Is anyone on my side? Anyone?" Then two or three eunuchs looked out at him.

³³ He said, "Throw her down." They threw her down, and some of her blood splattered on the wall and the horses. The horses trampled her.

³⁴ He went inside, ate, and drank. Then he said, "Take care of this woman who

had a curse on her. After all, she was a king's daughter."

³⁵ But when they went out to bury her, they couldn't find any of her body except her skull, feet, and hands.

³⁶ They came back and told him. Jehu said, "The LORD spoke through his servant Elijah from Tishbe. He said, 'Dogs will eat Jezebel's body inside the walls of Jezreel.

³⁷ Jezebel's corpse will be like manure on the ground in the fields surrounding Jezreel so that no one will be able to say that this is Jezebel.'"

10 ¹ Ahab had 70 male heirs in Samaria. So Jehu wrote letters to the officials of Jezreel, the respected leaders, and the guardians of Ahab's descendants in Samaria. The letters read,

² "Your master's heirs are with you, and you have chariots, horses, fortified

cities, and weapons. As soon as this letter reaches you,

³ choose the best and most honest of your master's heirs, and put him on Ahab's throne. Fight for your master's family."

⁴ But they panicked. They said, "If two kings couldn't stand up to him, how can we stand up to him?"

⁵ So the official in charge of the palace, the mayor of the city, the respected leaders, and the guardians sent this message to Jehu: "We are your servants. We'll do everything you tell us. We won't make anyone king. Do what you think is best."

⁶ So he wrote them a second letter. It read, "If you are on my side and ready to listen to me, bring the heads of your master's heirs to me in Jezreel about this time tomorrow." The 70 male heirs were

staying with the city's most powerful men. These men had raised them.

⁷ When the letter came to the men, they slaughtered all 70 heirs. They put the heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu in Jezreel.

⁸ A messenger told him, "They've brought the heads of the king's heirs." Jehu said, "Put them in two piles at the entrance to the gateway until morning."

⁹ In the morning he stood there. He told the people, "You are innocent. I plotted against my master and killed him. But who killed all these men?"

¹⁰ You can be sure that the word of the LORD spoken about Ahab's family will be fulfilled. The LORD will do what he said through his servant Elijah."

¹¹ Jehu also killed every member of Ahab's household who was left in Jezreel: all the most powerful men,

friends, and priests. Not one of them was left.

¹² Then Jehu left for Samaria. When he came to Beth Eked of the Shepherds,

¹³ he found some relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah. "Who are you?" he asked. They answered, "We're Ahaziah's relatives. We've come to greet the families of the king and the queen mother."

¹⁴ Jehu ordered, "Capture them!" Jehu's men captured and slaughtered 42 of them at a cistern near Beth Eked. They didn't leave any survivors.

¹⁵ When he left that place, he met Jehonadab, son of Rechab, who was coming to meet him. Jehu greeted him and asked, "Are you as loyal to me as I am to you?" "I am," Jehonadab answered. So Jehu said, "If you are, give me your hand." When he gave Jehu

his hand, Jehu helped him up into the chariot.

¹⁶ Jehu said, "Come with me. See how devoted I am to the LORD." So he had Jehonadab ride on his chariot.

¹⁷ When they arrived in Samaria, Jehu killed the rest of Ahab's family, every member who was left in Samaria. He wiped them out, as the LORD had told Elijah.

¹⁸ Then Jehu brought all the people together. He said, "Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve him a lot.

¹⁹ Summon all the prophets, servants, and priests of Baal. Make sure no one is missing because I have a great sacrifice to offer Baal. Whoever is missing will not live." (Jehu was deceiving them. He actually wanted to destroy those who worshiped Baal.)

²⁰ Jehu said, "Call a holy assembly to honor Baal." So they did.

²¹ Jehu sent messengers to all the Israelites. All the worshipers of Baal came, and there wasn't one who didn't come. They went into the temple of Baal and filled it from one end to the other.

²² Then Jehu told the man in charge of the priests' robes, "Bring out the robes for all the worshipers of Baal." So he brought out robes for them.

²³ Jehu and Jehonadab, son of Rechab, went into the temple of Baal and said to the worshipers of Baal, "Make sure that there are no worshipers of the LORD here with you. Only the worshipers of Baal should be here."

²⁴ So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. But Jehu had stationed 80 of his men outside. He said to them, "If any of the people I'm putting in your hands escape, you will pay for their lives with yours."

²⁵ When the burnt offerings had been made, Jehu said to the guards and attendants, "Kill them. Don't let anyone get away." So they used swords to kill the Baal worshipers and threw out the bodies until the guards and attendants came to the stronghold in the temple of Baal.

²⁶ Then they brought out the large sacred stone of the temple of Baal and burned it.

²⁷ They destroyed the sacred stone of Baal and the temple of Baal and made it into a latrine. It is still a latrine today.

²⁸ So Jehu got rid of Baal worship throughout Israel.

²⁹ But Jehu did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam (Nebat's son) led Israel to commit—the worship of the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan.

³⁰ The LORD said to Jehu, "You did what I consider right, and you did it well. You did everything I wanted done to Ahab's family. That is why four generations of your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel."

³¹ But Jehu didn't wholeheartedly obey the teachings of the LORD God of Israel. He didn't turn away from the sins that Jeroboam led Israel to commit.

³² So in those days the LORD began to take away some of Israel's territory. Hazael defeated Jehu's army throughout Israel's territory

³³ east of the Jordan River: the entire region of Gilead (the territory belonging to Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh) from Aroer, which is near the Arnon River, to Gilead and Bashan.

³⁴ Isn't everything else about Jehu—
—everything he did, all his heroic

acts—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

³⁵ Jehu lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoahaz succeeded him as king.

³⁶ Jehu ruled as king of Israel in Samaria for 28 years.

11 ¹ When Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, saw that her son was dead, she began to destroy the entire royal family.

² But Jehosheba, daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah, took Ahaziah's son Joash. She saved him from being killed with the king's other sons, and in a bedroom she hid him and his nurse from Athaliah. So Joash wasn't killed

³ but was hidden with her in the LORD'S temple for six years while Athaliah ruled the country.

⁴ In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada sent for the company commanders of the Carites and the guards and had them come to him in the LORD'S temple. He made an agreement with them, put them under oath in the LORD'S temple, and showed them the king's son.

⁵ He ordered them, "This is what you must do: One third of you, those who are on duty on the day of worship, must guard the royal palace.

⁶ Another third must be at Sur Gate. And another third must be at the gate behind the guards. You will guard the king's residence.

⁷ Then your two groups who normally go off duty on the day of worship must guard the king at the LORD'S temple.

⁸ Surround the king. Each man should have his weapons in his hand. Kill anyone

who tries to break through your ranks. Stay with the king wherever he goes."

⁹ The company commanders did as the priest Jehoiada had ordered them. Each commander took his men who were coming on duty on the day of worship as well as those who were about to go off duty and came to the priest Jehoiada.

¹⁰ He gave the commanders the spears and the shields that had belonged to King David but were now in the LORD'S temple.

¹¹ The guards stood with their weapons in their hands. They were stationed around the king and around the altar and the temple (from the south side to the north side of the temple).

¹² Then Jehoiada brought out the king's son, gave him the crown and the religious instructions, and made him king by anointing him. As the guards

clapped their hands, they said, "Long live the king!"

¹³ When Athaliah heard the noise made by the guards and the other people, she went into the LORD'S temple, where the people were.

¹⁴ She looked, and the king was standing by the pillar according to custom. The commanders and the trumpeters were by his side. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. As Athaliah tore her clothes in distress, she cried, "Treason, treason!"

¹⁵ Then the priest Jehoiada ordered the company commanders who were in charge of the army, "Take her out of the temple. Use your sword to kill anyone who follows her." (The priest had said, "She must not be killed in the LORD'S temple.")

¹⁶ So they arrested her as she came to the street where the horses enter the royal palace, and there she was killed.

¹⁷ Jehoiada made a promise to the LORD on behalf of the king and his people that they would be the LORD'S people. He made other promises between the king and the people.

¹⁸ Then all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed Baal's altars and his statues and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, in front of the altars. Next, the priest appointed officials to be in charge of the LORD'S temple.

¹⁹ He took the company commanders of the Carites and the guards and all the people of the land, and they brought the king from the LORD'S temple. They went down the street that goes through Guards' Gate to the royal palace. Then Joash sat on the royal throne.

²⁰ All the people of the land were celebrating. But the city was quiet because they had killed Athaliah with a sword at the royal palace.

²¹ Joash was seven years old when he began to rule.

12 ¹ Joash began to rule in Jehu's seventh year as king of Israel, and he ruled for 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zibiah from Beersheba.

² Joash did what the LORD considered right, as long as the priest Jehoiada instructed him.

³ But the illegal places of worship weren't torn down. The people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense at these worship sites.

⁴ Joash told the priests, "Collect all the holy contributions that are brought into the LORD'S temple—the money each person is currently required to bring and

all the money brought voluntarily to the LORD'S temple.

⁵ Each of the priests should receive it from the donors and use it to make repairs on the temple where they are needed."

⁶ But by Joash's twenty-third year as king, the priests still had not repaired the temple.

⁷ So King Joash called for Jehoiada and the other priests and asked them, "Why aren't you repairing the damage in the temple? Don't take any more money from the donors for your own use. Instead, use it to make repairs on the temple."

⁸ The priests agreed neither to receive money from the people for personal use nor to be responsible for repairing the temple.

⁹ Then the priest Jehoiada took a box, drilled a hole in its lid, and put it at the

right side of the altar as one comes into the LORD'S temple. The priests who guarded the entrance put the money that was brought to the LORD'S temple in the box.

¹⁰ Whenever they saw a lot of money in the box, the king's scribe and the chief priest would collect and count the money that was donated in the LORD'S temple.

¹¹ Then they would give the money that had been weighed to the men who had been appointed to work on the LORD'S temple. They used it to pay the carpenters, builders,

¹² masons, and stonecutters. They also used it to buy wood and cut stones to make repairs on the LORD'S temple and to buy anything else that they needed for the temple repairs.

¹³ But no silver bowls, snuffers, dishes, trumpets, or any other gold and silver

utensils were made for the LORD'S temple with the money that was brought.

¹⁴ Instead, the money was given to the workmen, and they used it to repair the temple.

¹⁵ They didn't require the men who were entrusted with the money for the workers to give an account, because they were honest people.

¹⁶ The money from the guilt offerings and the offerings for sin was not brought into the LORD'S temple. It belonged to the priests.

¹⁷ At this time King Hazael of Aram fought against Gath and conquered it. He was also determined to attack Jerusalem.

¹⁸ So King Joash of Judah took all the gifts his ancestors Kings Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah of Judah, had dedicated to the LORD, the things he had

dedicated to the LORD, and all the gold that could be found in the storerooms of the LORD'S temple and the royal palace. He sent these things to King Hazael of Aram, who called off the attack on Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Isn't everything else about Joash—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

²⁰ His own officials plotted against him and killed him at Beth Millo on the road that goes down to Silla.

²¹ Joash's officials Jozacar, son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad, son of Shomer, executed him. They buried him with his ancestors in the City of David. His son Amaziah succeeded him as king.

13 ¹ Ahaziah's son King Joash of Judah was in his twenty-third year as king of Judah when Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, began to rule in Samaria as king of Israel. He ruled for 17 years.

² He did what the LORD considered evil. He continued to commit the sins that Jeroboam (Nebat's son) led Israel to commit. He never gave up committing those sins.

³ So the LORD became angry with Israel and put it at the mercy of King Hazael of Aram and Hazael's son Benhadad as long as they lived.

⁴ Then Jehoahaz pleaded with the LORD, and the LORD heard him because he saw how the Aramean king was oppressing Israel.

⁵ So the LORD gave the Israelites someone to save them, and they were freed from Aram's power. They were able to live in their homes again as they had done before.

⁶ But they didn't turn away from the sins that Jeroboam and his dynasty led Israel to commit. They continued to commit those sins. In addition, the

pole dedicated to the goddess Asherah remained standing in Samaria.

⁷ Jehoahaz had no army left except for 50 horses, 10 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers because the king of Aram had destroyed the rest. He had made them like dust that people trample.

⁸ Isn't everything else about Jehoahaz—everything he did, his heroic acts—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

⁹ Jehoahaz lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoash ruled as king in his place.

¹⁰ In Joash's thirty-seventh year as king of Judah, Jehoahaz's son Jehoash began to rule Israel in Samaria. He ruled for 16 years.

¹¹ He did what the LORD considered evil and never gave up committing the sins that Jeroboam led Israel to commit. He continued to commit them.

¹² Isn't everything else about Jehoash—everything he did, his heroic acts when he fought against King Amaziah of Judah—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

¹³ Jehoash lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with the kings of Israel in Samaria. Then Jeroboam claimed the throne.

¹⁴ Elisha became fatally ill. King Jehoash of Israel visited him, cried over him, and said, "Master! Master! Israel's chariot and horses!"

¹⁵ Elisha told him, "Get a bow and some arrows." So he got a bow and some arrows.

¹⁶ Then Elisha told the king of Israel, "Take the bow in your hand." So the king picked up the bow. Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands.

¹⁷ Elisha said, "Open the window that faces east." So the king opened it.

"Shoot," Elisha said, and the king shot. Then Elisha said, "That is the arrow of the LORD'S victory, the arrow of victory against Aram. You will completely defeat the Arameans at Aphek."

¹⁸ Then Elisha said, "Take the arrows." So the king took them. "Stomp on them," he told the king of Israel. The king stomped three times and stopped.

¹⁹ Then the man of God became angry with him. "You should have stomped five or six times!" he said. "Then you would have completely defeated the Arameans. But now you will only defeat the Arameans three times."

²⁰ Elisha died and was buried. Moabite raiding parties used to invade the country in the spring.

²¹ One day some people who were burying a man saw one of these raiding parties. So they quickly put the man into Elisha's tomb. But when the body

touched Elisha's bones, the man came back to life and stood up.

²² King Hazael of Aram oppressed Israel as long as Jehoahaz ruled.

²³ But the LORD was kind and merciful to the Israelites because of his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He didn't want to destroy the Israelites, and even now he hasn't turned away from them.

²⁴ King Hazael of Aram died, and his son Benhadad succeeded him as king.

²⁵ Then Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, reconquered the cities that Benhadad had taken from his father Jehoahaz. Jehoash defeated Benhadad three times and recovered those cities of Israel.

14 ¹ Jehoahaz's son King Jehoash was in his second year as king of Israel when King Amaziah, son of Joash of Judah, began to rule.

² Amaziah was 25 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 29 years

in Jerusalem. His mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem.

³ He did what the LORD considered right, but not exactly what his ancestor David had done. He did everything his father Joash had done.

⁴ But the illegal places of worship were still not torn down. The people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense at these worship sites.

⁵ As soon as he had a firm control over the kingdom, he executed the officials who had killed his father, the former king.

⁶ But he didn't execute their children. He obeyed the LORD'S command written in the Book of Moses' Teachings: "Parents must never be put to death for the crimes of their children, and children must never be put to death for the crimes of their parents. Each person must be put to death for his own crime."

⁷ Amaziah killed 10,000 Edomites in the Dead Sea region and took the city of Sela in battle. He gave it the name Joktheel, which is still its name today.

⁸ Then Amaziah sent messengers to King Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz and grandson of Jehu of Israel, to declare war on Israel.

⁹ King Jehoash of Israel sent this message to King Amaziah of Judah: "A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon. It said, 'Let your daughter marry my son,' but a wild animal from Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle.

¹⁰ You certainly defeated Edom, and now you have become arrogant. Enjoy your fame, but stay home. Why must you invite disaster and your own defeat and take Judah with you?"

¹¹ But Amaziah wouldn't listen. So King Jehoash of Israel attacked, and King

Amaziah of Judah met him in battle at Beth Shemesh in Judah.

¹² Israel defeated the army of Judah, and the Judeans fled to their homes.

¹³ King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah, son of Joash and grandson of Ahaziah of Judah, at Beth Shemesh and went to Jerusalem. He tore down a 600-foot section of the wall around Jerusalem from Ephraim Gate to Corner Gate.

¹⁴ He took all the gold, silver, and all the utensils he found in the LORD'S temple and in the royal palace treasury. He also took hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

¹⁵ Isn't everything else about Jehoash—what he did, his heroic acts when he fought against King Amaziah of Judah—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

¹⁶ Jehoash lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with the kings of Israel in Samaria. His son Jeroboam succeeded him as king.

¹⁷ Joash's son King Amaziah of Judah lived 15 years after the death of Jehoahaz's son King Jehoash of Israel.

¹⁸ Isn't everything else about Amaziah written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

¹⁹ Conspirators in Jerusalem plotted against him, so he fled to Lachish. But they sent men to Lachish after him and killed him there.

²⁰ They brought him back by horse, and he was buried in Jerusalem, in the City of David, with his ancestors.

²¹ All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was 16 years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah.

²² Azariah rebuilt Elath and returned it to Judah after King Amaziah lay down in death with his ancestors.

²³ Joash's son Amaziah was in his fifteenth year as king of Judah when Jehoash's son King Jeroboam of Israel began to rule in Samaria. Jeroboam ruled for 41 years.

²⁴ He did what the LORD considered evil. He didn't turn away from any of the sins that Jeroboam (Nebat's son) led Israel to commit.

²⁵ He restored Israel's boundaries from the border of Hamath to the Dead Sea as the LORD God of Israel predicted through his servant Jonah, the prophet from Gath Hopher and the son of Amittai.

²⁶ The LORD did this because he saw how bitterly everyone in Israel was suffering. No slave or free person could help Israel.

²⁷ Since the LORD had said he was not going to wipe out Israel's name completely, he saved them through Jeroboam, son of Jehoash.

²⁸ Isn't everything else about Jeroboam—everything he did, his heroic acts when he fought, how he recovered Damascus and Hamath for Israel—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

²⁹ Jeroboam lay down in death with his ancestors, the kings of Israel. His son Zechariah succeeded him as king.

15 ¹ In Jeroboam's twenty-seventh year as king of Israel, Amaziah's son Azariah began to rule as king of Judah.

² He was 16 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jecoliah from Jerusalem.

³ He did what the LORD considered right, as his father Amaziah had done.

⁴ But the illegal places of worship were still not torn down. The people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense at these worship sites.

⁵ The LORD inflicted the king with a skin disease that lasted until the day the king died. So the king lived in a separate house. The king's son Jotham was in charge of the palace and governed the country.

⁶ Isn't everything else about Azariah—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

⁷ Azariah lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. His son Jotham succeeded him as king.

⁸ In Azariah's thirty–eighth year as king of Judah, Jeroboam's son Zechariah was king of Israel in Samaria for six months.

⁹ He did what the LORD considered evil, as his ancestors had done. He didn't turn away from the sins that Jeroboam (Nebat's son) led Israel to commit.

¹⁰ Shallum, son of Jabesh, plotted against Zechariah, attacked him at Kabal Am, killed him, and succeeded him as king.

¹¹ Everything else about Zechariah is written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

¹² It happened exactly as the LORD had told Jehu: "Four generations of your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel."

¹³ Shallum, son of Jabesh, became king in Azariah's thirty-ninth year as king of Judah. Shallum ruled for an entire month in Samaria.

¹⁴ Then Menahem, son of Gadi, came from Tirzah to Samaria, attacked

Shallum (son of Jabesh), killed him, and succeeded him as king.

¹⁵ Everything else about Shallum—all about his conspiracy—is written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

¹⁶ Then Menahem attacked Tiphseh, everyone there, and its territory. Because the city didn't open its gates for him, he attacked it and ripped open all its pregnant women.

¹⁷ In Azariah's thirty-ninth year as king of Judah, Menahem, son of Gadi, began to rule as king of Israel. He ruled for 10 years in Samaria.

¹⁸ He did what the LORD considered evil. During his entire life he never turned away from the sins that Jeroboam (Nebat's son) led Israel to commit.

¹⁹ King Pul of Assyria came to attack the country. So Menahem gave Pul 75,000

pounds of silver to gain his support and help strengthen his hold on the kingdom.

²⁰ Menahem raised the money from all the wealthy men in Israel. Each gave 20 ounces of silver for the king of Assyria. Then the king of Assyria left the country.

²¹ Isn't everything else about Menahem—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Israel?

²² Menahem lay down in death with his ancestors, and his son Pekahiah succeeded him as king.

²³ In Azariah's fiftieth year as king of Judah, Menahem's son Pekahiah began to rule. Pekahiah was king of Israel in Samaria for two years.

²⁴ He did what the LORD considered evil. He didn't turn away from the sins that Jeroboam (Nebat's son) led Israel to commit.

²⁵ His officer Pekah, son of Remaliah, plotted against him. With 50 men from Gilead, Pekah attacked Pekahiah, Argob, and Arieah in the fortress of the royal palace in Samaria. Pekah killed him and succeeded him as king.

²⁶ Everything else about Pekahiah—everything he did—is written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

²⁷ In Azariah's fifty-second year as king of Judah, Pekah, son of Remaliah, began to rule Israel in Samaria. He ruled for 20 years.

²⁸ He did what the LORD considered evil. He did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam (Nebat's son) led Israel to commit.

²⁹ In the days of King Pekah of Israel, King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria took Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, Galilee, and the entire

territory of Naphtali. He also took the people away to Assyria as captives.

³⁰ Hoshea, son of Elah, plotted against Pekah, son of Remaliah. Hoshea attacked him and killed him. Hoshea began to rule as king in his place in the twentieth year that Jotham, son of Azariah, was king of Judah.

³¹ Everything else about Pekah—everything he did—is written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

³² In the second year that King Pekah, son of Remaliah, ruled Israel, Jotham, son of Azariah, began to rule as king of Judah.

³³ He was 25 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jerusha, daughter of Zadok.

³⁴ He did what the LORD considered right, as his father Azariah had done.

³⁵ But the illegal places of worship were not torn down. The people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense at these worship sites. Jotham built the Upper Gate of the LORD'S temple.

³⁶ Isn't everything else about Jotham—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

³⁷ In those days the LORD began to use King Rezin of Aram and Pekah, son of Remaliah, to attack Judah.

³⁸ Jotham lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of his ancestor David. His son Ahaz succeeded him as king.

16 ¹ Pekah, son of Remaliah, was in his seventeenth year as king of Israel when King Ahaz, son of Jotham, began to rule as king of Judah.

² Ahaz was 20 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 26 years in Jerusalem. He didn't do what the LORD

his God considered right, as his ancestor David had done.

³ He followed the example of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son by burning him alive. Sacrificing children was one of the disgusting things done by the nations that the LORD had forced out of the Israelites' way.

⁴ He offered sacrifices and burned incense as an offering at the illegal worship sites, which were on hills and under every large tree.

⁵ Then King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah, son of Remaliah of Israel, came to wage war against Jerusalem. They blockaded Ahaz but couldn't get him to fight.

⁶ At that time King Rezin of Aram drove the Judeans out of Elath and gave it back to Edom. The Edomites came to Elath and still live there today.

⁷ Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria to say, "I'm your servant, your son. Come and save me from the kings of Aram and Israel who are attacking me."

⁸ Ahaz took the silver and gold he found in the LORD'S temple and in the treasury in the royal palace and sent them to the king of Assyria as a present.

⁹ The king of Assyria listened to him and attacked Damascus. He captured it, took the people to Kir as captives, and killed Rezin.

¹⁰ Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria. He saw an altar there in Damascus. So King Ahaz sent the priest Urijah a model of the altar and a set of detailed plans.

¹¹ Urijah built an altar exactly like the model King Ahaz sent from Damascus. He finished it before Ahaz returned home from Damascus.

¹² When the king came from Damascus, he saw the altar. The king approached the altar and went up to it.

¹³ He sacrificed his burnt offering and grain offering, poured out his wine offering, and sprinkled the blood of his fellowship offering on the altar.

¹⁴ But he moved the bronze altar dedicated to the LORD. It had been in front of the temple between his altar and the LORD'S temple. Ahaz put it on the north side of his altar.

¹⁵ King Ahaz gave this command to the priest Urijah: "On this great altar you must burn the morning burnt offerings and the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offerings and grain offerings, and the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and wine offerings of all the people of the land. Sprinkle all the blood of the burnt offerings and other sacrifices on it. I will use the bronze altar for prayer."

¹⁶ The priest Urijah did what King Ahaz had commanded.

¹⁷ King Ahaz cut off the side panels of the bronze stands used in the temple and removed the basin from each of them. He took the bronze pool down from the bronze bulls that were under it and set it on a stone base.

¹⁸ Ahaz removed the covered walkway used on the day of worship. This walkway had been built in the temple. He also removed the outer entrance for the king from the LORD'S temple. He did this to please the king of Assyria.

¹⁹ Isn't everything else about Ahaz—the things he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

²⁰ Ahaz lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. His son Hezekiah succeeded him as king.

17 ¹ In Ahaz's twelfth year as king of Judah, Hoshea, son of Elah, began to rule as king of Israel in Samaria. He ruled for nine years.

² He did what the LORD considered evil, but he didn't do what the kings of Israel before him had done.

³ King Shalmaneser of Assyria defeated Hoshea, who became his servant and was required to make annual payments to him.

⁴ The king of Assyria found Hoshea to be a traitor. (Hoshea had sent messengers to King Dais of Egypt and had stopped making annual payments to the king of Assyria.) So the king of Assyria arrested him and put him in prison.

⁵ Then the king of Assyria attacked the entire country. He attacked Samaria and blockaded it for three years.

⁶ In Hoshea's ninth year as king of Israel, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and

took the Israelites to Assyria as captives. He settled them in Halah, along the Habor River in Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

⁷ The Israelites sinned against the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt and rescued them from the power of Pharaoh (the king of Egypt). They worshiped other gods

⁸ and lived by the customs of the nations that the LORD had forced out of the Israelites' way. They also did what their kings wanted them to do.

⁹ The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that weren't right: They built for themselves illegal places of worship in all of their cities, from the smallest watchtower to the largest fortified city.

¹⁰ They set up sacred stones and poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah on

every high hill and under every large tree.

¹¹ At all the illegal places of worship, they sacrificed in the same way as the nations that the LORD had removed from the land ahead of them. They did evil things and made the LORD furious.

¹² They served idols, although the LORD had said, "Never do this."

¹³ The LORD had warned Israel and Judah through every kind of prophet and seer, "Turn from your evil ways, and obey my commands and decrees as I commanded your ancestors in all my teachings, the commands I sent to you through my servants the prophets."

¹⁴ But they refused to listen. They became as impossible to deal with as their ancestors who refused to trust the LORD their God.

¹⁵ They rejected his decrees, the promise he made to their ancestors, and

the warnings he had given them. They went after worthless idols and became as worthless as the idols. They behaved like the nations around them, although the LORD had commanded them not to do that.

¹⁶ They abandoned all the commands of the LORD their God: They made two calves out of cast metal. They made a pole dedicated to the goddess Asherah. They prayed to the entire army of heaven. They worshiped Baal.

¹⁷ They sacrificed their sons and daughters by burning them alive. They practiced black magic and cast evil spells. They sold themselves by doing what the LORD considered evil, and they made him furious.

¹⁸ The LORD became so angry with Israel that he removed them from his sight. Only the tribe of Judah was left.

¹⁹ Even Judah didn't obey the commands of the LORD their God but lived according to Israel's customs.

²⁰ So the LORD rejected all of Israel's descendants, made them suffer, handed them over to those who looted their property, and finally turned away from Israel.

²¹ When he tore Israel away from the family of David, the people of Israel made Jeroboam (Nebat's son) king. Jeroboam forced Israel away from the LORD and led them to commit a serious sin.

²² The Israelites followed all the sins Jeroboam committed and never turned away from them.

²³ Finally, the LORD turned away from Israel as he had said he would through all his servants, the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their

land to Assyria as captives, and they are still there today.

²⁴ The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its cities.

²⁵ When they first came to live there, they didn't worship the LORD. So the LORD sent lions to kill some of them.

²⁶ Then someone said to the king of Assyria, "The people you took as captives and settled in the cities of Samaria don't know the customs of the god of that country, so he sent lions. Now the lions are killing them because they don't know the customs of the god of this country."

²⁷ The king of Assyria gave this command: "Bring one of the priests you captured from there. Let him go back to

teach them the customs of the god of that country."

²⁸ So one of the priests who had been taken prisoner from Samaria went to live in Bethel. He taught them how to worship the LORD.

²⁹ But each group that settled in Samaria continued to make its own gods. They put them at the illegal places of worship, which the people of Samaria had made. Each group did this in the cities where they lived:

³⁰ The people from Babylon made Succoth Benoth. The people from Cuth made Nergal. The people from Hamath made Ashima.

³¹ The people from Avva made Nibhaz and Tartak. The people from Sepharvaim burned their children for Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

³² So while these people were worshiping the LORD, they also appointed all kinds of people to serve as priests for the shrines at their illegal places of worship.

³³ They worshiped the LORD but also served their own gods according to the customs of the nations from which they had come.

³⁴ Today they are still following their customs, as they've done from the beginning. They don't fear the LORD or live by the decrees, customs, teachings, or commands that the LORD gave to the descendants of Jacob (whom he named Israel).

³⁵ When the LORD made a promise to Israel, he commanded, "Never worship other gods, bow down to them, serve them, or sacrifice to them.

³⁶ Instead, worship the LORD, who used his great power and a mighty arm to

bring you out of Egypt. Bow down to the LORD, and sacrifice to him.

³⁷ Faithfully obey the laws, rules, teachings, and commands that he wrote for you: 'Never worship other gods.

³⁸ Never forget the promise I made to you. Never worship other gods.

³⁹ Instead, worship the LORD your God, and he will rescue you from your enemies.'"

⁴⁰ The people of Israel had refused to listen and made up their own rules, as they had done from the beginning.

⁴¹ These other nations worshiped the LORD but also served their own idols. So did their children and their grandchildren. They still do whatever their ancestors did.

18 ¹ King Hoshea, son of Elah, had been king in Israel for three years when King Hezekiah, son of Ahaz of Judah, began to rule as king.

² Hezekiah was 25 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Abi, daughter of Zechariah.

³ He did what the LORD considered right, as his ancestor David had done.

⁴ He got rid of the illegal places of worship, crushed the sacred stones, and cut down the poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah. He even crushed the bronze snake that Moses had made because up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. They called it Nehushtan.

⁵ Hezekiah trusted the LORD God of Israel. No king among all the kings of Judah was like Hezekiah.

⁶ He was loyal to the LORD and never turned away from him. He obeyed the commands that the LORD had given through Moses,

⁷ so the LORD was with him. He succeeded in everything he tried: He rebelled against the king of Assyria and wouldn't serve him anymore.

⁸ He conquered the Philistines from the smallest watchtower to the largest fortified city all the way to Gaza and its territory.

⁹ In Hezekiah's fourth year as king (which was the seventh year in the reign of King Hoshea, son of Elah of Israel) King Shalmaneser of Assyria attacked Samaria, blockaded it,

¹⁰ and captured it at the end of three years. Samaria was taken in Hezekiah's sixth year as king (which was Hoshea's ninth year as king of Israel).

¹¹ The king of Assyria took the Israelites to Assyria as captives. He put them in Halah, along the Habor River in Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

¹² This happened because they refused to obey the LORD their God and disregarded the conditions of the promise he made to them. They refused to obey everything that Moses, the LORD'S servant, had commanded.

¹³ In Hezekiah's fourteenth year as king, King Sennacherib of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

¹⁴ Then King Hezekiah of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. Go away, and leave me alone. I'll pay whatever penalty you give me." So the king of Assyria demanded that King Hezekiah of Judah pay 22,500 pounds of silver and 2,250 pounds of gold.

¹⁵ Hezekiah gave him all the silver that could be found in the LORD'S temple and in the royal palace treasury.

¹⁶ At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold off the doors and doorposts of the LORD'S temple. (Earlier Hezekiah had them covered with gold.) He gave the gold to the king of Assyria.

¹⁷ Then the king of Assyria sent his commander-in-chief, his quartermaster, and his field commander with a large army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. They came there and stood at the channel for the Upper Pool on the road to the Laundryman's Field.

¹⁸ When they called for King Hezekiah, Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace and was the son of Hilkiah, Shebna the scribe, and Joah, who was the royal historian and the son of Asaph, went out to the field commander.

¹⁹ He said to them, "Tell Hezekiah, 'This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: What makes you so confident?"

²⁰ You give useless advice about getting ready for war. Whom, then, do you trust for support in your rebellion against me?

²¹ Now, look! When you trust Egypt, you're trusting a broken stick for a staff. If you lean on it, it stabs your hand and goes through it. This is what Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) is like for everyone who trusts him.

²² Suppose you tell me, "We're trusting the LORD our God." He's the god whose places of worship and altars Hezekiah got rid of. He told Judah and Jerusalem, "Worship at this altar in Jerusalem."

²³ "Now, make a deal with my master, the king of Assyria. I'll give you 2,000 horses if you can put riders on them.

²⁴ How can you defeat my master's lowest-ranking officers when you trust Egypt for chariots and horses?

²⁵ "Have I come to destroy this place without the LORD on my side? The LORD

said to me, 'Attack this country, and destroy it.'

²⁶ Then Eliakim (son of Hilkiah), Shebna, and Joah said to the field commander, "Speak to us in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in the Judean language as long as there are people on the wall listening."

²⁷ But the field commander asked them, "Did my master send me to tell these things only to you and your master? Didn't he send me to the men sitting on the wall who will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine with you?"

²⁸ Then the field commander stood and shouted loudly in the Judean language, "Listen to the great king, the king of Assyria.

²⁹ This is what the king says: Don't let Hezekiah deceive you. He can't rescue you from me.

³⁰ Don't let Hezekiah get you to trust the LORD by saying, 'The LORD will certainly rescue us, and this city will not be put under the control of the king of Assyria.'

³¹ Don't listen to Hezekiah, because this is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me! Come out and give yourselves up to me! Everyone will eat from his own grapevine and fig tree and drink from his own cistern.

³² Then I will come and take you away to a country like your own. It's a country with grain and new wine, a country with bread and vineyards, a country with olive trees, olive oil, and honey. Live! Don't die! Don't listen to Hezekiah when he tries to mislead you by saying to you, 'The LORD will rescue us.'

³³ Did any of the gods of the nations rescue their countries from the king of Assyria?

³⁴ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Did they rescue Samaria from my control?

³⁵ Did the gods of those countries rescue them from my control? Could the LORD then rescue Jerusalem from my control?"

³⁶ But the people were silent and didn't say anything to him because the king commanded them not to answer him.

³⁷ Then Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace and was the son of Hilkiah, Shebna the scribe, and Joah, who was the royal historian and the son of Asaph, went to Hezekiah with their clothes torn in grief. They told him the message from the field commander.

19 ¹ When King Hezekiah heard the message, he tore his clothes in grief, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the LORD'S temple.

² Then he sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the scribe, and the leaders of the priests, clothed in sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz.

³ They said to him, "This is what Hezekiah says: Today is a day filled with misery, punishment, and disgrace. We are like a woman who is about to give birth but doesn't have the strength to do it.

⁴ The LORD your God may have heard all the words of the field commander. His master, the king of Assyria, sent him to defy the living God. The LORD your God may punish him because of the message that the LORD your God heard. Pray for the few people who are left."

⁵ So King Hezekiah's men went to Isaiah.

⁶ Isaiah answered them, "Say this to your master, 'This is what the LORD says: Don't be afraid of the message

that you heard when the Assyrian king's assistants slandered me.

⁷ I'm going to put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own country. I'll have him assassinated in his own country."

⁸ The field commander returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah. He had heard that the king left Lachish.

⁹ Now, Sennacherib heard that King Tirhakah of Sudan was coming to fight him. Sennacherib sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

¹⁰ "Tell King Hezekiah of Judah, 'Don't let the god whom you trust deceive you by saying that Jerusalem will not be put under the control of the king of Assyria.

¹¹ You heard what the kings of Assyria did to all countries, how they totally destroyed them. Will you be rescued?

¹² Did the gods of the nations which my ancestors destroyed rescue Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar?

¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the cities of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?"

¹⁴ Hezekiah took the letters from the messengers, read them, and went to the LORD'S temple. He spread them out in front of the LORD

¹⁵ and prayed to the LORD, "LORD of Armies, God of Israel, you are enthroned over the angels. You alone are God of all the kingdoms of the world. You made heaven and earth.

¹⁶ Turn your ear toward me, LORD, and listen. Open your eyes, LORD, and see. Listen to the message that Sennacherib sent to defy the living God.

¹⁷ It is true, LORD, that the kings of Assyria have leveled nations.

¹⁸ They have thrown the gods from these countries into fires because these gods aren't real gods. They're only wooden and stone statues made by human hands. So the Assyrians have destroyed them.

¹⁹ Now, LORD our God, rescue us from Assyria's control so that all the kingdoms on earth will know that you alone are the LORD God."

²⁰ Then Isaiah, son of Amoz, sent a message to Hezekiah, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: You prayed to me about King Sennacherib of Assyria. I have heard you.

²¹ This is the message that the LORD speaks to him, 'My dear people in Zion despise you and laugh at you. My people in Jerusalem shake their heads behind your back.

²² Whom are you defying and slandering? Against whom are you

shouting? Who are you looking at so arrogantly? It is the Holy One of Israel!

²³ Through your servants you defy the Lord and say, "With my many chariots I'll ride up the high mountains, up the slopes of Lebanon. I'll cut down its tallest cedars and its finest cypresses. I'll come to its most distant borders and its most fertile forests.

²⁴ I'll dig wells and drink foreign water. I'll dry up all the streams of Egypt with the trampling of my feet."

²⁵ "Haven't you heard? I did this long ago. I planned it in the distant past. Now I make it happen so that you will turn fortified cities into piles of rubble.

²⁶ Those who live in these cities are weak, discouraged, and ashamed. They will be like plants in the field, like fresh, green grass on the roofs, scorched before it sprouted.

²⁷ I know when you get up and sit down, when you go out and come in, and how you rage against me.

²⁸ Since you rage against me and your boasting has reached my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bridle in your mouth. I will make you go back the way you came.

²⁹ "And this will be a sign for you, Hezekiah: You will eat what grows by itself this year and next year. But in the third year you will plant and harvest, plant vineyards, and eat what is produced.

³⁰ Those few people from the nation of Judah who escape will again take root and produce crops.

³¹ Those few people will go out from Jerusalem, and those who escape will go out of Mount Zion. The LORD is determined to do this.'

³² "This is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria: He will never come into this city, shoot an arrow here, hold a shield in front of it, or put up dirt ramps to attack it.

³³ He will go back the way he came, and he won't come into this city," declares the LORD of Armies.

³⁴ "I will shield this city to rescue it for my sake and for the sake of my servant David."

³⁵ It happened that night. The LORD'S angel went out and killed 185,000 soldiers in the Assyrian camp. When the Judeans got up early in the morning, they saw all the corpses.

³⁶ Then King Sennacherib of Assyria left. He went home to Nineveh and stayed there.

³⁷ While he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, Adrammelech and Sharezer assassinated him and

escaped to the land of Ararat. His son Esarhaddon succeeded him as king.

20¹ In those days Hezekiah became sick and was about to die. The prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, came to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Give final instructions to your household, because you're about to die. You won't get well."

² Hezekiah turned to the wall and prayed to the LORD,

³ "Please, LORD, remember how I've lived faithfully and sincerely in your presence. I've done what you consider right." And he cried bitterly.

⁴ Isaiah hadn't gone as far as the middle courtyard when the LORD spoke his word to him:

⁵ "Go back and say to Hezekiah, leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: I've heard your prayer. I've seen your tears.

Now I'm going to heal you. The day after tomorrow you will go to the LORD'S temple.

⁶ I'll give you 15 more years to live. I'll rescue you and defend this city from the control of the king of Assyria for my sake and for the sake of my servant David."

⁷ Then Isaiah said, "Get a fig cake, and put it on the boil so that the king will get well."

⁸ Hezekiah asked Isaiah, "What is the sign that the LORD will heal me and that I'll go to the LORD'S temple the day after tomorrow?"

⁹ Isaiah said, "This is your sign from the LORD that he will do what he promises. Do you want the shadow to go forward ten steps or come back ten steps?"

¹⁰ Hezekiah replied, "It's easy for the shadow to extend ten more steps forward. No, let it come back ten steps."

¹¹ Then the prophet Isaiah called on the LORD, and the LORD made the shadow that had gone down on Ahaz's stairway go back up ten steps.

¹² At that time Baladan's son, King Merodach Baladan of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah because he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

¹³ Hezekiah was so happy with them that he showed the messengers his warehouse: the silver, gold, balsam, fine olive oil, his entire armory, and everything in his treasury. Hezekiah showed them everything in his palace and every corner of his kingdom.

¹⁴ Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did these men say? And where did they come from?" Hezekiah answered, "They came to me from the distant country of Babylon."

¹⁵ Isaiah asked, "What did they see in your palace?" Hezekiah answered, "They saw everything in my palace, and I showed them everything in my treasury."

¹⁶ Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD!

¹⁷ The LORD says, 'The days are going to come when everything in your palace, everything your ancestors have stored up to this day, will be taken away to Babylon. Nothing will be left.

¹⁸ Some of your own descendants will be taken away. They will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'

¹⁹ Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The LORD'S word that you have spoken is good." He added, "Isn't it enough if there is peace and security as long as I live?"

²⁰ Isn't everything else about Hezekiah, all his heroic acts and how he made the pool and tunnel to bring water into the

city, written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

²¹ Hezekiah lay down in death with his ancestors. His son Manasseh succeeded him as king.

21 ¹ Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 55 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah.

² He did what the LORD considered evil by copying the disgusting things done by the nations that the LORD had forced out of the Israelites' way.

³ He rebuilt the illegal places of worship that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He set up altars dedicated to Baal and made a pole dedicated to the goddess Asherah as King Ahab of Israel had done. Manasseh, like Ahab, worshiped and served the entire army of heaven.

⁴ He built altars in the LORD'S temple, where the LORD had said, "I will put my name in Jerusalem."

⁵ In the two courtyards of the LORD'S temple, he built altars for the entire army of heaven.

⁶ He burned his son as a sacrifice, consulted fortunetellers, cast evil spells, and appointed royal mediums and psychics. He did many things that made the LORD furious.

⁷ Manasseh had an idol of Asherah made. Then he set it up in the temple, where the LORD had said to David and his son Solomon, "I have chosen this temple and Jerusalem from all the tribes of Israel. I will put my name here forever.

⁸ I will never again make Israel's feet wander from the land that I gave to their ancestors if they will obey all the commands and all the Teachings that my servant Moses gave them."

⁹ (But they wouldn't obey.) Manasseh misled Israel so that they did more evil things than the nations that the LORD had destroyed when the Israelites arrived in the land.

¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke through his servants the prophets:

¹¹ "King Manasseh of Judah has done disgusting things, things more evil than what the Amorites who were here before him had done. Manasseh has also made Judah sin by worshiping his idols.

¹² So this is what I, the LORD God of Israel, said: I'm going to bring such a disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears about it will ring.

¹³ I will measure Jerusalem with the measuring line used for Samaria and the plumb line used for Ahab's dynasty. I will wipe out Jerusalem in the same way that

a dish is wiped out and turned upside down.

¹⁴ I will abandon the rest of my people. I will put them under the control of their enemies, and they will become property that their enemies capture.

¹⁵ I will do this because they have done what I consider evil and have been making me furious from the time their ancestors left Egypt until this day."

¹⁶ In addition to his sin that he led Judah to commit in front of the LORD, Manasseh also killed a lot of innocent people from one end of Jerusalem to the other.

¹⁷ Isn't everything else about Manasseh—everything he did, the sins he committed—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

¹⁸ Manasseh lay down in death with his ancestors. He was buried in the garden

of his own palace, in the garden of Uzza. His son Amon succeeded him as king.

¹⁹ Amon was 22 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 2 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Meshullemeth, daughter of Haruz from Jotbah.

²⁰ He did what the LORD considered evil, as his father Manasseh had done.

²¹ He lived like his father in every way and worshiped and prayed to the idols his father had worshiped.

²² He abandoned the LORD God of his ancestors and didn't live the LORD'S way.

²³ Amon's officials plotted against him and killed him in his palace.

²⁴ Then the people of the land killed everyone who had plotted against King Amon. They made his son Josiah king in his place.

²⁵ Isn't everything else about Amon—the things he did—written in the official record of the kings of Judah?

²⁶ He was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. His son Josiah succeeded him as king.

22 ¹ Josiah was 8 years old when he began to rule, and he was king for 31 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jedidah, daughter of Adaiah from Bozkath.

² Josiah did what the LORD considered right. He lived in the ways of his ancestor David and never stopped.

³ In Josiah's eighteenth year as king of Judah, he sent the scribe Shaphan, son of Azaliah and grandson of Meshullam, to the LORD'S temple with these instructions:

⁴ "Go to the chief priest Hilkiah. Have him count the money that has been brought into the LORD'S temple, the

money that the doorkeepers have collected from the people.

⁵ Give some of it to the foremen who are in charge of the LORD'S temple. They should give it to the workmen who are making repairs on the LORD'S temple.

⁶ (These workers include the carpenters, builders, and masons.) Also, use the rest of the money to buy lumber and quarried stones to repair the temple.

⁷ Since the workmen are honest, don't require them to account for the money you give them."

⁸ The chief priest Hilkiah told the scribe Shaphan, "I have found the Book of Moses' Teachings in the LORD'S temple." Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, who then read it.

⁹ The scribe Shaphan went to the king and reported, "We have taken the money donated in the temple and have

given it to the workmen who are in charge of the LORD'S temple."

¹⁰ Then the scribe Shaphan told the king, "The priest Hilkiah has given me a book." And Shaphan read it to the king.

¹¹ When the king heard what the book of the Teachings said, he tore his clothes in distress.

¹² Then the king gave an order to the priest Hilkiah, to Ahikam (son of Shaphan), Achbor (son of Micaiah), the scribe Shaphan, and the royal official Asaiah. He said,

¹³ "On behalf of the people, all of Judah, and me, ask the LORD about the words in this book that has been found. The LORD'S fierce anger is directed towards us because our ancestors did not obey the things in this book or do everything written in it."

¹⁴ So the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to talk to

the prophet Huldah. She was the wife of Shallum, son of Tikvah and grandson of Harhas. Shallum was in charge of the royal wardrobe. Huldah was living in the Second Part of Jerusalem.

¹⁵ She told them, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Tell the man who sent you to me,

¹⁶ 'This is what the LORD says: I'm going to bring disaster on this place and on the people living here according to everything written in the book that the king of Judah has read.

¹⁷ I will do this because they have abandoned me and sacrificed to other gods in order to make me furious. Therefore, my burning anger directed at this place will never be extinguished.'"

¹⁸ Huldah added, "But tell Judah's king who sent you to me to ask the LORD a question, 'This is what the LORD God of Israel says about the words you heard:

¹⁹ You had a change of heart and humbled yourself in front of the LORD when you heard my words against this place and those who live here. I had said that those who live here will be destroyed and cursed. You also tore your clothes in distress and cried in front of me. So I will listen to you, declares the LORD.

²⁰ That is why I'm going to bring you to your ancestors. I'm going to bring you to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see any of the disaster I'm going to bring on this place.'" So they reported this to the king.

23 ¹ Then the king sent for all the respected leaders of Judah and Jerusalem to join him.

² The king, everyone in Judah, everyone living in Jerusalem, the priests, the prophets, and all the people (young and old) went to the LORD'S temple. Josiah

read everything written in the Book of the Promise found in the LORD'S temple so that they could hear it.

³ The king stood beside the pillar and made a promise to the LORD that he would follow the LORD and obey his commands, instructions, and laws with all his heart and soul. He confirmed the terms of the promise written in this book. And all the people joined in the promise.

⁴ Then the king ordered the chief priest Hilkiah, the priests who served under Hilkiah, and the doorkeepers to take out of the LORD'S temple all the utensils that had been made for Baal, Asherah, and the entire army of heaven. Josiah burned the utensils outside Jerusalem in an open field near the Kidron Brook. Then he carried their ashes to Bethel.

⁵ He got rid of the pagan priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to

sacrifice at the illegal places of worship in the cities of Judah and all around Jerusalem. They had been sacrificing to Baal, the sun god, the moon god, the zodiac, and the entire army of heaven.

⁶ He took the pole dedicated to the goddess Asherah from the temple to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem. He burned it in the Kidron Valley, ground it to dust, and threw its ashes on the tombs of the common people.

⁷ He tore down the houses of the male temple prostitutes who were in the LORD'S temple, where women did weaving for Asherah.

⁸ He brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah from Geba to Beersheba and made the places where those priests sacrificed unclean. He tore down the worship site at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua, the gate named after the mayor of the city. (The worship site was

to the left of anyone going through the city gate.)

⁹ The priests of the illegal worship sites had never gone to the LORD'S altar in Jerusalem. Instead, they ate their unleavened bread among the other worshipers.

¹⁰ Josiah also made Topheth in the valley of Ben Hinnom unclean so that people would never again sacrifice their sons or daughters by burning them to the god Molech.

¹¹ He removed the horses that Judah's kings had dedicated to the sun god at the entrance of the LORD'S temple. They were in the temple courtyard near the room of the eunuch Nathan Melech. He also burned the chariots of the sun god,

¹² the altars that Judah's kings had made and placed on the roof of Ahaz's upstairs room, and the altars Manasseh had made in the two courtyards of the

LORD'S temple. The king tore them down from there, crushed them, and dumped their rubble in the Kidron Valley.

¹³ The king made the illegal places of worship east of Jerusalem unclean. They were on the southern part of the Hill of Destruction. King Solomon of Israel had built them for Astarte (the disgusting goddess of the Sidonians), Chemosh (the disgusting god of Moab), and Milcom (the disgusting god of the Ammonites).

¹⁴ Josiah crushed the sacred stones, cut down the poles dedicated to Asherah, and filled their places with human bones.

¹⁵ He also tore down the altar at Bethel—the place of worship made by Jeroboam (Nebat's son), who had made Israel sin. He tore down both the altar and the place of worship. They burned the worship site, crushing it to

powder and burning the pole dedicated to Asherah.

¹⁶ When Josiah turned and saw the tombs on the hill there, he sent men to take the bones out of the tombs and burn them on the altar to make it unclean. This fulfilled the word of the LORD announced by the man of God.

¹⁷ Then he asked, "What is this monument that I see?" The people of the city answered him, "It's the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah to announce that you would do these things to the altar of Bethel."

¹⁸ So Josiah said, "Let him rest. Don't disturb his bones." So they left his bones with the bones of the prophet who had come from Samaria.

¹⁹ Josiah also got rid of all the temples at the illegal places of worship in the cities of Samaria. The kings of Israel had built these places to make the LORD

furious. He did to them everything that he had done to the worship places at Bethel.

²⁰ He slaughtered all the priests of the illegal worship sites on their altars and then burned human bones on them. He went back to Jerusalem.

²¹ The king ordered all the people to celebrate the Passover for the LORD their God as it is written in this Book of the Promise.

²² The Passover had never been celebrated like this during the time of the judges who governed Israel or during the entire time of the kings of Israel and Judah.

²³ But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign, this Passover was celebrated in Jerusalem for the LORD.

²⁴ Josiah also got rid of the mediums, psychics, family idols, other idols, and disgusting gods that could be seen in

the land of Judah and in Jerusalem. He did this to confirm the words of the Teachings written in the book that the priest Hilkiah found in the LORD'S temple.

²⁵ No king before Josiah had turned to the LORD with all his heart, soul, and strength, as directed in Moses' Teachings. No other king was like Josiah.

²⁶ But the LORD still didn't turn his hot, burning anger from Judah. After all, Manasseh had done all these things to make him furious.

²⁷ The LORD had said, "I will put Judah out of my sight as I put Israel out of my sight. I will reject Jerusalem, the city that I chose, and I will reject the temple where I said my name would be."

²⁸ Isn't everything else about Josiah—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

²⁹ In Josiah's days Pharaoh Necho (the king of Egypt) came to help the king of Assyria at the Euphrates River. King Josiah went to attack Necho. When Pharaoh saw him at Megiddo, Pharaoh killed him.

³⁰ His officers put his dead body in a chariot and brought it from Megiddo to Jerusalem. They buried Josiah in his tomb. Then the people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz, anointed him, and made him king in place of his father.

³¹ Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king, and he was king for 3 months in Jerusalem. His mother was Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah.

³² He did what the LORD considered evil, as his ancestors had done.

³³ Pharaoh Necho made him a prisoner at Riblah in the territory of Hamath during his reign in Jerusalem and fined

the country 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold.

³⁴ Then Pharaoh Necho made Josiah's son Eliakim king in place of his father Josiah and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. He took Jehoahaz away to Egypt, where he died.

³⁵ Jehoiakim gave Pharaoh the silver and the gold. But he had to tax the country to pay the silver Pharaoh had demanded. He taxed each person according to his wealth so that he could get the silver and gold from the people of the land and give it to Pharaoh Necho.

³⁶ Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began to rule, and he was king for 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zebidah, daughter of Pedaiiah from Rumah.

³⁷ Jehoiakim did what the LORD considered evil, as his ancestors had done.

24 ¹ During Jehoiakim's reign King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Judah, and Jehoiakim became subject to him for three years. Then Jehoiakim turned against him and rebelled.

² The LORD sent raiding parties of Babylonians, Arameans, Moabites, and Ammonites against Jehoiakim to destroy Judah as the LORD had predicted through his servants the prophets.

³ Without a doubt, this happened to Judah because the LORD had commanded it to happen. He wanted to remove the people of Judah from his sight because of Manasseh's sins—everything he had done,

⁴ including the innocent blood he had shed. He had a lot of innocent people in Jerusalem killed, and the LORD refused to forgive him.

⁵ Isn't everything else about Jehoiakim—everything he did—written in the official records of the kings of Judah?

⁶ Jehoiakim lay down in death with his ancestors, and his son Jehoiakin succeeded him as king.

⁷ The king of Egypt didn't leave his own country again because the king of Babylon had taken all the territory from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates River. This territory had belonged to the king of Egypt.

⁸ Jehoiakin was 18 years old when he began to rule as king. He was king for three months in Jerusalem. His mother was Nehushta, daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem.

⁹ Jehoiakin did what the LORD considered evil, as his father had done.

¹⁰ At that time the officers of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Jerusalem. (The city was blockaded.)

¹¹ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon arrived while his officers were blockading the city.

¹² King Jehoiakin of Judah, his mother, officials, generals, and eunuchs surrendered to the king of Babylon. In the eighth year of his reign, the king of Babylon captured Jehoiakin.

¹³ He also took away all the treasures in the LORD'S temple and the royal palace. As the LORD had predicted, Nebuchadnezzar stripped the gold off all the furnishings that King Solomon of Israel had made for the LORD'S temple.

¹⁴ He captured all Jerusalem, all the generals, all the soldiers(10,000 prisoners), and all the craftsmen and smiths. Only the poorest people of the land were left.

¹⁵ He took Jehoiakin to Babylon as a captive. He also took the king's mother, wives, eunuchs, and the leading citizens

of the land from Jerusalem as captives to Babylon.

¹⁶ The king of Babylon brought all 7,000 of the prominent landowners, 1,000 craftsmen and smiths, and all the men who could fight in war as captives to Babylon.

¹⁷ The king of Babylon made King Jehoiakin's Uncle Mattaniah king in his place and changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah.

¹⁸ Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah.

¹⁹ Zedekiah did what the LORD considered evil, as Jehoiakim had done.

²⁰ The LORD became angry with Jerusalem and Judah and threw the people out of his sight. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

25 ¹ On the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Jerusalem with his entire army. They set up camp and built dirt ramps around the city walls.

² The blockade of the city lasted until Zedekiah's eleventh year as king.

³ On the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine in the city became so severe that the common people had no food.

⁴ The enemy broke through the city walls that night. All Judah's soldiers left on the road of the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden. While the Babylonians were attacking the city from all sides, the king took the road to the plain of Jericho.

⁵ The Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah and caught up with him in the plain of Jericho. His entire army had deserted him.

⁶ The Babylonians captured the king, brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and passed sentence on him.

⁷ They slaughtered Zedekiah's sons as he watched, and then they blinded Zedekiah. They put him in bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.

⁸ On the seventh day of the fifth month of Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth year as king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, who was the captain of the guard and an officer of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

⁹ He burned down the LORD'S temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. Every important building was burned down.

¹⁰ The entire Babylonian army that was with the captain of the guard tore down the walls around Jerusalem.

¹¹ Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, captured the few people left in the city, those who surrendered to the

king of Babylon, and the rest of the population.

¹² The captain of the guard left some of the poorest people in the land to work in the vineyards and on the farms.

¹³ The Babylonians broke apart the bronze pillars of the LORD'S temple, the stands, and the bronze pool in the LORD'S temple. They shipped the bronze to Babylon.

¹⁴ They took the pots, shovels, snuffers, dishes, and all the bronze utensils used in the temple service.

¹⁵ The captain of the guard took all of the incense burners and bowls that were made of gold or silver.

¹⁶ The bronze from the two pillars, the pool, and the stands that Solomon had made for the LORD'S temple couldn't be weighed.

¹⁷ One pillar was 27 feet high and had a bronze capital on it that was 4½ feet

high. The filigree and the pomegranates around the capital were all made of bronze. The second pillar and its filigree were the same.

¹⁸ The captain of the guard took the chief priest Seraiah, the second priest Zephaniah, and the 3 doorkeepers.

¹⁹ From the city he also took an army commander, 5 men who had access to the king whom he found in the city, the scribe who was in charge of the militia, and 60 of the common people whom he found in the city.

²⁰ Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

²¹ The king of Babylon executed them at Riblah in the territory of Hamath. So the people of Judah were captives when they left their land.

²² King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appointed Gedaliah, son of Ahikam and

grandson of Shaphan, to govern the remaining people in the land of Judah.

²³ When all the army commanders and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah, they went to Gedaliah at Mizpah. They were Ishmael (son of Nethaniah), Johanan (son of Kareah), Seraiah (son of Tanhumeth from Netophah), and Jaazaniah from Beth Maacah and their men.

²⁴ Gedaliah swore an oath to them and their men. He said, "Don't be afraid of the Babylonian officers. Live in this country, serve the king of Babylon, and you will prosper."

²⁵ In the seventh month Ishmael (son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama, a descendant of the kings) went with ten men to kill Gedaliah and the Judeans and Babylonians who were with him at Mizpah.

²⁶ Then people of all classes and the army commanders left for Egypt because they were afraid of the Babylonians.

²⁷ On the twenty–seventh day of the twelfth month of the thirty–seventh year of the imprisonment of King Jehoiakin of Judah, King Evil Merodach of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, freed King Jehoiakin of Judah from prison.

²⁸ He treated him well and gave him a special position higher than the other kings who were with him in Babylon.

²⁹ Jehoiakin no longer wore prison clothes, and he ate his meals in the king’s presence as long as he lived.

³⁰ The king of Babylon gave him a daily food allowance as long as he lived.

1 Chronicles

1 ¹ Adam, Seth, Enosh,
² Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared,
³ Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech,
⁴ Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

⁵ Japheth's descendants were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

⁶ Gomer's descendants were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁷ Javan's descendants were the people from Elishah, Tarshish, Cyprus, and Rhodes.

⁸ Ham's descendants were Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan.

⁹ Cush's descendants were Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabteca. Raama's descendants were Sheba and Dedan.

¹⁰ Cush was the father of Nimrod, the first mighty warrior on the earth.

¹¹ Egypt was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites,

¹² Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came), and the Caphtorites.

¹³ Canaan was the father of Sidon his firstborn, then Heth,

¹⁴ also the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites,

¹⁵ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites,

¹⁶ the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites.

¹⁷ The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.

¹⁸ Arpachshad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah was the father of Eber.

¹⁹ Two sons were born to Eber. The name of the one was Peleg [Division],

because in his day the earth was divided.
His brother's name was Joktan.

²⁰ Joktan was the father of Almodad,
Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

²¹ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

²² Ebal, Abimael, Sheba,

²³ Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these
were sons of Joktan.

²⁴ Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah,

²⁵ Eber, Peleg, Reu,

²⁶ Serug, Nahor, Terah,

²⁷ Abram (that is, Abraham).

²⁸ Abraham's sons were Isaac and
Ishmael.

²⁹ This is their list of descendants:
Ishmael's firstborn was Nebaioth, then
Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

³⁰ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad,
Tema,

³¹ Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These
were the sons of Ishmael.

³² Keturah, Abraham's concubine, gave birth to the following sons: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan's sons were Sheba and Dedan.

³³ The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah.

³⁴ Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac's sons were Esau and Israel.

³⁵ Esau's sons were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

³⁶ Eliphaz's sons were Teman and Omar, Zephi and Gatam, Kenaz and Amalek, son of Timna.

³⁷ Reuel's sons were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

³⁸ Seir's sons were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

³⁹ Lotan's sons were Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister.

⁴⁰ Shobal's sons were Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. Zibeon's sons were Aiah and Anah.

⁴¹ Anah's son was Dishon. Dishon's sons were Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.

⁴² Ezer's sons were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Jaakan. Dishan's sons were Uz and Aran.

⁴³ These were the kings who ruled Edom before any king ruled the people of Israel: Bela, son of Beor, and the name of his capital city was Dinhabah.

⁴⁴ After Bela died, Jobab, son of Zerah from Bozrah, succeeded him as king.

⁴⁵ After Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king.

⁴⁶ After Husham died, Hadad, son of Bedad, who defeated the Midianites in the country of Moab, succeeded him as king, and the name of his capital city was Avith.

⁴⁷ After Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah succeeded him as king.

⁴⁸ After Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the river succeeded him as king.

⁴⁹ After Shaul died, Baal Hanan, son of Achbor, succeeded him as king.

⁵⁰ After Baal Hanan died, Hadad succeeded him as king, and the name of his capital city was Pai. His wife's name was Mehetabel, daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Mezahab.

⁵¹ Then Hadad died. The tribal leaders of Edom were Timna, Aliah, Jetheth,

⁵² Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,

⁵³ Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,

⁵⁴ Magdiel, and Iram. These were the tribal leaders of Edom.

2 ¹ These were Israel's sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun,

² Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

³ Judah's sons were Er, Onan, and Shelah. These three were born to him by Bathshua, a Canaanite woman. The LORD considered Er, Judah's firstborn, evil, so the LORD killed Er.

⁴ Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, gave birth to Judah's sons Perez and Zerah. Judah had five sons in all.

⁵ Perez's sons were Hezron and Hamul.

⁶ Zerah's sons were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara —five in all.

⁷ Carmi's son was Achar, who caused trouble for Israel by taking goods that were claimed by God.

⁸ Ethan's son was Azariah.

⁹ The sons born to Hezron were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai.

¹⁰ Ram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon, leader of Judah's people.

¹¹ Nahshon was the father of Salma, and Salma was the father of Boaz.

¹² Boaz was the father of Obed, and Obed was the father of Jesse.

¹³ Jesse was the father of Eliab (his firstborn), Abinadab (his second son), Shimea (his third son),

¹⁴ Nethanel (his fourth son), Raddai (his fifth son),

¹⁵ Ozem (his sixth son), and David (his seventh son).

¹⁶ Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah's three sons were Abishai, Joab, and Asahel.

¹⁷ Abigail was the mother of Amasa, whose father was Jether, a descendant of Ishmael.

¹⁸ Hezron's son was Caleb. Caleb and his wife Azubah had a son named Jerioth. Her other sons were Jeshar, Shobab, and Ardon.

¹⁹ After Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath. She gave birth to Hur.

²⁰ Hur was the father of Uri, and Uri was the father of Bezalel.

²¹ Afterwards, Hezron slept with the daughter of Machir, the man who first settled Gilead. Hezron had married her when he was 60 years old. She gave birth to Segub.

²² Segub was the father of Jair, who had 23 towns in Gilead.

²³ Geshur and Aram captured Havvoth Jair with Kenath and its villages (60 cities in all). All of these people were descendants of Machir, the man who first settled Gilead.

²⁴ After Hezron died in Caleb Ephrathah, Hezron's wife Abijah gave birth to Ashhur, who first settled Tekoa.

²⁵ Jerahmeel (the firstborn son of Hezron) fathered Ram (his firstborn), then Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah.

²⁶ Jerahmeel had another wife. Her name was Atarah, and she was the mother of Onam.

²⁷ The sons of Ram (the firstborn son of Jerahmeel) were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker.

²⁸ Onam's sons were Shammai and Jada. Shammai's sons were Nadab and Abishur.

²⁹ The name of Abishur's wife was Abihail. She gave birth to Ahban and Molid.

³⁰ Nadab's sons were Seled and Appaim, but Seled died without children.

³¹ Appaim's son was Ishi, and Ishi's son was Sheshan, and Sheshan's son was Ahlai.

³² The sons of Jada (Shammai's brother) were Jether and Jonathan. Jether died without children.

³³ Jonathan's sons were Peleth and Zaza. These were the descendants of Jerahmeel.

³⁴ Sheshan had no sons, but he had daughters. He had an Egyptian slave named Jarha.

³⁵ Sheshan let Jarha marry one of his daughters. She gave birth to Attai.

³⁶ Attai was the father of Nathan. Nathan was the father of Zabad.

³⁷ Zabad was the father of Ephlal. Ephlal was the father of Obed.

³⁸ Obed was the father of Jehu. Jehu was the father of Azariah.

³⁹ Azariah was the father of Helez. Helez was the father of Eleasah.

⁴⁰ Eleasah was the father of Sismai. Sismai was the father of Shallum.

⁴¹ Shallum was the father of Jekamiah. Jekamiah was the father of Elishama.

⁴² The descendants of Caleb (Jerahmeel's brother) were his firstborn son Mesha, who first settled Ziph, and the sons of Mareshah, who first settled Hebron.

⁴³ Hebron's sons were Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema.

⁴⁴ Shema was the father of Raham, who first settled Jorkeam. Rekem was the father of Shammai.

⁴⁵ Shammai's son was Maon, who first settled Beth Zur.

⁴⁶ Ephah, Caleb's concubine, was the mother of Haran, Moza, and Gazez. Haran was the father of Gazez.

⁴⁷ Jahdai's sons were Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.

⁴⁸ Maacah, Caleb's concubine, was the mother of Sheber and Tirhanah.

⁴⁹ Also, she was the mother of Shaaph, who first settled Madmannah, and of Sheva, who first settled Machbenah and Gibeon. Caleb's daughter was Achsah.

⁵⁰ These people were the descendants of Caleb. The sons of Hur, the firstborn son of Ephrath, were Shobal, who first settled Kiriath Jearim,

⁵¹ Salma, who first settled Bethlehem, and Hareph, who first settled Beth Gadar.

⁵² Shobal, who first settled Kiriath Jearim, had these descendants: Haroeh, half of the Manahathites,

⁵³ the families of Kiriath Jearim, the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraites. From these people came the Zorahites and Eshtaolites.

⁵⁴ The descendants of Salma, who first settled Bethlehem, were the Netophathites, Atroth, who first settled Beth Joab, half of the Manahathites, the Zorites,

⁵⁵ and the families of scribes who lived at Jabez. These families were the people of Tira, Shimea, and Sucah. These people are the Kenites who came from Hammath. They first settled Beth Rechab.

3¹ These were David's sons who were born to him while he was in Hebron: His first son was Amnon, born to Ahinoam from Jezreel. The second was Daniel, born to Abigail from Carmel.

² The third was Absalom, born to Maacah (the daughter of King Talmai) from Geshur. The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith.

³ The fifth was Shephatiah, born to Abital. The sixth was Ithream, born to David's wife Eglah.

⁴ Six sons were born to him in Hebron, where he ruled for seven years and six months. He ruled for 33 years in Jerusalem.

⁵ These children were born to David in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon (the mother of these four was Ammiel's daughter Bathshua) and

⁶ Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet,

⁷ Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,

⁸ Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet (nine by other wives).

⁹ All of these were David's sons. Besides these, there were the sons of the concubines. Tamar was their sister.

¹⁰ Solomon's son was Rehoboam. Rehoboam's son was Abijah. Abijah's son was Asa. Asa's son was Jehoshaphat.

¹¹ Jehoshaphat's son was Joram. Joram's son was Ahaziah. Ahaziah's son was Joash.

¹² Joash's son was Amaziah. Amaziah's son was Azariah. Azariah's son was Jotham.

¹³ Jotham's son was Ahaz. Ahaz's son was Hezekiah. Hezekiah's son was Manasseh.

¹⁴ Manasseh's son was Amon. Amon's son was Josiah.

¹⁵ Josiah's firstborn son was Johanan, the second was Jehoiakim, the third was Zedekiah, and the fourth was Shallum.

¹⁶ Jehoiakim's son was Jeconiah, whose son was Zedekiah.

¹⁷ The descendants of the prisoner Jeconiah were his son Shealtiel,

¹⁸ then Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

¹⁹ Pedaiah's sons were Zerubbabel and Shimei. Zerubbabel's sons were Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister.

²⁰ There were also five other sons: Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab Hessed.

²¹ Hananiah's sons were Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah. Jeshaiiah's son was Rephaiah. Rephaiah's son was Arnan. Arnan's son was Obadiah. Obadiah's son was Shecaniah.

²² Shecaniah's son was Shemaiah. Shemaiah's six sons were Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat.

²³ Neariah's three sons were Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam.

²⁴ Elioenai's seven sons were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani.

4 ¹ Judah's descendants were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.

² Reaiah, son of Shobal, was the father of Jahath. Jahath was the father of Ahumai and Lahad. These were the families of the Zorathites.

³ These were the first settlers in Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash. Their sister's name was Hazelelponi.

⁴ Penuel was the father of Gedor, and Ezer was the father of Hushah. These were the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, who first settled Bethlehem.

⁵ Ashhur, who first settled Tekoa, had two wives, Helah and Naarah.

⁶ Naarah gave birth to Ahuzzam, Hopher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were Naarah's sons.

⁷ Helah's sons were Zereth, Izohar, and Ethnan.

⁸ Koz was the father of Anub and Zobebah, and he was the ancestor of the families of Aharhel, son of Harum.

⁹ Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez [Painful], because she said that his birth was painful.

¹⁰ Jabez prayed to the God of Israel, "Please bless me and give me more territory. May your power be with me and free me from evil so that I will not be in pain." God gave him what he prayed for.

¹¹ Chelub, Shuhah's brother, was the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton.

¹² Eshton was the first to settle Beth Rapha. He was the father of Paseah and Tehinnah, who first settled the city of Nahash. These were the men from Recah.

¹³ Kenaz's sons were Othniel and Seraiah. The sons of Othniel were Hathath and Meonothai.

¹⁴ Meonothai was the father of Ophrah. Seraiah was the father of Joab, who first settled the valley of Craftsmen. (It was named this because they were craftsmen.)

¹⁵ The sons of Caleb, son of Jephunneh, were Iru, Elah, and Naam. Elah's son was Kenaz.

¹⁶ Jehallelel's sons were Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.

¹⁷ Ezra's sons were Jether, Mered, Ephraim, and Jalon. His wife gave birth to Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah, who first settled Eshtemoa.

¹⁸ His Judean wife was the mother of Jered, who first settled Gedor, Heber, who first settled Soco, and Jekuthiel, who first settled Zanoah.

¹⁹ The sons of Hodiah's wife, the sister of Naham, first settled Keilah of the Garmites and Eshtemoa of the Maacathites.

²⁰ Shimon's sons were Amnon, Rinnah, Ben Hanan, and Tilon. Ishi's sons were Zoheth and Ben Zoheth.

²¹ The descendants of Shelah, son of Judah, were Er, who first settled Lecah, Laadah, who first settled Mareshah, families of the guild of linen workers at Beth Ashbea,

²² Jokim, Joash, Saraph, and the men of Cozeba. Saraph ruled Moab and Jashubi Lehem (according to ancient records).

²³ They were the potters who lived at Netaim and Gederah. They lived there with the king and did his work.

²⁴ Simeon's sons were Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul.

²⁵ Shaul's son was Shallum. Shallum's son was Mibsam. Mibsam's son was Mishma.

²⁶ Mishma's son was Hammuel. Hammuel's son was Zaccur. Zaccur's son was Shimei.

²⁷ Shimei had 16 sons and 6 daughters. But his brothers didn't have many children, so their entire family didn't become as large as the people of Judah.

²⁸ Simeon's descendants lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual,

²⁹ Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad,

³⁰ Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag,

³¹ Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri, and Shaaraim. These were their cities until David became king.

³² Their five cities were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan.

³³ They also had all the villages around these cities as far as the city of Baal. These places were where they lived, and they had their own genealogical records:

³⁴ Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah (son of Amaziah),

³⁵ Joel, Jehu (son of Joshibiah, grandson of Seraiah, and great-grandson of Asiel),

³⁶ Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, and

³⁷ Ziza (son of Shiphi, grandson of Allon, great-grandson of Jedaiah, a descendant of Shimri and Shemaiah).

³⁸ These who are mentioned by name were leaders in their families, and the number of people in their households increased.

³⁹ They moved to the outskirts of Gedor, on the east side of the valley, to find pasture for their flocks.

⁴⁰ They found pasture that was rich and good. The land was vast, peaceful, and

quiet because the Hamites used to live there.

⁴¹ In the days of King Hezekiah of Judah, the men listed here knocked down tents and killed the Meunites. They claimed the Meunites for God and destroyed them. (Even today no Meunites live there.) They lived in that land in place of the Meunites in order to have pasture for their flocks.

⁴² Ishi's sons Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel led 500 of Simeon's male descendants to Mount Seir.

⁴³ They killed the Amalekites who were left. Simeon's descendants still live there today.

5 ¹ These are the sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn. (Although he was the firstborn, his rights as firstborn were given to his nephews, Joseph's sons, because he dishonored his father's bed.

However, Joseph couldn't be listed in the genealogy as the firstborn son.

² Even though Judah was more prominent than his brothers and the prince was to come from him, Joseph received the rights as firstborn.)

³ The sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

⁴ Joel's son was Shemaiah. Shemaiah's son was Gog. Gog's son was Shimei.

⁵ Shimei's son was Micah. Micah's son was Reaiah. Reaiah's son was Baal.

⁶ Baal's son was Beerah. King Tiglath Pilneser of Assyria took him away as a captive. He was leader of the tribe of Reuben.

⁷ Beerah's brothers according to their families, when they were enrolled in the genealogical records according to their ancestry, were as follows: The first was Jeiel, then Zechariah

⁸ and Bela (son of Azaz, grandson of Shema, and great-grandson of Joel). Reuben's descendants lived in Aroer as far as Nebo and Baal Meon.

⁹ Some of them lived eastward as far as the edge of the desert that extends to the Euphrates River, because they had so much livestock in Gilead.

¹⁰ In Saul's day they fought a war against the Hagrites, defeated them, and lived in their tents throughout the entire region east of Gilead.

¹¹ Gad's descendants lived next to Reuben's descendants in Bashan as far east as Salcah.

¹² One family descended from Gad's first son Joel. Another family descended from Gad's second son Shapham. Other families descended from Gad's sons Janai and Shaphat in Bashan.

¹³ Their seven relatives by families were Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber.

¹⁴ These were the sons of Abihail, who was the son of Huri, grandson of Jaroah, and great-grandson of Gilead. Gilead was the son of Michael, grandson of Jeshishai, great-grandson of Jahdo, and great-great-grandson of Buz.

¹⁵ Ahi, son of Abdiel and grandson of Guni, was the head of their families.

¹⁶ They lived in Gilead, in Bashan and its villages, and in the entire pastureland of Sharon to its extreme edges.

¹⁷ All these people were recorded in genealogical records in the days of King Jotham of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel.

¹⁸ The descendants of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh had 44,760 soldiers ready to go to war. They

were skilled fighters who could carry shields and swords and shoot arrows.

¹⁹ They went to war against Hagar's descendants (including Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab)

²⁰ and received help while fighting them. Hagar's descendants and the nations with them were handed over to Reuben's descendants. They had called out to God during the battle, and he answered their prayers because they trusted him.

²¹ They confiscated the Hagrites' livestock: 50,000 of their camels, 250,000 sheep and goats, and 2,000 donkeys. They captured 100,000 people.

²² Many were killed in battle because this was God's war. Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh lived in the Hagrites' land until the Assyrians captured them.

²³ Half of the tribe of Manasseh lived in the land from Bashan to Baal Hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. The tribe members were numerous.

²⁴ These were the heads of Manasseh's families: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were soldiers who were famous heads of their families.

²⁵ But Gad, Reuben, and half of the tribe of Manasseh were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors. They chased after the gods of the people of the land as if they were prostitutes. God had destroyed these people as the Israelites arrived.

²⁶ Then the God of Israel led King Pul of Assyria (King Tiglath Pilneser of Assyria) to take Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara,

and the Gozan River. They are still there today.

6¹ Levi's sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

² Kohath's sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

³ Amram's children were Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. Aaron's sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

⁴ Eleazar was the father of Phinehas. Phinehas was the father of Abishua.

⁵ Abishua was the father of Bukki. Bukki was the father of Uzzi.

⁶ Uzzi was the father of Zerariah. Zerariah was the father of Meraioth.

⁷ Meraioth was the father of Amariah. Amariah was the father of Ahitub.

⁸ Ahitub was the father of Zadok. Zadok was the father of Ahimaaz.

⁹ Ahimaaz was the father of Azariah. Azariah was the father of Johanan.

¹⁰ Johanan was the father of Azariah. (He was the one who served as priest in the temple Solomon built in Jerusalem.)

¹¹ Azariah was the father of Amariah. Amariah was the father of Ahitub.

¹² Ahitub was the father of Zadok. Zadok was the father of Shallum.

¹³ Shallum was the father of Hilkiah. Hilkiah was the father of Azariah.

¹⁴ Azariah was the father of Seraiah. Seraiah was the father of Jehozadak.

¹⁵ Jehozadak was taken captive when the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar to take Judah and Jerusalem away into captivity.

¹⁶ Levi's sons were Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.

¹⁷ These are the names of Gershom's sons: Libni and Shimei.

¹⁸ Kohath's sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

¹⁹ Merari's sons were Mahli and Mushi. These are the descendants of Levi's sons. They are grouped by families:

²⁰ Gershom's son was Libni. Libni's son was Jahath. Jahath's son was Zimmah.

²¹ Zimmah's son was Joah. Joah's son was Iddo. Iddo's son was Zerah. Zerah's son was Jeatherai.

²² These were Kohath's descendants: Kohath's son was Amminadab. Amminadab's son was Korah. Korah's son was Assir.

²³ Assir's son was Elkanah. Elkanah's son was Ebiasaph. Ebiasaph's son was Assir.

²⁴ Assir's son was Tahath. Tahath's son was Uriel. Uriel's son was Uziah. Uziah's son was Shaul.

²⁵ Elkanah's sons were Amasai and Ahimoth.

²⁶ Ahimoth's son was Elkanah. Elkanah's son was Zophai. Zophai's son was Nahath.

²⁷ Nahath's son was Eliab. Eliab's son was Jeroham. Jeroham's son was Elkanah.

²⁸ Samuel's sons were Joel, who was his firstborn, and Abijah, who was his second son.

²⁹ These were Merari's descendants: Merari's son was Mahli. Mahli's son was Libni. Libni's son was Shimei. Shimei's son was Uzzah.

³⁰ Uzzah's son was Shimea. Shimea's son was Haggiah. Haggiah's son was Asaiah.

³¹ David put men in charge of the music in the LORD'S temple after the ark was placed there permanently.

³² They served as musicians in the courtyard in front of the tent of meeting until Solomon built the LORD'S temple in

Jerusalem. They performed their duties according to the regulations set down for them.

³³ These are the men who served (their descendants also served): The musician Heman was from Kohath's family line. Heman was the son of Joel, who was the son of Samuel,

³⁴ who was the son of Elkanah, who was the son of Jeroham, who was the son of Eliel, who was the son of Toah,

³⁵ who was the son of Zuph, who was the son of Elkanah, who was the son of Mahath, who was the son of Amasai,

³⁶ who was the son of Elkanah, who was the son of Joel, who was the son of Azariah, who was the son of Zephaniah,

³⁷ who was the son of Tahath, who was the son of Assir, who was the son of Ebiasaph, who was the son of Korah,

³⁸ who was the son of Izhar, who was the son of Kohath, who was the son of Levi, who was the son of Israel.

³⁹ Heman's relative Asaph stood on his right. He was the son of Berechiah, who was the son of Shimea,

⁴⁰ who was the son of Michael, who was the son of Baaseiah, who was the son of Malchiah,

⁴¹ who was the son of Ethni, who was the son of Zerah, who was the son of Adaiah,

⁴² who was the son of Ethan, who was the son of Zimmah, who was the son of Shimei,

⁴³ who was the son of Jahath, who was the son of Gershom, who was the son of Levi.

⁴⁴ On the left was Ethan, one of Heman's relatives descended from Merari. Ethan was the son of Kishi, who

was the son of Abdi, who was the son of Malluch,

⁴⁵ who was the son of Hashabiah, who was the son of Amaziah, who was the son of Hilkiah,

⁴⁶ who was the son of Amzi, who was the son of Bani, who was the son of Shemer,

⁴⁷ who was the son of Mahli, who was the son of Mushi, who was the son of Merari, who was the son of Levi.

⁴⁸ Their relatives, the Levites, were assigned all the other duties in the tent, the house of God.

⁴⁹ Aaron and his descendants offered sacrifices on the altar for burnt offerings and on the altar for incense. They did all the work in the most holy place and removed Israel's sins to make Israel acceptable to God. They did exactly what God's servant Moses had commanded.

⁵⁰ These were Aaron's descendants:
His son was Eleazar. Eleazar's son was
Phinehas. Phinehas' son was Abishua.

⁵¹ Abishua's son was Bukki. Bukki's son
was Uzzi. Uzzi's son was Zerahiah.

⁵² Zerahiah's son was Meraioth.
Meraioth's son was Amariah. Amariah's
son was Ahitub.

⁵³ Ahitub's son was Zadok. Zadok's son
was Ahimaaz.

⁵⁴ These are the places where Levi's
descendants lived, the places where
they settled in the territory chosen for
them when lots were drawn: The first lot
was drawn for the descendants of Aaron
from the family descended from Kohath.

⁵⁵ They were given Hebron in the
territory of Judah as well as the
pastureland around it,

⁵⁶ but the fields belonging to the city
and its villages were given to Caleb, son
of Jephunneh.

⁵⁷ Aaron's descendants were given Hebron as a city of refuge, Libnah with its pastureland, Jattir, Eshtemoa with its pastureland,

⁵⁸ Hilén with its pastureland, Debir with its pastureland,

⁵⁹ Ashan with its pastureland, and Beth Shemesh with its pastureland.

⁶⁰ From the tribe of Benjamin, Aaron's descendants received Geba with its pastureland, Alemeth with its pastureland, and Anathoth with its pastureland. There was a total of 13 cities for their families.

⁶¹ The rest of Kohath's descendants received 10 cities chosen by lot from the families of half of the tribe of Manasseh.

⁶² The families of Gershom's descendants were given 13 cities chosen by lot from the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the part of the tribe of Manasseh that lived in Bashan.

⁶³ The families of Merari's descendants were given 12 cities chosen by lot from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

⁶⁴ So the Israelites gave the Levites the cities with their pasturelands.

⁶⁵ They gave them the cities chosen by lot and mentioned here by name from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

⁶⁶ Some of the families of Kohath's descendants had cities chosen by lot from the tribe of Ephraim.

⁶⁷ They were given these cities of refuge: Shechem with its pastureland in the hills of Ephraim, Gezer with its pastureland,

⁶⁸ Jokmeam with its pastureland, Beth Horon with its pastureland,

⁶⁹ Aijalon with its pastureland, and Gath Rimmon with its pastureland.

⁷⁰ From half of the tribe of Manasseh, they were given Aner with its pastureland

and Bileam with its pastureland for the families of the rest of Kohath's descendants.

⁷¹ Gershom's descendants received Golan in Bashan with its pastureland and Ashtaroth with its pastureland from the families of half of the tribe of Manasseh.

⁷² From the tribe of Issachar, they received Kedesh with its pastureland, Daberath with its pastureland,

⁷³ Ramoth with its pastureland, and Anem with its pastureland.

⁷⁴ From the tribe of Asher, they received Mashal with its pastureland, Abdon with its pastureland,

⁷⁵ Hukok with its pastureland, and Rehob with its pastureland.

⁷⁶ From the tribe of Naphtali, they received Kedesh in Galilee with its pastureland, Hammon with its pastureland, and Kiriathaim with its pastureland.

⁷⁷ The rest of Merari's descendants received Rimmono with its pastureland and Tabor with its pastureland from the tribe of Zebulun.

⁷⁸ From the tribe of Reuben, Merari's descendants received land east of the Jordan River and across from Jericho: Bezer in the wilderness with its pastureland, Jahzah with its pastureland,

⁷⁹ Kedemoth with its pastureland and Mephaath with its pastureland.

⁸⁰ From the tribe of Gad, they received Ramoth in Gilead with its pastureland, Mahanaim with its pastureland,

⁸¹ Heshbon with its pastureland, and Jazer with its pastureland.

7 ¹ Issachar's four sons were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

² Tola's sons were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Shemuel. These men were heads of the families of Tola. They were soldiers grouped according to

their ancestry. In David's day there were 22,600 of them.

³ The five descendants of Uzzi were Izrahiah and Izrahiah's sons Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah. All of them were heads of families.

⁴ They had many wives and children. So in addition to these men grouped according to their ancestry and families, there were 36,000 soldiers.

⁵ Their relatives (that is, all of Issachar's families) were fighting men. A total of 87,000 of them was recorded in the genealogy.

⁶ Benjamin had three sons: Bela, Becher, and Jediael.

⁷ Bela's five sons were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri. They were heads of families and fighting men. In the genealogy 22,034 of them were recorded.

⁸ Becher's sons were Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. These were all of Becher's sons.

⁹ In the genealogy 22,200 of them were recorded according to their ancestry (the heads of their families and fighting men).

¹⁰ Jediael's son was Bilhan. Bilhan's sons were Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar.

¹¹ All of these men were Jediael's descendants. They headed families that produced 17,200 fighting men who could go to war.

¹² The Shuppites and Huppites were Ir's descendants. The Hushites were descendants of someone else.

¹³ Naphtali's sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum. They were Bilhah's grandsons.

¹⁴ Manasseh's sons were Asriel and Machir. Their mother was Manasseh's Aramean concubine. Machir was the first to settle Gilead.

¹⁵ He married a wife from the Huppites and Shuppites. His wife's name was Maacah. The name of his second son was Zelophehad. Zelophehad had only daughters.

¹⁶ Maacah, Machir's wife, had a son, and she named him Peresh. His brother's name was Sheresh, whose sons were Ulam and Rakem.

¹⁷ Ulam's son was Bedan. These were the people of Gilead, descendants of Machir (son of Manasseh).

¹⁸ Bedan's sister Hammolecheth gave birth to Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.

¹⁹ Shemida's sons were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

²⁰ Ephraim's son was Shuthelah. Shuthelah's son was Bered. Bered's son

was Tahath. Tahath's son was Eleadah. Eleadah's son was Tahath.

²¹ Tahath's son was Zabad. Zabad's son was Shuthelah. Ephraim's sons Ezer and Elead were killed by the men of Gath when they came to take their livestock.

²² Their father Ephraim mourned a long time, even though his brothers tried to comfort him.

²³ Then he slept with his wife, and she became pregnant. She gave birth to a son, and Ephraim named him Beriah [Tragedy], because tragedy had come to his home.

²⁴ Beriah's daughter was Sheerah, who built Upper and Lower Beth Horon and Uzen Sheerah.

²⁵ Beriah's son was Rephah. Rephah's son was Resheph. Resheph's son was Telah. Telah's son was Tahan.

²⁶ Tahan's son was Ladan. Ladan's son was Ammihud. Ammihud's son was Elishama.

²⁷ Elishama's son was Nun. Nun's son was Joshua.

²⁸ The land and homes of Ephraim's descendants were in Bethel and its villages, Naaran to the east, Gezer with its villages to the west, Shechem and its villages, and as far as Gaza and its villages.

²⁹ Next to Manasseh were Beth Shean and its villages, Taanach and its villages, Megiddo and its villages, and Dor and its villages. The descendants of Joseph, son of Israel, live in these cities.

³⁰ Asher's sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Their sister was Serah.

³¹ Beriah's sons were Heber and Malchiel, who first settled Birzaith.

³² Heber was the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, and their sister Shua.

³³ Japhlet's sons were Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These were Japhlet's sons.

³⁴ The sons of his brother Shomer were Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram.

³⁵ His brother Helem's sons were Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.

³⁶ Zophah's sons were Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah,

³⁷ Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilsha, Ithran, and Beera.

³⁸ Jether's sons were Jephunneh, Pispa, and Ara.

³⁹ Ulla's sons were Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia.

⁴⁰ All of these men were Asher's descendants—heads of their families, outstanding men, soldiers, and distinguished leaders. Their military roster had 26,000 recorded in it.

8 ¹ Benjamin was the father of Bela (his firstborn), Ashbel (his second son), Aharah (his third son),

² Nohah (his fourth son), and Rapha (his fifth son).

³ Bela's sons were Addar, Gera, Abihud,
⁴ Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah,
⁵ Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram.

⁶ These were Ehud's sons, who were heads of the families living in Geba and who were taken away as captives to Manahath:

⁷ Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera. Gera led the rest of them away as captives. He was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.

⁸ Shaharaim divorced his wives Hushim and Baara. But later in Moab,

⁹ he and his wife Hodesh had the following sons: Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam,

¹⁰ Jeuz, Sachia, and Mirmah. All of Shaharaim's sons became heads of families.

¹¹ He and Hushim were the parents of Abitub and Elpaal.

¹² Elpaal's sons were Eber, Misham, and Shemed (who built Ono, Lod, and Lod's villages).

¹³ Beriah and Shema were the heads of the families who lived in Aijalon. They forced out the people living in Gath.

¹⁴ Their brothers were Shashak and Jeremoth.

¹⁵ Beriah's sons were Zebadiah, Arad, Eder,

¹⁶ Michael, Ishpah, and Joha.

¹⁷ Elpaal's sons were Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber,

¹⁸ Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab.

¹⁹ Shimei's sons were Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi,

²⁰ Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel,

²¹ Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath.

²² Shashak's sons were Ishpan, Eber, Eliel,

²³ Abdon, Zichri, Hanan,

²⁴ Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah,

²⁵ Iphdeiah, and Penuel.

²⁶ Jeroham's sons were Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah,

²⁷ Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri.

²⁸ These were the heads of families listed by their ancestry. They were the heads of families. They lived in Jerusalem.

²⁹ Jeiel, who first settled Gibeon, lived in Gibeon, and his wife's name was Maacah.

³⁰ His firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab,

³¹ Gedor, Ahio, Zecher,

³² and Mikloth, who was the father of Shimeah. They lived next to their relatives in Jerusalem.

³³ Ner was the father of Kish. Kish was the father of Saul. Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal.

³⁴ Jonathan's son was Meribbaal, and Meribbaal was the father of Micah.

³⁵ Micah's sons were Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz.

³⁶ Ahaz was the father of Jehoaddah. Jehoaddah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was the father of Moza.

³⁷ Moza was the father of Binea. Binea's son was Raphah. Raphah's son was Eleasah. Eleasah's son was Azel.

³⁸ Azel had six sons. Their names were Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All of these men were Azel's sons.

³⁹ His brother Eshek's sons were Ulam (the firstborn), Jeush (the second son), and Eliphelet (the third son).

⁴⁰ Ulam's sons were soldiers, skilled archers. They had many sons and grandsons, 150 in all. All of these men were Benjamin's descendants.

9¹ All Israel was recorded in the genealogies in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. The Israelites were taken away to Babylon as captives because they had sinned.

² The first to settle again on their property in their own cities were some Israelites, the priests, the Levites, and the temple servants.

³ Jerusalem was settled by descendants of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh:

⁴ From the descendants of Perez, son of Judah, was Uthai, who was the son of Ammihud, grandson of Omri, and great-grandson of Imri. (Imri's father was Bani.)

⁵ From the descendants of Shilah were Asaiah (the firstborn) and his sons.

⁶ And from the descendants of Zerah were Jeuel and their relatives, 690 in all.

⁷ From the descendants of Benjamin were Sallu (son of Meshullam, grandson of Hodaviah, and great-grandson of Hassenuah),

⁸ Ibneiah (son of Jeroham), Elah (son of Uzzi and grandson of Michri), and Meshullam (son of Shephatiah, grandson of Reuel, and great-grandson of Ibniah),

⁹ and their relatives according to their ancestry. All of these men were heads of their families. A total of 956 of them lived in Jerusalem.

¹⁰ From the priests were Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin,

¹¹ and Azariah. Azariah was the son of Hilkiah, grandson of Meshullam, and great-grandson of Zadok. Zadok's father was Meraioth, the son of Ahitub (the official in charge of God's temple).

¹² Also from the priests were Adaiah (son of Jeroham, grandson of Pashhur, and great-grandson of Malchiah)

and Maasai (son of Adiel, grandson of Jahzerah, and great-grandson of Meshullam, whose father was Meshillemith, son of Immer).

¹³ Their relatives who were heads of their families totaled 1,760 soldiers. They served in God's temple and settled in Jerusalem.

¹⁴ From the Levites descended from Merari were Shemaiah (son of Hasshub, grandson of Azrikam, and great-grandson of Hashabiah),

¹⁵ Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, Mattaniah (son of Mica, grandson of Zichri, and great-grandson of Asaph),

¹⁶ Obadiah (son of Shemaiah, grandson of Galal, and great-grandson of Jeduthun), and Berechiah (son of Asa and grandson of Elkanah, who lived in the villages belonging to the Netophathites).

¹⁷ The gatekeepers were Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their relatives. (Shallum was in charge.)

¹⁸ Formerly, they were stationed at the king's gate on the east side. They were the gatekeepers for the Levite quarters.

¹⁹ Shallum (son of Kore, grandson of Ebiasaph, great-grandson of Korah) and the members of his family (Korah's descendants) were responsible for serving as watchmen at the entrances to the tent, as their ancestors had been in charge of guarding the entrances to the LORD'S camp.

²⁰ (Phinehas, Eleazar's son, had been the official in charge of the gatekeepers, and the LORD was with him.)

²¹ Zechariah, son of Meshelemiah, was the keeper at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

²² The men chosen to be gatekeepers at the entrances totaled 212. Their

genealogies were recorded in their villages. David and the seer Samuel appointed them to these positions because they were trustworthy.

²³ So they and their descendants were assigned to be gatekeepers for the LORD'S house, that is, the tent.

²⁴ The gatekeepers were on the four sides (east, west, north, and south).

²⁵ Their relatives had to come from their villages from time to time. They would come to serve under the gatekeepers' supervision for a period of seven days.

²⁶ The four chief Levite gatekeepers were in charge of the rooms and treasures in God's temple because of their faithfulness.

²⁷ They would spend the night stationed around God's temple because they had to guard it and open it every morning.

²⁸ Some of them were in charge of the utensils for worship. They would count

them when they brought them in and when they took them out.

²⁹ Other descendants of Korah were placed in charge of the utensils, the holy utensils, the flour, wine, olive oil, incense, and spices.

³⁰ Some of the priests' sons prepared the mixture of spices.

³¹ Mattithiah, a Levite, the firstborn son of Shallum, Korah's descendant, was entrusted with preparing the flat bread.

³² Some of their Kohathite relatives were responsible for setting the bread out in rows every day of worship.

³³ These were the musicians who were the heads of the Levite families. They lived in rooms in the temple and were free from other duties because they were on duty day and night.

³⁴ They were the heads of the Levite families according to their ancestry. These head Levites lived in Jerusalem.

³⁵ Jeiel, who first settled Gibeon, lived in Gibeon, and his wife's name was Maacah.

³⁶ His firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab,

³⁷ Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth.

³⁸ Mikloth was the father of Shimeam. They lived next to their relatives in Jerusalem.

³⁹ Ner was the father of Kish. Kish was the father of Saul. Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal.

⁴⁰ Jonathan's son was Meribbaal, and Meribbaal was the father of Micah.

⁴¹ Micah's sons were Pithon, Melech, and Tarea.

⁴² Ahaz was the father of Jarah. Jarah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was the father of Moza.

⁴³ Moza was the father of Binea. Binea's son was Rephaiah. Rephaiah's son was Eleasah. Eleasah's son was Azel.

⁴⁴ Azel had six sons. Their names were Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All of these men were Azel's sons.

10 ¹ When the Philistines fought against Israel, the men of Israel fled from the Philistines and were killed in battle on Mount Gilboa.

² The Philistines caught up to Saul and his sons. They killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

³ The heaviest fighting was against Saul. When the archers got him in their range, he was wounded by them.

⁴ Saul told his armorbearer, "Draw your sword! Stab me, or these godless men will come and make fun of me." But his armorbearer refused because he was

terrified. So Saul took the sword and fell on it.

⁵ When the armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on the sword and died.

⁶ So Saul, his three sons, and his dynasty died together.

⁷ When all the people of Israel in the valley saw that their army had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities. So the Philistines came to live in these cities.

⁸ The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his sons lying on Mount Gilboa.

⁹ They stripped him and took his head and his armor. Then they sent men throughout Philistine territory to tell their idols and the people this good news.

¹⁰ They put his armor in the temple of their gods and fastened his head to the temple of Dagon.

¹¹ When all the people of Jabesh Gilead heard about everything the Philistines had done to Saul,

¹² all the fighting men came and took away the dead bodies of Saul and his sons and brought them to Jabesh. They buried the bones under the oak tree in Jabesh. Then they fasted seven days.

¹³ So Saul died because of his unfaithfulness to the LORD: He did not obey the word of the LORD. He asked a medium to request information from a dead person.

¹⁴ He didn't request information from the LORD. So the LORD killed him and turned the kingship over to David, Jesse's son.

11 ¹ All Israel gathered around David at Hebron. "We are your own flesh and blood," they said.

² "Even in the past when Saul ruled, you were the one who led Israel on its campaigns to war. The LORD your God has said to you, 'You will be shepherd of my people Israel, the leader of my people Israel.'"

³ All the leaders of Israel had come to Hebron. David made an agreement with them at Hebron in front of the LORD. So they anointed David king of Israel, as the LORD had spoken through Samuel.

⁴ David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus). The Jebusites were living in that region.

⁵ They told David, "You will never get in here." But David captured the fortress Zion (that is, the City of David).

⁶ Now, David said, "Whoever is the first to kill a Jebusite will be made a general

and a prince." Zeruah's son Joab was the first to go into Jerusalem, so he became the general.

⁷ David lived in the fortress, so it was called the City of David.

⁸ He built the city of Jerusalem around it, starting from the Millo and making a complete circuit. Joab rebuilt the rest of the city.

⁹ David continued to grow more powerful because the LORD of Armies was with him.

¹⁰ Now, these were the commanders of David's fighting men, who exercised power with him in his kingdom, and with all Israel they made him king according to the LORD'S word to Israel.

¹¹ The first of David's fighting men was Jashobeam, son of Hachmon, the leader of the three. He used his spear to kill 300 men on one occasion.

¹² Next in rank to him was Eleazar, another one of the three fighting men. He was the son of Dodo and grandson of Aho.

¹³ Eleazar was with David at Pas Dammim when the Philistines gathered there for battle. There was a field of ripe barley. When the troops fled from the Philistines,

¹⁴ they stood in the middle of the field and defended it by killing Philistines. So the LORD saved them with an impressive victory.

¹⁵ Once three of the thirty leading men went down to David's rock at the cave of Adullam when the army of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim.

¹⁶ While David was in the fortified camp, Philistine troops were in Bethlehem.

¹⁷ David was thirsty and said, "I wish I could have a drink of water from the cistern at the city gate of Bethlehem."

¹⁸ So the three burst into the Philistine camp and drew water from the cistern. They brought it to David, but he refused to drink it. He poured it out as an offering to the LORD

¹⁹ and said, "It's unthinkable that I would do this, God. Should I drink the blood of these men who risked their lives? They had to risk their lives to get this water." So he refused to drink it. These are the things which the three fighting men did.

²⁰ Joab's brother Abishai was the leader of the thirty. He used his spear to kill 300 men, but he was not one of the three,

²¹ although he was honored more than they were. So he became their captain but didn't become a member of the three.

²² Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, was from Kabzeel and was a brave man who did many things. He killed two distinguished

soldiers from Moab. He also went into a cistern and killed a lion on the day it snowed.

²³ He killed an eight-foot-tall Egyptian. The Egyptian had a spear like a weaver's beam in his hand. But Benaiah went to him with a club, grabbed the spear away from him, and killed him with it.

²⁴ These are the things that Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, did. He was as famous as the three fighting men.

²⁵ He was honored more than the thirty, but he was not a member of the three. David put him in charge of his bodyguards.

²⁶ The distinguished fighting men were Joab's brother Asahel, Elhanan (son of Dodo) from Bethlehem,

²⁷ Shammoth from Harod, Helez the Pelonite,

²⁸ Ira (son of Ikkesh) from Tekoa, Abiezer from Anathoth,

²⁹ Sibbecai (son of Hushai), Ilai
(descendant of Ahohi),

³⁰ Maharai from Netophah, Heled (son
of Baanah) from Netophah,

³¹ Ithai (son of Ribai) from Gibeah in
Benjamin, Benaiah from Pirathon,

³² Hurai from the Gaash ravines, Abiel
from Beth Arabah,

³³ Azmaveth from Bahurim, Eliahba
from Shaalbon,

³⁴ Bene Hashem from Gizon, Jonathan
(son of Shage the Hararite),

³⁵ Ahiam (son of Sachar the Hararite),
Eliphal (son of Ur),

³⁶ Hopher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the
Pelonite,

³⁷ Hezro from Carmel, Naari (son of
Ezbai),

³⁸ Joel (son of Nathan), Mibhar (son of
Hagri),

³⁹ Zelek from Ammon, Naharai from Beroth, armorbearer for Zeruiah's son Joab,

⁴⁰ Ira (descendant of Ithra), Gareb (descendant of Ithra),

⁴¹ Uriah the Hittite, Zabad (son of Ahlai),

⁴² Adina (son of Shiza) from the tribe of Reuben (who was leader of the tribe of Reuben and had his own group of thirty soldiers),

⁴³ Hanan (son of Maacah), and Joshaphat the Mithnite,

⁴⁴ Uzzia from Ashteroth, Shama and Jeiel (sons of Hotham from Aroer),

⁴⁵ Jediael (son of Shimri) and his brother Joha the Tizite,

⁴⁶ Eliel the Mahavite, Jeribai and Joshaviah (sons of Elnaam), Ithmah from Moab,

⁴⁷ Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

12 ¹ These are the men who came to David at Ziklag when he was banished by Saul, son of Kish. They were among the soldiers who went into battle with David.

² They were armed with bows and could sling stones or shoot arrows with either their right or their left hands. They were Saul's relatives, from the tribe of Benjamin.

³ Ahiezer was the leader, then Joash (they were the sons of Shemaah from Gibeah), Azmaveth's sons Jeziel and Pelet, Beracah and Jehu from Anathoth,

⁴ Ishmaiah from Gibeon (one of the thirty fighting men and one of their leaders), Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad from Gederah,

⁵ Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, and Shephatiah from Haruph,

⁶ Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam (Korah's descendants),

⁷ and Joelah and Zebadiah, Jeroham's sons from Gedor.

⁸ Some men left Gad to join David at the fortified camp in the desert. They were warriors, trained soldiers, able to fight with shields and spears. They looked like lions and were as fast as gazelles on the hills.

⁹ Ezer was the first of these soldiers. The second was Obadiah. The third was Eliab.

¹⁰ The fourth was Mishmannah. The fifth was Jeremiah.

¹¹ The sixth was Attai. The seventh was Eliel.

¹² The eighth was Johanan. The ninth was Elzabad.

¹³ The tenth was Jeremiah. The eleventh was Machbannai.

¹⁴ These descendants of Gad were army officers. The least able one was in

command of 100 men, and the best one was in command of 1,000.

¹⁵ In the first month of the year, these men crossed the Jordan River when it was flooding its banks. They chased away all the people in the valleys to the east and west.

¹⁶ Some of the men of Benjamin and Judah came to David at the fortified camp.

¹⁷ David went to meet them. He told them, "If you've come to help me as friends would, then you may join me. But if you've come to betray me to my enemies, even though I haven't committed a crime, may the God of our ancestors see this and judge you."

¹⁸ Then the Spirit gave Amasai, the leader of the thirty, the strength to say, "We are yours, David. We are with you, son of Jesse. Success, success to you! Success to those who help you, because

your God is helping you." So David welcomed them and made them officers over his troops.

¹⁹ Some men from Manasseh had deserted Saul's army to join David when he went with the Philistines to attack Saul. (However, David didn't help the Philistines because their rulers sent him away after considering the matter. They said, "It will cost us our heads when he deserts and joins his master Saul.")

²⁰ When David went to Ziklag, these men from Manasseh deserted to join him: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai. Each one was an officer over 1,000 men in Manasseh.

²¹ They helped David fight raiding parties because they were all warriors, commanders in the army.

²² From day to day, men came to help David until he had an army as large as God's army.

²³ These are the numbers of the men equipped for war. The men joined David at Hebron to turn Saul's kingship over to David, as the LORD had said.

²⁴ From Judah's descendants there were 6,800 men equipped for war. They carried shields and spears.

²⁵ From Simeon's descendants there were 7,100 warriors.

²⁶ From Levi's descendants there were 4,600

²⁷ as well as Jehoiada (leader of Aaron's families). With him there were 3,700 men,

²⁸ and Zadok, a young warrior from whose family came 22 officers.

²⁹ From Benjamin's descendants, Saul's relatives, there were 3,000 men, though

most of them remained loyal to Saul's family.

³⁰ From Ephraim's descendants there were 20,800 warriors who were famous among their families.

³¹ From half of the tribe of Manasseh there were 18,000 who had been designated by name to make David king.

³² From Issachar's descendants there were 200 leaders who understood the times and knew what Israel should do. Their relatives were under their command.

³³ From Zebulun there were 50,000 experienced soldiers. They were equipped for battle with every kind of weapon. Their loyalty was unquestioned.

³⁴ From Naphtali there were 1,000 commanders. With them were 37,000 who fought with shields and spears.

³⁵ From Dan there were 28,600 ready for battle.

³⁶ From Asher there were 40,000 experienced soldiers ready for battle.

³⁷ From the east side of the Jordan River, from Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, there were 120,000 soldiers ready to fight with all kinds of weapons.

³⁸ All of these soldiers, who were prepared for battle, came with a single purpose to Hebron—to make David king of all Israel. The rest of Israel also had agreed to make David king.

³⁹ They ate and drank with David for three days because their relatives in Judah had provided enough for them.

⁴⁰ Also, their neighbors as far as the territories of Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali brought food on donkeys, camels, mules, and oxen. There was plenty of flour, fig cakes, raisins, wine, olive oil, cattle, and sheep, because Israel was celebrating.

13 ¹ David consulted with every officer who commanded a regiment or battalion.

² Then he told the whole assembly of Israel, "If you approve and if the LORD our God has consented, we will send an invitation to the rest of our relatives in every region of Israel and to the priests and Levites in their cities and pasturelands so that they may join us.

³ Then we'll bring back our God's ark, which we ignored while Saul was king."

⁴ The whole assembly agreed to this because the people considered it the right thing to do.

⁵ So David gathered all Israel from the Shihor River near Egypt to the border of Hamath in order to bring God's ark from Kiriath Jearim.

⁶ David and all Israel went to Baalah in Kiriath Jearim, which is in Judah, to bring God's ark to Jerusalem. (The LORD

is enthroned over the angels on the ark where his name is used.)

⁷ David and his men put God's ark on a new cart from Abinadab's home. Uzzah and Ahio guided the cart.

⁸ David and all Israel were celebrating in God's presence with all their might, with songs, with lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets.

⁹ But when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, the oxen stumbled. So Uzzah reached out to grab the ark.

¹⁰ The LORD became angry with Uzzah and killed him for reaching for the ark. He died in God's presence.

¹¹ David was angry because the LORD had struck Uzzah so violently. (That place is still called Perez Uzzah [The Striking of Uzzah] today.)

¹² David was afraid of God that day. "How can I bring God's ark to my city?" he asked.

¹³ So he didn't bring God's ark to his home, the City of David. Instead, he rerouted it to the home of Obed Edom, who was from Gath.

¹⁴ God's ark stayed at the home of Obed Edom with his family for three months, and the LORD blessed Obed Edom's family and everything he owned.

14 ¹ King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedarwood, masons, and carpenters to build a palace for David.

² So David realized that the LORD had established him as king of Israel and that his kingdom was made famous for the sake of Israel, the LORD'S people.

³ David married more wives in Jerusalem and fathered more sons and daughters.

⁴ These are the names of the children who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet,

⁶ Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,

⁷ Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

⁸ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of Israel, all of them came to attack David. But David heard about it and went out to meet them.

⁹ The Philistines had come and raided the valley of Rephaim.

¹⁰ David asked God, "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The LORD answered him, "Attack! I will hand them over to you."

¹¹ So David and his men attacked and defeated the Philistines at Baal Perazim. David said, "Using my power like an overwhelming flood, God has overwhelmed my enemies." That is why they call that place Baal Perazim [The Lord Overwhelms].

¹² The Philistines left their gods there, so David ordered that the gods be burned.

¹³ The Philistines again raided the valley.

¹⁴ Once more David asked God. God answered him, "Don't go after them. Circle around, and come at them in front of the balsam trees.

¹⁵ As you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go out and fight because God has gone ahead of you to defeat the Philistine army."

¹⁶ David did as God ordered him, and his men defeated the Philistine army from Gibeon to Gezer.

¹⁷ David's fame spread through all lands, and the LORD made all the nations fear him.

15 ¹ After David constructed buildings for himself in the City of

David, he prepared a place for God's ark and set up a tent for it.

² Then David insisted that only the Levites carry God's ark because the LORD had chosen them to carry his ark and to serve him forever.

³ David called together all Israel at Jerusalem to bring the LORD'S ark to the place he had prepared for it.

⁴ David also called together Aaron's descendants and the Levites.

⁵ Leading Kohath's descendants was Uriel, who came with 120 of his relatives.

⁶ Leading Merari's descendants was Asaiah, who came with 220 of his relatives.

⁷ Leading Gershom's descendants was Joel, who came with 130 of his relatives.

⁸ Leading Elizaphan's descendants was Shemaiah, who came with 200 of his relatives.

⁹ Leading Hebron's descendants was Eliel, who came with 80 of his relatives.

¹⁰ Leading Uzziel's descendants was Amminadab, who came with 112 of his relatives.

¹¹ David called for the priests Zadok and Abiathar and for the Levites Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab.

¹² He said to them, "You are the heads of the Levite families. You and your relatives must perform the ceremonies to make yourselves holy. Then bring the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place I prepared for it.

¹³ Because you weren't there the first time, the LORD our God struck us. We hadn't dedicated our lives to serving him in the way he designated."

¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites made themselves holy in order to move the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁵ The Levites carried God's ark on their shoulders. They used poles as Moses had commanded according to the LORD'S instructions.

¹⁶ David told the Levite leaders to appoint some of their relatives to serve as musicians. They were expected to play music on harps, lyres, and cymbals to produce joyful music for singing.

¹⁷ So the Levites appointed Heman, son of Joel, and from his relatives they appointed Asaph, Berechiah's son. From their own relatives, Merari's descendants, they appointed Ethan, son of Kushaiah.

¹⁸ In addition, they appointed their relatives from the second division: Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah. Obed Edom and Jeiel were appointed gatekeepers.

¹⁹ The musicians Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were appointed to play bronze cymbals.

²⁰ Zechariah, Jaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah were appointed to play harps according to alamoath.

²¹ Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah were appointed to play lyres and to conduct the sheminith.

²² Chenaniah, a Levite leader, instructed others how to sing prophetic songs because he was skilled at it.

²³ Berechiah and Elkanah were gatekeepers for the ark.

²⁴ The priests Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer blew trumpets in front of God's ark. Obed Edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark.

²⁵ So David, the leaders of Israel, and the army's commanders joyfully went to get the ark of the LORD'S promise from Obed Edom's house.

²⁶ Because God helped the Levites who carried the ark of the LORD'S promise, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams.

²⁷ David was dressed in a fine linen robe, as were all the Levites who carried the ark, the Levites who were singers, and Chenaniah, the leader of the musicians' prophetic songs. David also wore a linen ephod.

²⁸ All Israel brought the ark of the LORD'S promise with shouts of joy and the sounding of rams' horns, trumpets, cymbals, harps, and lyres.

²⁹ When the ark of the LORD'S promise came to the City of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked out of a window and saw

King David dancing and celebrating, so she despised him.

16 ¹ The men carrying the ark set it inside the tent David had put up for it. They presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings in God's presence.

² When David had finished sacrificing burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.

³ He also distributed to every person in Israel—both men and women—a loaf of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake.

⁴ David appointed some Levites to serve in front of the LORD'S ark by offering prayers, thanks, and praise to the LORD God of Israel.

⁵ Asaph was the head; Zechariah was second, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed Edom, and Jeiel with harps and lyres. Asaph played the cymbals.

⁶ The priests Benaiah and Jahaziel played trumpets all the time in front of the ark of God's promise.

⁷ For the first time David entrusted Asaph and his relatives with the task of singing songs of thanks to the LORD:

⁸ "Give thanks to the LORD. Call on his name. Make known among the nations what he has done.

⁹ Sing to him. Make music to praise him. Meditate on all the miracles he has done.

¹⁰ Brag about his holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

¹¹ Search for the LORD and his strength. Always seek his presence.

¹² Remember the miracles he performed, the amazing things he did and the judgments he pronounced,

¹³ you descendants of Israel, his servant, you descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones.

¹⁴ "He is the LORD our God. His judgments are pronounced throughout the earth.

¹⁵ Remember his promise forever, the word that he commanded for a thousand generations,

¹⁶ the promise that he made to Abraham, and his sworn promise to Isaac.

¹⁷ He confirmed it as a law for Jacob, as an everlasting promise to Israel,

¹⁸ by saying, 'I will give you Canaan. It is your share of the inheritance.'

¹⁹ "While they were few in number, a small group of foreigners living in that land,

²⁰ they wandered from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another.

²¹ He didn't permit anyone to oppress them. He warned kings about them:

²² 'Do not touch my anointed ones or harm my prophets.'

²³ "Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Day after day announce that the LORD saves his people.

²⁴ Tell people about his glory. Tell all the nations about his miracles.

²⁵ "The LORD is great! He should be highly praised. He should be feared more than all other gods

²⁶ because all the gods of the nations are idols. The LORD made the heavens.

²⁷ Splendor and majesty are in his presence. Strength and joy are where he is.

²⁸ "Give to the LORD, you families of the nations. Give to the LORD glory and power.

²⁹ Give to the LORD the glory his name deserves. Bring an offering, and come

to him. Worship the LORD in his holy splendor.

³⁰ Tremble in his presence, all the earth! "The earth stands firm; it cannot be moved.

³¹ Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. Say to the nations, 'The LORD rules as king!'

³² Let the sea and everything in it roar like thunder. Let the fields and everything in them rejoice.

³³ Then the trees in the forest will sing with joy in the presence of the LORD when he comes to judge the earth.

³⁴ "Give thanks to the LORD because he is good, because his mercy endures forever.

³⁵ Say, 'Rescue us, O God our Savior. Gather us and save us from the nations so that we may give thanks to your holy name and make your praise our glory.'

³⁶ Thanks be to the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting." Then all the people said amen and praised the LORD.

³⁷ David left Asaph and his relatives to serve continually in front of the ark of the LORD'S promise, as the daily work required.

³⁸ David also left Obed Edom and 68 of his relatives to serve there. Obed Edom (Jeduthun's son) and Hosah were to be gatekeepers.

³⁹ David left Zadok and his priestly relatives to serve in the LORD'S tent at the place of worship in Gibeon.

⁴⁰ They were ordered to sacrifice burnt offerings to the LORD. This happened on the altar of burnt offerings continually, morning and evening, as written in the LORD'S Teachings that he gave Israel.

⁴¹ With Zadok and his relatives were Heman, Jeduthun, and the rest of the

Levites who had been selected, chosen by name, to give thanks to the LORD by singing, "His mercy endures forever."

⁴² Also, Heman and Jeduthun played trumpets, cymbals, and the other musical instruments that accompany sacred songs. Jeduthun's sons were stationed at the gate.

⁴³ Then all the people went home. David went back to bless his family.

17 ¹ When David was living in his house, he said to the prophet Nathan, "I'm living in a house made of cedar, while the ark of the LORD'S promise is inside a tent."

² Nathan told David, "Do everything you have in mind, because God is with you."

³ But that same night God spoke his word to Nathan:

⁴ "Say to David, my servant, 'This is what the LORD says: You must not build this house for me to live in.'

⁵ I haven't lived in a house from the day I brought Israel out of Egypt to this day, but I've gone from tent site to tent site, moving the tent of meeting from one location to another.

⁶ In all the places I've moved with all Israel, did I ever ask any of the judges of Israel whom I ordered to be shepherds of my people why they didn't build me a house of cedar?'

⁷ "Now this is what you will say to my servant David: 'This is what the LORD of Armies says: I took you from the pasture where you followed sheep so that you could be the leader of my people Israel.

⁸ I was with you wherever you went, and I destroyed all your enemies in front of you. I will make your name like the names of the greatest people on earth.

⁹ I will make a place for my people Israel and plant them there. They will live in their own place and not be troubled

anymore. The wicked will no longer frighten them as they used to do

¹⁰ ever since I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. I will crush all your enemies. I even tell you that I, the LORD, will build a house for you.

¹¹ "'When the time comes for you to go and be with your ancestors, I will send one of your descendants. He will be one of your sons. I will establish his kingdom.

¹² He will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever.

¹³ I will be his Father, and he will be my Son. And I will never stop showing him my love as I did to your predecessor.

¹⁴ I will place him in my royal house forever, and his throne will be established forever.'"

¹⁵ Nathan told David all these words and everything he had seen.

¹⁶ Then King David went into the tent and sat in front of the LORD. "Who am

I, LORD God," he asked, "and why is my house so important that you have brought me this far?

¹⁷ And this you consider to be a small act, God. You've spoken about the distant future of my house. LORD God, you've shown me the generation of the great man.

¹⁸ "What more can I do for you in light of the honor you have given to me and since you know me so well!

¹⁹ LORD, you've done this great thing for my sake and your own desire. You made this great thing known to me.

²⁰ "LORD, there is no one like you, and there is no other god except you, as we have heard with our own ears.

²¹ Who is like your people Israel? It is the one nation on earth that God came to free in order to make its people his own, to make your name known, and to do great and wonderful things for them.

You forced the nations and their gods out of the way of your people, whom you freed from Egypt.

²² You made the people of Israel to be your people forever. And you, LORD, became their God.

²³ "Now, LORD, faithfully keep the promise you made to me and my house forever. Do as you promised.

²⁴ Your name will endure and be respected forever when people say, 'The LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, is Israel's God.' And the house of David, your servant, will be established in your presence.

²⁵ You, my God, have revealed especially to me that you will build me a house. That is why I have found the courage to pray to you.

²⁶ "Almighty LORD, you are God. You promised me this good thing.

²⁷ Now, you were pleased to bless my house so that it may continue in your presence forever. Indeed, you, LORD, have blessed it. It will be blessed forever."

18 ¹ After this, David defeated and crushed the Philistines. He took Gath and its surrounding villages from them.

² He also defeated Moab, and the Moabites became David's subjects and paid taxes to him.

³ When David went to establish his control over the territory along the Euphrates River, he defeated King Hadadezer at Hamath.

⁴ David took 1,000 chariots, 7,000 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers from him. David also disabled all but 100 of their horses so that they couldn't pull chariots.

⁵ When the Arameans from Damascus came to help King Hadadezer of Zobah, David killed 22,000 of them.

⁶ David put troops in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became his subjects and paid taxes to him. Everywhere David went, the LORD gave him victories.

⁷ David took the gold shields that Hadadezer's servants carried, and he brought them to Jerusalem.

⁸ David also took a large quantity of bronze from Tibhath and Cun, Hadadezer's cities. (Later Solomon used it to make the pool, pillars, and utensils for the temple.)

⁹ When King Tou of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army of Zobah's King Hadadezer,

¹⁰ he sent his son Hadoram to greet King David and congratulate him for fighting and defeating Hadadezer. (There

had often been war between Hadadezer and Tou.)

¹¹ King David dedicated all the articles of gold, silver, and bronze to the LORD, along with the silver and gold he had taken from other nations—from Edom, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines, and Amalek.

¹² Zeruah's son Abishai killed 18,000 Edomites in the Dead Sea region.

¹³ He put troops in Edom, and all its people became David's subjects. Everywhere David went, the LORD gave him victories.

¹⁴ So David ruled all Israel. He did what was fair and right for all his people.

¹⁵ Zeruah's son Joab was in charge of the army. Ahilud's son Jehoshaphat was the royal historian.

¹⁶ Ahitub's son Zadok and Abiathar's son Abimelech were priests. Shavsha was the royal scribe.

¹⁷ Jehoiada's son Benaiah was commander of the Cherethites and the Pelethites. And David's sons were his main officials.

19 ¹ Later King Nahash of Ammon died, and his son became king in his place.

² David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun because his father Nahash showed me kindness." So David sent messengers to comfort Hanun after his father's death. But when David's servants entered Ammonite territory to comfort Hanun,

³ the Ammonite princes asked Hanun, "Do you think David is honoring your father because he sent men to comfort you? Haven't his servants come to explore, destroy, and spy on the country?"

⁴ So Hanun took David's men, shaved them, cut off their clothes from the waist down, and sent them away.

⁵ After people told David what had happened to the men, he sent someone to meet them because they were deeply humiliated. The king said to them, "Stay in Jericho until your beards have grown back, and then return to Jerusalem."

⁶ The Ammonites realized that they had made themselves offensive to David. So Hanun and the Ammonites sent 75,000 pounds of silver to hire chariots and horses from the Arameans in Upper Mesopotamia, Maacah, and Zobah.

⁷ They hired 32,000 chariots and the king of Maacah with his army. They camped near Medeba. The Ammonites gathered for the battle from their cities.

⁸ After David heard about this, he sent Joab and all the elite troops.

⁹ The Ammonites formed a battle line at the entrance of the city, while the Arameans from Zobah and Rehob and the kings who had come remained by themselves in the open country.

¹⁰ When Joab saw he was under attack in front and behind, he took the select troops of Israel and organized them for combat against the Arameans.

¹¹ He put his brother Abishai in charge of the rest of the troops. They organized for combat against the Ammonites.

¹² Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for my troops, be ready to help me. And if the Ammonites are too strong for your troops, I'll help you.

¹³ Be strong! Let's prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God, and the LORD will do what he considers right."

¹⁴ Then Joab and his troops advanced to fight the Arameans, and the Arameans fled.

¹⁵ When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, they, too, fled from Joab's brother Abishai and went into the city. So Joab returned to Jerusalem.

¹⁶ Realizing that Israel had defeated them, the kings sent messengers to get other Arameans from beyond the Euphrates River. Shophach, the commander of Hadadezer's army, led them.

¹⁷ When David was told about this, he assembled Israel's army, crossed the Jordan, and confronted them. David formed a battle line against the Arameans, and they fought him.

¹⁸ The Arameans fled from Israel, and David killed 7,000 chariot drivers and 40,000 foot soldiers. David also killed Shophach.

¹⁹ When all the kings who were subject to Hadadezer saw that Israel had defeated them, they made peace with David and became his subjects. And the Arameans were no longer willing to help the Ammonites.

20 ¹ In the spring, the time when kings go out to battle, Joab led the army to war. They destroyed the Ammonites and came to Rabbah to attack it, while David stayed in Jerusalem. Joab defeated Rabbah and tore it down.

² He took the gold crown from the head of Rabbah's king and put it on David's head. (The crown was found to weigh 75 pounds, and in it was a precious stone.) David also took a lot of goods from the city.

³ He brought out the troops who were there and put them to work with saws, hoes, and axes. He did the same to all

the Ammonite cities. Then David and all the troops returned to Jerusalem.

⁴ After this, war broke out with the Philistines at Gezer. Then Sibbecai from Hushah killed Sippai, a descendant of Haraphah, and the Philistines were defeated.

⁵ When more fighting broke out with the Philistines, Elhanan, son of Jair, killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath from Gath. (The shaft of Lahmi's spear was like a beam used by weavers.)

⁶ In another battle at Gath, there was a tall man who had 24 fingers and toes: six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He also was a descendant of Haraphah.

⁷ When he challenged Israel, Jonathan, son of David's brother Shimea, killed him.

⁸ These men were the descendants of Haraphah from Gath, and David and his men killed them.

21 ¹ Satan attempted to attack Israel by provoking David to count the Israelites.

² David said to Joab and the leaders of the people, "Go, count Israel from Beersheba to Dan. Bring me the results so that I may know how many people there are."

³ Joab responded, "May the LORD multiply his people a hundred times over. But, Your Majesty, aren't they all your servants? Why are you trying to do this? Why do you wish to make Israel guilty of this sin?"

⁴ However, the king overruled Joab. So Joab left, went throughout Israel, and returned to Jerusalem.

⁵ Joab reported the census figures to David: In Israel there were 1,100,000

men who could serve in the army, and in Judah there were 470,000 who could serve in the army.

⁶ Joab didn't include Levi and Benjamin in the number because he was disgusted with the king's order.

⁷ God considered the census to be sinful, so he struck Israel with a plague.

⁸ David said to God, "I have committed a terrible sin by doing this thing. Forgive me because I have acted very foolishly."

⁹ The LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer.

¹⁰ "Go and tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I'm offering you three choices. Choose the one you want me to do to you.'"

¹¹ When Gad came to David, he said, "This is what the LORD says: 'Take your pick:

¹² either three years of famine, or three months during which your enemies will chase you away when their swords catch

up to you, or three days of the LORD'S sword—a plague in the land with the Messenger of the LORD destroying the whole country of Israel.' Decide what answer I should give the one who sent me."

¹³ "I'm in a desperate situation," David told Gad. "Please let me fall into the LORD'S hands because he is extremely merciful. But don't let me fall into human hands."

¹⁴ So the LORD sent a plague on Israel, and 70,000 Israelites died.

¹⁵ God also sent a Messenger to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was destroying it, the LORD reconsidered and changed his mind about the disaster. "Enough!" he said to the destroying Messenger. "Put down your weapon." The Messenger of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

¹⁶ When David looked up, he saw the Messenger of the LORD standing between heaven and earth. The Messenger had a sword in his hand and stretched it over Jerusalem. David and the leaders were dressed in sackcloth. They bowed down with their faces touching the ground.

¹⁷ David said to God, "I'm the one who ordered the people to be counted. I am the one who sinned and did wrong. What have these sheep done? LORD my God, let your punishment be against me and my father's family, but don't punish your people with a plague."

¹⁸ The LORD'S Messenger told Gad to tell David to go and set up an altar for the LORD at Ornan the Jebusite's threshing floor.

¹⁹ David went as Gad had told him in the LORD'S name.

²⁰ Now, Ornan had turned around and seen the Messenger. Ornan's four sons who were with him hid, but Ornan kept on threshing the wheat.

²¹ When David arrived, Ornan looked up and saw him. So he left the threshing floor and bowed down with his face touching the ground in front of David.

²² David said to Ornan, "Let me have the land this threshing floor is on. I'll build an altar for the LORD on it. Sell it to me for the full price. Then the plague on the people will stop."

²³ Ornan said to David, "Take it, Your Majesty, and do whatever you think is right. I'll give you oxen for the burnt offering, threshers for firewood, and wheat for the grain offering. I'll give you everything."

²⁴ "No," King David told Ornan, "I insist on buying it for the full price. I won't

take what is yours for the LORD and offer burnt sacrifices that cost me nothing."

²⁵ So David gave Ornan 15 pounds of gold for that place.

²⁶ David built an altar for the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him by sending fire from heaven on the altar for burnt offerings.

²⁷ So the LORD spoke to the Messenger, and he put his sword back in its scabbard.

²⁸ At that time, when David saw the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he offered sacrifices there.

²⁹ The LORD'S tent that Moses made in the desert and the altar for burnt offerings were at the worship site at Gibeon.

³⁰ However, David couldn't go there to consult God because he was frightened by the sword of the LORD'S Messenger.

22 ¹ Then David said, "This is where the LORD God's temple will be. Israel's altar for burnt offerings will also be here."

² David ordered the foreigners living in Israel to gather. He appointed some of them to cut stones to build God's temple.

³ David prepared a large quantity of iron for nails and fittings on the doors of the gates. He also prepared so much bronze that it couldn't be weighed.

⁴ The men of Sidon and Tyre brought David so many cedar logs that the logs couldn't be counted.

⁵ David thought, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the temple that will be built for the LORD must be magnificent, large, famous,

praised, and honored in all other countries. I'll prepare the building materials for him." So David prepared many materials for Solomon before he died.

⁶ He summoned his son Solomon and commanded him to build a temple for the LORD God of Israel.

⁷ David told his son Solomon, "I had my heart set on building a temple for the name of the LORD, my God.

⁸ But the LORD spoke his word to me by saying, 'You have caused a lot of bloodshed and fought in a lot of wars. You must not build a temple for my name because you have caused so much bloodshed in my presence.

⁹ You will have a son who will be a peaceful man. I will give him peace from all the enemies around him. His name will be Solomon [Peace], and in his time I will give Israel peace and quiet.

¹⁰ He will build a temple for my name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. I will establish the throne of his kingdom permanently over Israel.'"

¹¹ David continued, "Now, son, the LORD will be with you. You will be successful, and you will build the temple of the LORD your God as he predicted you would.

¹² The LORD will give you insight and understanding as he commands you to take charge of Israel and to follow the Teachings of the LORD your God.

¹³ Then you will succeed if you will carefully obey the laws and decrees the LORD commanded Moses to give to Israel. Be strong and courageous. Don't be afraid or terrified.

¹⁴ "Despite my troubles I've made preparations for the LORD'S temple. There are 7,500,000 pounds of gold, 75,000,000 pounds of silver, and so

much bronze and iron that it can't be weighed. I've also prepared wood and stones, and you may add to them.

¹⁵ You have many kinds of workers: stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and men skilled in every kind of work.

¹⁶ The gold, silver, bronze, and iron are more than can be counted. So get to work! May the LORD be with you."

¹⁷ David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon.

¹⁸ David said, "Isn't the LORD your God with you? Hasn't he given you peace with all your neighbors? He put the people who live in this country under my power, and the country has been conquered by the LORD and his people.

¹⁹ So dedicate your hearts and lives to serving the LORD your God. Start building the holy place of the LORD God so that you can bring the ark of the LORD'S promise and God's holy utensils

into the temple that will be built for the LORD'S name."

23 ¹ When David had grown old and had lived out his years, he made his son Solomon king of Israel.

² He gathered all the officials of Israel and the priests and Levites.

³ Every male Levite who was at least 30 years old was counted. There were 38,000.

⁴ Of these, 24,000 were appointed to supervise the work on the LORD'S temple, 6,000 were appointed to be officers and judges,

⁵ 4,000 were appointed to be gatekeepers, and 4,000 were appointed to praise the LORD with the instruments David had made for praising God.

⁶ David organized the Levites into divisions based on which of Levi's sons (Gershon, Kohath, or Merari) they were descended from.

⁷ Ladan and Shimei were Gershon's descendants.

⁸ Ladan had three sons: Jehiel was the first, then Zetham, and Joel.

⁹ Shimei had three sons: Shelomith, Haziël, and Haran. They were the heads of Ladan's families.

¹⁰ Shimei's sons were Jahath, Zina, Jeush, and Beriah. They were Shimei's four sons.

¹¹ Jahath was the first, and Ziza was the second. Jeush and Beriah didn't have many sons, so they were given an assignment as one family.

¹² Kohath had four sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

¹³ Amram's sons were Aaron and Moses. Aaron and his sons were forever designated to dedicate the most holy things to God, to offer sacrifices to the LORD, to serve him, and always give the blessing in his name.

¹⁴ The sons of Moses, the man of God, were counted with the tribe of Levi.

¹⁵ Moses' sons were Gershom and Eliezer.

¹⁶ Gershom's only son was Shebuel.

¹⁷ Eliezer's only son was Rehabiah. Eliezer had no other sons, but Rehabiah had many sons.

¹⁸ Izhar's only son was Shelomith.

¹⁹ Hebron's first son was Jeriah; his second was Amariah; his third was Jahaziel; his fourth was Jekameam.

²⁰ Uzziel's first son was Micah; his second was Isshiah.

²¹ Merari's sons were Mahli and Mushi. Mahli's sons were Eleazar and Kish.

²² Eleazar died without having any sons. He only had daughters. Their cousins, the sons of Kish, married them.

²³ Mushi had three sons: Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth.

²⁴ These were Levi's descendants, who were grouped according to their families. The heads of their families were registered by name as they were counted. Everyone who served in the LORD'S temple was at least 20 years old.

²⁵ David had said, "The LORD God of Israel has given his people rest. He will now live in Jerusalem forever.

²⁶ The Levites will no longer have to carry the tent and all the utensils used in worship."

²⁷ David's last instructions were to count the Levites who were at least 20 years old.

²⁸ They were appointed to stand beside Aaron's descendants to serve in the LORD'S temple. They were appointed to be in charge of the courtyards and the temple rooms, to ensure that all the holy things were clean, and to serve in God's temple.

²⁹ They were also responsible for the rows of bread, the flour for the grain offerings, the unleavened bread wafers, and the bread made in frying pans. In addition, they were responsible for mixing the ingredients and keeping track of all weights and measures.

³⁰ They were appointed to stand to give thanks and praise to the LORD every morning. They were appointed to do the same thing in the evening.

³¹ They were appointed to stand in front of the LORD in the required numbers whenever burnt offerings were made—on weekly worship days, at New Moon Festivals, and on appointed annual festivals.

³² They were appointed to follow the regulations for the tent of meeting and the holy place and to help their relatives, Aaron's descendants, as they served in the LORD'S temple.

24 ¹The divisions of Aaron's descendants were as follows: Aaron's sons were Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

² Nadab and Abihu died before their father died, and neither had any children. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests.

³ David, Eleazar's descendant Zadok, and Ithamar's descendant Ahimelech divided Aaron's descendants into groups for service.

⁴ Since Eleazar's descendants had more men who were family heads than Ithamar's descendants, they were divided so that Eleazar's descendants had 16 family leaders and Ithamar's descendants had 8 family leaders.

⁵ Both groups were divided impartially by drawing lots so that there were officers for the holy place and officers for

God among both Eleazar's and Ithamar's descendants.

⁶ The scribe Shemaiah was a son of Nethanel and a descendant of Levi. Shemaiah recorded their names in the presence of the king, the princes, the priest Zadok, Ahimelech (son of Abiathar), and the family leaders of the priests and Levites. One family was chosen for Eleazar, another for Ithamar.

⁷ The first lot drawn was for Jehoiarib, the second for Jedaiah,

⁸ the third for Harim, the fourth for Seorim,

⁹ the fifth for Malchiah, the sixth for Mijamin,

¹⁰ the seventh for Hakkoz, the eighth for Abijah,

¹¹ the ninth for Jeshua, the tenth for Shecaniah,

¹² the eleventh for Eliashib, the twelfth for Jakim,

¹³ the thirteenth for Huppah, the fourteenth for Jeshebeab,

¹⁴ the fifteenth for Bilgah, the sixteenth for Immer,

¹⁵ the seventeenth for Hezir, the eighteenth for Happizzez,

¹⁶ the nineteenth for Pethahiah, the twentieth for Jehezkel,

¹⁷ the twenty-first for Jachin, the twenty-second for Gamul,

¹⁸ the twenty-third for Delaiah, the twenty-fourth for Maaziah.

¹⁹ These were their priestly groups when they went to serve at the LORD'S temple. Their ancestor Aaron made these rules for them, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

²⁰ The following men were leaders for Levi's descendants from Kohath: Jehdeiah (for Amram's descendants through Shubael),

²¹ Isshiah (for Amram's descendants through Rehabiah),

²² Jahath (for Izhar's descendants through Shelomoth),

²³ Jeriah (for Hebron's descendants), Amariah (the second of Hebron's descendants), Jahaziel (the third of Hebron's descendants), Jekameam (the fourth of Hebron's descendants),

²⁴ Shamir (for Uzziel's descendants through Micah),

²⁵ and Zechariah (for Uzziel's descendants through Micah's brother Isshiah).

²⁶ The following men were leaders from Levi's descendants from Merari: Mahli, Mushi, and Merari's son Jaaziah,

²⁷ Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri (for Merari's descendants through his son Jaaziah),

²⁸ Eleazar (who had no sons, for Mahli's descendants),

²⁹ Jerahmeel (for Mahli's descendants through Kish),

³⁰ Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth (for Mushi's descendants). These were Levi's descendants according to their families.

³¹ They drew lots as their relatives, Aaron's descendants, had done. They drew them in front of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the leaders of the families of the priests and Levites. The families of the oldest brother were treated the same way as those of the youngest.

25 ¹ David and the army commanders appointed the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun to serve as prophets with lyres, harps, and cymbals. This is the list of the men who performed this service:

² From the sons of Asaph were Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah. (They

were directed by Asaph, who served as a prophet under the king's direction.)

³ From the sons of Jeduthun were Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, Mattithiah. (The six brothers were directed by their father, the prophet Jeduthun. They thanked and praised the LORD as they played lyres.)

⁴ From the sons of Heman were Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth.

⁵ (All of them were the sons of the king's seer Heman. They were given to him to make him prominent, as God had promised. So God gave Heman 14 sons and 3 daughters.)

⁶ All these Levites sang at the LORD'S temple under the direction of their fathers Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. They played cymbals, lyres, and harps

for worship in God's temple under the direction of the king.

⁷ They, along with their relatives, were trained, skilled musicians for the LORD. There were 288 of them.

⁸ They drew lots for their assignment of duties, the youngest as well as the oldest, the skilled musicians along with the students.

⁹ The first lot drawn chose Joseph, the son of Asaph. The second chose Gedaliah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹⁰ The third chose Zaccur, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹¹ The fourth chose Izri, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹² The fifth chose Nethaniah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹³ The sixth chose Bukkiah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹⁴ The seventh chose Jesarelah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹⁵ The eighth chose Jeshaiiah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹⁶ The ninth chose Mattaniah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹⁷ The tenth chose Shimei, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹⁸ The eleventh chose Azarel, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

¹⁹ The twelfth chose Hashabiah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²⁰ The thirteenth chose Shubael, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²¹ The fourteenth chose Mattithiah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²² The fifteenth chose Jeremoth, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²³ The sixteenth chose Hananiah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²⁴ The seventeenth chose Joshbekashah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²⁵ The eighteenth chose Hanani, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²⁶ The nineteenth chose Mallothi, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²⁷ The twentieth chose Eliathah, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²⁸ The twenty-first chose Hothir, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

²⁹ The twenty-second chose Giddalti, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

³⁰ The twenty-third chose Mahazioth, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

³¹ The twenty-fourth chose Romamti Ezer, his sons, and his relatives—12 men.

26 ¹ The following were the divisions of the gatekeepers: For Korah's descendants there was Meshelemiah, the son of Kore, from the descendants of Asaph.

² Meshelemiah's sons were Zechariah (the firstborn), Jediel (the second), Zebadiah (the third), Jathniel (the fourth),

³ Elam (the fifth), Jehohanan (the sixth), and Eliehoenai (the seventh).

⁴ Also for Korah's descendants there were Obed Edom's sons Shemaiah (the firstborn), Jehozabad (the second), Joah (the third), Sachar (the fourth), Nethanel (the fifth),

⁵ Ammiel (the sixth), Issachar (the seventh), and Peullethai (the eighth). God had blessed Obed Edom.

⁶ His son Shemaiah had sons who ruled their families because they were soldiers.

⁷ Shemaiah's sons were Othni, and Othni's skilled brothers Rephael, Obed, Elzabad, as well as Elihu and Semachiah.

⁸ All of these people were Obed Edom's descendants. They, their sons, and their

relatives were skilled and had the ability to perform the service. Obed Edom's family included 62 men.

⁹ Meshelemiah's sons and relatives were 18 skilled men.

¹⁰ From the descendants of Merari there were Hosah's sons. Shimri was the head, although he was not the firstborn. His father appointed him head.

¹¹ Hosah's other sons were Hilkiah (the second), Tebaliah (the third), and Zechariah (the fourth). There were 13 sons and relatives of Hosah.

¹² These divisions of gatekeepers through their head men were assigned duties with their relatives to serve in the LORD'S temple.

¹³ They drew lots by families, youngest and oldest alike, for every gate.

¹⁴ Shelemiah was chosen for the east side. His son Zechariah, a counselor who

displayed insight, was chosen for the north side.

¹⁵ Obed Edom was chosen for the south side, and his sons were chosen for the storerooms.

¹⁶ Shuppim and Hosah were chosen for the west side with Shallecheth Gate at the gateway that goes to the palace. One squad of guards served its watch after another.

¹⁷ On the east side there were six Levites. On the north there were four every day. On the south there were four every day. At the storerooms there were four, two at each entrance.

¹⁸ At the courtyard on the west there were four Levites at the gateway to the palace and two at the courtyard itself.

¹⁹ These were the divisions of the gatekeepers among Korah's and Merari's descendants.

²⁰ Ahijah, a Levite, was in charge of the treasuries in God's temple and the treasuries of the gifts dedicated to God.

²¹ There were also the descendants of Ladan, who was descended from Gershon. Those who served for Ladan, the descendant of Gershon, were the heads of Ladan's families: Jehiel

²² and Jehiel's sons Zetham and Joel. They were in charge of the treasuries in the LORD'S temple.

²³ For the descendants of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel,

²⁴ there was Shebuel, a descendant of Moses' son Gershom. He was the highest-ranking official in charge of the treasuries.

²⁵ From his relatives on Eliezer's side of the family was Shelomith. (Eliezer's son was Rehabiah; his grandson was Jeshaiiah; his great-grandson was Joram.)

Joram's son was Zichri; his grandson was Shelomith.)

²⁶ He and his relatives were in charge of all the treasuries of the gifts dedicated to God that King David, the heads of families, the commanders of regiments and battalions, and the commanders of the army had donated.

²⁷ (They had donated some of the loot taken in battle to support the LORD'S temple.)

²⁸ Everything that Samuel the seer, Saul (son of Kish), Abner (son of Ner), and Joab (son of Zeruiah) had donated—everything that had been donated—was under the supervision of Shelomith and his relatives.

²⁹ From Izhar's descendants Chenaniah and his sons were assigned duties. They served as officials and judges outside the temple in Israel.

³⁰ From Hebron's descendants Hashabiah and his 1,700 skilled, male relatives were appointed to serve Israel west of the Jordan River. They did everything the LORD wanted them to do, and they served the king.

³¹ Jeriah was the head of Hebron's descendants. In the fortieth year of David's reign, the ancestry of Hebron's descendants was researched family by family. Warriors from these families were found at Jazer in Gilead.

³² Jeriah's relatives were 2,700 skilled men, who were heads of families. King David appointed them to be overseers in every matter involving God or the king for the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

27 ¹ This is a list of Israelite family heads, regiment and battalion commanders, and officers who were serving the king in all the army's units.

Throughout each year they came for a month at a time and then left. Each unit consisted of 24,000 men.

² Jashobeam, son of Zabdiel, was in charge of the first unit, the one during the first month. In his unit there were 24,000.

³ He was a descendant of Perez, and he was head of all of the army's officers for the first month.

⁴ Dodai, Ahoh's descendant, was in charge of the unit during the second month. It was his unit. (Mikloth was one of its leaders.) In Dodai's unit there were 24,000.

⁵ The third commander of the army during the third month was Benaiah, son of the priest Jehoiada. He was the head, and in his unit there were 24,000.

⁶ This Benaiah was one of the thirty fighting men and commander of the

thirty as well as his own unit. His son was Ammizabad.

⁷ Asahel, Joab's brother, was in charge of the fourth unit during the fourth month, and after him was his son Zebadiah. In his unit there were 24,000.

⁸ Shamhuth, Izrah's descendant, was commander of the fifth unit during the fifth month. In his unit there were 24,000.

⁹ Ira, the son of Ikkesh from Tekoa, was in charge of the sixth unit during the sixth month. In his unit there were 24,000.

¹⁰ Helez, a Pelonite from the descendants of Ephraim, was in charge of the seventh unit during the seventh month. In his unit there were 24,000.

¹¹ Sibbecai, a descendant of Zerah from Hushah, was in charge of the eighth unit during the eighth month. In his unit there were 24,000.

¹² Abiezer, a member of the tribe of Benjamin from Anathoth, was in charge of the ninth unit during the ninth month. In his unit there were 24,000.

¹³ Mahrai, a descendant of Zerah from Netophah, was in charge of the tenth unit during the tenth month. In his unit there were 24,000.

¹⁴ Benaiah, a member of the tribe of Ephraim from Pirathon, was in charge of the eleventh unit during the eleventh month. In his unit there were 24,000.

¹⁵ During the twelfth month, the twelfth unit was commanded by Heldai from Netophah. He was Othniel's descendant. In his unit there were 24,000.

¹⁶ The following officers were in charge of the tribes of Israel: for the tribe of Reuben— Eliezer, son of Zichri for the tribe of Simeon— Shephatiah, son of Maacah

¹⁷ for the tribe of Levi— Hashabiah, son of Kemuel for the family of Aaron— Zadok

¹⁸ for the tribe of Judah— Elihu, one of David's brothers for the tribe of Issachar— Omri, son of Michael

¹⁹ for the tribe of Zebulun— Ishmaiah, son of Obadiah for the tribe of Naphtali— Jerimoth, son of Azriel

²⁰ for the tribe of Ephraim— Hoshea, son of Azaziah for half of the tribe of Manasseh— Joel, son of Pedaiah

²¹ for the half of Manasseh in Gilead— Iddo, son of Zechariah for the tribe of Benjamin— Jaasiel, son of Abner

²² for the tribe of Dan— Azarel, son of Jeroham These were the commanders of Israel's tribes.

²³ David didn't count those under 20 years old, because the LORD had promised that the people of Israel would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

²⁴ Joab, son of Zeruiah, started to count them but didn't finish. God was angry with Israel because of this, and the report from it was never included in the official records of King David.

²⁵ These were all the commanders in charge of King David's property: for the royal treasuries—Azmaveth, son of Adiel for the goods in the fields, cities, villages, and watchtowers—Jonathan, son of Uzziah

²⁶ for the farm workers in the fields—Ezri, son of Chelub

²⁷ for the vineyards— Shimei from Ramah for storing wine that came from the vineyards— Zabdi from Shepham

²⁸ for the olive and fig trees in the foothills— Baal Hanan from Gedor for storing olive oil— Joash

²⁹ for the herds grazing in Sharon— Shitrai from Sharon for the herds in the valleys— Shaphat, son of Adlai

³⁰ for the camels— Obil, a descendant of Ishmael for the donkeys— Jehdeiah from Meronoth

³¹ for the flocks— Jaziz from Hagar

³² David's uncle Jonathan, an educated man who possessed insight, was David's adviser. Jonathan and Jehiel, son of Hachmoni, were in charge of the king's sons.

³³ Ahithophel was the king's adviser. Hushai, a descendant of Archi, was the king's friend.

³⁴ Jehoiada (son of Benaiah) and Abiathar succeeded Ahithophel. Joab was the commander of the royal army.

28 ¹ David held a meeting in Jerusalem for all the leaders of Israel—the leaders of the tribes, the leaders of the army units that served the king, the commanders of regiments and battalions, the officials in charge of all the property and livestock belonging to

the king and his sons, the palace officials, the soldiers, and the fighting men.

² David stood in front of them and said, "Listen to me, my relatives and subjects. I had my heart set on building the temple where the ark of the LORD'S promise could be placed. This temple would be a stool for our God's feet, and I have made preparations to build it.

³ But God told me, 'You must not build the temple for my name. You have fought wars and caused bloodshed.'

⁴ Yet, from my entire family the LORD God of Israel chose me to be king of Israel permanently. He had chosen the tribe of Judah to lead Israel. From the families of Judah he chose my father's family. From among my father's sons he was pleased to make me king of all Israel.

⁵ And of all my sons (the LORD has given me many sons) he chose my son

Solomon to sit on the throne of the LORD'S kingdom to rule Israel.

⁶ "He told me, 'Your son Solomon will build my temple and my courtyards because I have chosen him to be my son. I will be his father.

⁷ I will establish his kingdom forever if he will remain determined to obey my commands and laws, as he is doing today.'

⁸ Now, leaders, I order you in the sight of Israel (the LORD'S congregation) and as our God listens to dedicate your lives to doing everything the LORD your God has commanded. Then you will be able to possess this good land and leave it as an inheritance to your descendants.

⁹ "And you, my son Solomon, learn to know your father's God. Serve the LORD wholeheartedly and willingly because he searches every heart and understands every thought we have. If you dedicate

your life to serving him, he will accept you. But if you abandon him, he will reject you from then on.

¹⁰ So be careful, because the LORD has chosen you to build the temple as his holy place. Be strong, and do it."

¹¹ Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the entrance hall and the temple, its storerooms, upper rooms, inner rooms, and the room for the throne of mercy.

¹² He gave him plans for the courtyards of the LORD'S temple and for all the rooms around it. (These rooms served as treasuries for God's temple and the gifts dedicated to God.)

¹³ He determined the divisions of priests and Levites. He planned all the work done for worship in the LORD'S temple. He designed all the utensils for worship in the LORD'S temple.

¹⁴ David specified the weight of gold to be used for each of the utensils for worship,

¹⁵ the weight of the gold lamp stands and their gold lamps (that is, the weight of gold for each lamp stand and its lamps), the weight of silver for each silver lamp stand and its lamps (according to the use of each lamp stand for worship),

¹⁶ the weight of gold for each table with the rows of bread, and the silver for the silver tables,

¹⁷ the pure gold for the forks, bowls, and pitchers, the weight of each gold bowl, the weight of each silver bowl,

¹⁸ and the refined gold for the altar of incense. He also gave Solomon the plans for the chariot, that is, the gold angels with their wings spread to cover the ark of the LORD'S promise.

¹⁹ David said, "All this was written for me by the LORD'S hand. He made all the details of the plan clear to me."

²⁰ David also told his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or terrified. The LORD God, my God, will be with you. He will not abandon you before all the work on the LORD'S temple is finished.

²¹ Here are also the divisions of the priests and Levites for every type of worship in God's temple. You have with you every skilled worker to do all the work. In addition, all the leaders and people are at your command."

29¹ Then King David said to the whole assembly, "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. Yet, the work is important because this palace is not for a person but for the LORD God.

² With all my might I gathered the materials for the temple of my God: gold for gold objects, silver for silver objects, bronze for bronze objects, iron for iron objects, wood for wooden objects, onyx stones and settings, black stones, stones of different colors, gems, and marble.

³ Moreover, I delight in the temple of my God. I have a personal treasury of gold and silver that I'm giving to my God's temple in addition to everything else I gathered for the holy temple.

⁴ There are 225,000 pounds of gold from Ophir and 525,000 pounds of refined silver. They are to be used to cover the walls of the buildings,

⁵ to make gold objects, silver objects, and everything else the craftsmen will make. Who else is willing to make an offering and dedicate himself to the LORD today?"

⁶ Then the leaders of the families, the leaders of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of regiments and battalions, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave generously.

⁷ They gave 375,186 pounds of gold, 750,000 pounds of silver, 135,000 pounds of bronze, and 7,500,000 pounds of iron for the work on God's temple.

⁸ Whoever happened to have precious stones gave them to Jehiel, Gershon's descendant, for the treasury of the LORD'S temple.

⁹ The people were overjoyed that the leaders gave so generously and wholeheartedly to the LORD. King David was also overjoyed, and

¹⁰ he praised the LORD while the whole assembly watched. David said, "May you be praised, LORD God of Israel, our father forever and ever.

¹¹ Greatness, power, splendor, glory, and majesty are yours, LORD, because everything in heaven and on earth is yours. The kingdom is yours, LORD, and you are honored as head of all things.

¹² Riches and honor are in front of you. You rule everything. You hold power and strength in your hands, and you can make anyone great and strong.

¹³ "Our God, we thank you and praise your wonderful name.

¹⁴ But who am I and who are my people that you enable us to give so generously? Everything comes from you. We give you only what has come from your hands.

¹⁵ To you we are all like our ancestors—foreigners without permanent homes. Our days are as fleeting as shadows on the ground. There's no hope for them.

¹⁶ "LORD, our God, all this wealth that we gathered to build a temple for your holy name is from you. All of it is yours.

¹⁷ I know, my God, that you examine hearts and delight in honesty. With an honest heart I have willingly offered all these things. I've been overjoyed to see your people here offering so willingly to you.

¹⁸ LORD God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, always watch over your people's deepest thoughts. Keep their hearts directed toward you.

¹⁹ Make my son Solomon completely committed to you so that he will obey your commands, requests, and laws and do everything to build the palace I have planned."

²⁰ Then David said to the whole assembly, "Praise the LORD your God!" So the whole assembly praised the LORD God of their ancestors and knelt in front of the LORD and the king.

²¹ The next day they sacrificed to the LORD. They sacrificed burnt offerings

to the LORD: 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams, 1,000 lambs, wine offerings, and many sacrifices for all Israel.

²² That day they ate and drank as they joyfully celebrated in front of the LORD. For the second time they made David's son Solomon king. On the LORD'S behalf they anointed Solomon to be leader and Zadok to be the priest.

²³ Then Solomon sat on the LORD'S throne as king in place of his father David. Solomon was successful and all Israel obeyed him.

²⁴ All the leaders and soldiers and all of King David's sons pledged their loyalty to King Solomon.

²⁵ The LORD made Solomon extremely powerful, as all Israel could see. The people of Israel gave him royal honor like no king of Israel before him ever had.

²⁶ David, son of Jesse, had ruled all Israel.

²⁷ He ruled as king of Israel for 40 years. He ruled for 7 years in Hebron and for 33 in Jerusalem.

²⁸ He died at a very old age. His long life was full of wealth and honor. Then his son Solomon succeeded him as king.

²⁹ Everything about King David from first to last is written in the records of the seer Samuel, the prophet Nathan, and the seer Gad.

³⁰ It includes everything about his reign, his power, and the things that happened to him, Israel, and all the other kingdoms.

2 Chronicles

1 ¹ Solomon, son of David, strengthened his position over the kingdom. The LORD his God was with him and made him very powerful.

² Solomon spoke to all Israel—to the commanders of regiments and battalions, judges, every prince, and the heads of Israel's families.

³ Then Solomon and the entire assembly went to the place of worship in Gibeon because God's tent of meeting was there. Moses, the LORD'S servant, had made the tent in the desert.

⁴ (However, David had already brought God's ark from Kiriath Jearim to a place he had prepared for it. He had put up a tent for it in Jerusalem.)

⁵ The bronze altar that Bezalel, son of Uri and grandson of Hur, had made was in front of the LORD'S tent. There Solomon and the assembly worshiped the LORD.

⁶ In the LORD'S presence Solomon went to the bronze altar in front of the tent of meeting and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings on it.

⁷ That night God appeared to Solomon. He said, "What can I give you?"

⁸ Solomon responded to God, "You've shown great love to my father David, and you've made me king in his place.

⁹ Now, LORD God, you've kept the promise you made to my father David. You've made me king of people who are as numerous as specks of dust on the ground.

¹⁰ Give me wisdom and knowledge so that I may lead these people. After

all, who can judge this great people of yours?"

¹¹ God replied to Solomon, "I know this request is from your heart. You didn't ask for riches, fortunes, honor, or the death of those who hate you. You didn't even ask for a long life. Instead, you've asked for wisdom and knowledge to judge my people, over whom I made you king.

¹² So wisdom and knowledge will be given to you. I will also give you riches, fortunes, and honor like no other king before or after you."

¹³ Solomon went from the tent of meeting at the place of worship in Gibeon to Jerusalem. And he ruled Israel.

¹⁴ Solomon built up his army with chariots and war horses. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 war horses. He

stationed some in chariot cities and others with himself in Jerusalem.

¹⁵ The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as fig trees in the foothills.

¹⁶ Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and Kue. The king's traders bought them from Kue for a fixed price.

¹⁷ They imported each chariot from Egypt for 15 pounds of silver and each horse for 6 ounces of silver. For the same price they obtained horses to export to all the Hittite and Aramean kings.

2 ¹ Solomon gave orders to begin building the temple for the LORD'S name and a royal palace for himself.

² Solomon drafted 70,000 men to carry heavy loads, 80,000 to quarry stones in the mountains, and 3,600 foremen.

³ Solomon sent word to King Hiram of Tyre by saying, "Do what you did for my

father David. You sent him cedar so that he could build a palace to live in.

⁴ I want to build the temple for the name of the LORD my God. I want to dedicate it to him, burn sweet-smelling incense in his presence, and have rows of bread there continually. I want to sacrifice burnt offerings every morning and evening, on weekly worship days, New Moon Festivals, and during the annual festivals appointed by the LORD our God. (These festivals are always to be celebrated by Israel.)

⁵ The temple I am building will be great because our God is greater than all other gods.

⁶ But who is able to build him a temple when heaven itself, the highest heaven, cannot hold him? Who am I to build him a temple except as a place to sacrifice in his presence?

⁷ "Send me a man who has the skill to work with gold, silver, bronze, and iron as well as purple, dark red, and violet cloth. He should know how to make engravings with the skilled men whom my father David provided for me in Judah and Jerusalem.

⁸ Send me cedar, cypress, and sandalwood from Lebanon. I know that your servants are skilled Lebanese lumberjacks. My workers will work with your workers.

⁹ They'll prepare plenty of lumber for me, because the temple I want to build will be large and astonishing.

¹⁰ I will give your lumberjacks 120,000 bushels of ground wheat, 120,000 bushels of barley, 200,000 gallons of wine, and 200,000 gallons of olive oil."

¹¹ Then King Hiram of Tyre responded to Solomon by sending a letter that said,

"Because the LORD loves his people, he made you their king."

¹² Hiram added, "May the LORD God of Israel be praised. He made the heavens and the earth and has given King David a wise son who has insight and intelligence and can build the LORD'S temple and a royal palace.

¹³ And now, I'm sending a man with skill and intelligence—Hiram Abi.

¹⁴ He was the son of a woman from the tribe of Dan, and his father is a native of Tyre. Hiram knows how to work with gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, wood, purple, violet, and dark red cloth, and linen. He also knows how to make all kinds of engravings and follow any set of plans that will be given to him. He can work with your skilled workmen and the skilled workmen of His Majesty David, your father.

¹⁵ Your Majesty may now send the wheat, barley, olive oil, and wine he promised the workers.

¹⁶ We will cut all the lumber you need in Lebanon. Then we will make rafts out of it and send them to you in Joppa by sea. You can take it from there to Jerusalem."

¹⁷ Solomon counted all the men who were foreigners in the land of Israel, as his father David had counted them. Solomon counted 153,600 foreigners.

¹⁸ He made 70,000 of them carry heavy loads, 80,000 of them quarry stone in the mountains, and 3,600 of them supervise the work as foremen.

3¹ Solomon began to build the LORD'S temple in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared to his father David. There David had prepared the site on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

² He began to build on the second day in the second month of the fourth year of his reign.

³ This is how Solomon laid the foundation to build God's temple. It was 90 feet long and 30 feet wide. (They used the old standard measurement.)

⁴ The entrance hall in front of the main room was 30 feet wide (the same as the width of the temple) and 30 feet high. He covered its inside walls with pure gold.

⁵ He paneled the larger building with cypress, overlaid it with fine gold, and decorated it with designs in the form of palm trees and chains.

⁶ He covered the building with gems to beautify it and used gold from Parvaim.

⁷ He also overlaid the building, the rafters, the threshold, the walls, and the doors with gold, and he carved angels into the walls.

⁸ He made the most holy place. It was as long as the temple was wide, 30 feet long. It was also 30 feet wide. He overlaid it with 45,000 pounds of fine gold.

⁹ The gold nails weighed 20 ounces. He also overlaid the upper rooms with gold.

¹⁰ In the most holy place he made two sculptured angels and covered them with gold.

¹¹ The combined length of the angels' wings was 30 feet. A wing of one of the angels was 7½ feet long and touched the wall of the building. Its other wing was 7½ feet long and touched one wing of the other.

¹² The wing of the other one of the angels was 7½ feet long and touched the other wall of the building. Its other wing was 7½ feet long and touched the wing of the first. So the angels' combined wingspan was 30 feet.

¹³ They stood on their feet and faced the main hall.

¹⁴ Solomon made the canopy of violet, purple, and dark red cloth and of linen and decorated it with angels.

¹⁵ He made two pillars for the front of the temple. They were 53 feet long, and the capital on each pillar was 7½ feet high.

¹⁶ He made chains for the inner room and also put them on the capitals. He made 100 pomegranates and put them on the chains.

¹⁷ He set up the pillars in front of the temple, one on the right and the other on the left. He named the one on the right Jachin [He Establishes] and the one on the left Boaz [In Him Is Strength].

4 ¹ He made a bronze altar 30 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 15 feet high.

² Hiram made a pool from cast metal. It was 15 feet in diameter. It was round,

7½ feet high, and had a circumference of 45 feet.

³ Under the rim were two rows of figurines shaped like bulls all around the 45-foot circumference of the pool. They were cast in metal when the pool was cast.

⁴ The pool was set on 12 metal bulls. Three bulls faced north, three faced west, three faced south, and three faced east. The pool was set on them, and their hindquarters were toward the center of the pool.

⁵ The pool was three inches thick. Its rim was like the rim of a cup, shaped like a lily's bud. It held 18,000 gallons.

⁶ Hiram also made ten basins for washing and put five on the south side and five on the north side. The priests rinsed the meat prepared for the burnt offerings in them. They used the pool to wash themselves.

⁷ Hiram made ten gold lamp stands according to their specifications and put them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north side.

⁸ He made ten tables and put them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north side. And he made 100 gold bowls.

⁹ He also made the priests' courtyard and the large courtyard and its doors. He covered the doors with bronze.

¹⁰ He set the pool on the south side in the southeast corner.

¹¹ Hiram also made the pots, shovels, and bowls. So Hiram finished the work for King Solomon in God's temple:

¹² 2 pillars, bowl-shaped capitals on top of the 2 pillars, and 2 sets of filigree to cover the 2 bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars,

¹³ 400 pomegranates for the 2 sets of filigree (2 rows of pomegranates for

each filigree to cover the 2 bowl-shaped capitals on the pillars),

¹⁴ 10 stands and 10 basins on the stands,

¹⁵ 1 pool and the 12 bulls under it,

¹⁶ pots, shovels, and three-pronged forks. Hiram made all of them out of polished bronze for the LORD'S temple at King Solomon's request.

¹⁷ The king cast them in foundries in the Jordan Valley between Succoth and Zeredah.

¹⁸ Solomon made so many of these products that no one tried to determine how much the bronze weighed.

¹⁹ Solomon made all the furnishings for God's temple: the gold altar, the gold tables on which the bread of the presence was placed,

²⁰ lamp stands and lamps of pure gold (to burn as directed in front of the inner room),

²¹ flowers, lamps, pure gold tongs,
²² snuffers, basins, dishes, incense burners of pure gold, the gold entrance to the temple, the gold doors of the inner room (the most holy place), and the gold doors of the temple.

5 ¹ All the work Solomon did on the LORD'S temple was finished. He brought the holy things that had belonged to his father David—the silver, gold, and all the utensils—and put them in the storerooms of God's temple.

² Then Solomon assembled the respected leaders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes, and the leaders of the Israelite families. They came to Jerusalem to take the ark of the LORD'S promise from the City of David (that is, Zion).

³ All the men of Israel gathered around the king at the Festival of Booths in the seventh month.

⁴ When all the leaders of Israel had arrived, the Levites picked up the ark.

⁵ They brought the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy utensils in it to the temple. The priests and the Levites carried them

⁶ while King Solomon and the whole assembly from Israel were offering countless sheep and cattle sacrifices in front of the ark.

⁷ The priests brought the ark of the LORD'S promise to its place in the inner room of the temple (the most holy place) under the wings of the angels.

⁸ The angels' outstretched wings were over the place where the ark rested so that the angels became a covering above the ark and its poles.

⁹ The poles were so long that their ends could be seen in the holy place by anyone standing in front of the inner

room, but they couldn't be seen outside. (They are still there today.)

¹⁰ There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets Moses placed there at Horeb, where the LORD made a promise to the Israelites after they left Egypt.

¹¹ All the priests who were present had performed the ceremonies to make themselves holy to God without regard to staying in their divisions.

¹² All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, their sons, and their relatives—were dressed in fine linen and stood east of the altar with cymbals, harps, and lyres. With the musicians were 120 priests blowing trumpets. When the priests left the holy place,

¹³ the trumpeters and singers praised and thanked the LORD in unison. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other musical instruments, they

sang in praise to the LORD: "He is good; his mercy endures forever." Then the LORD'S temple was filled with a cloud.

¹⁴ The priests couldn't serve because of the cloud. The LORD'S glory filled God's temple.

6 ¹ Then Solomon said, "The LORD said he would live in a dark cloud.

² But I have built you a high temple, a home for you to live in permanently."

³ Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly from Israel while they were standing.

⁴ "Thanks be to the LORD God of Israel. With his mouth he made a promise to my father David; with his hand he carried it out. He said,

⁵ 'Ever since I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I didn't choose any city from the tribes of Israel as a place to build a temple for my name. And I didn't

choose any man to be prince over my people Israel.

⁶ But now I've chosen Jerusalem to be a place for my name; I've chosen David to rule my people Israel.'

⁷ "My father David had his heart set on building a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

⁸ However, the LORD said to my father David, 'Since you had your heart set on building a temple for my name, your intentions were good.

⁹ But you must not build the temple. Instead, your own son will build the temple for my name.'

¹⁰ The LORD has kept the promise he made. I've taken my father David's place, and I sit on the throne of Israel as the LORD promised. I've built the temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

¹¹ I've put the ark which contains the LORD'S promise to Israel there."

¹² In the presence of the entire assembly of Israel, Solomon stood in front of the LORD'S altar. He stretched out his hands to pray.

¹³ (Solomon had made a bronze platform 7½ feet long, 7½ feet wide, and 4½ feet high. He put it in the middle of the courtyard. He stood on the platform, knelt in front of the entire assembly, and stretched out his hands toward heaven.)

¹⁴ He said, "LORD God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven or on earth. You keep your promise of mercy to your servants, who obey you wholeheartedly.

¹⁵ You have kept your promise to my father David, your servant. With your mouth you promised it. With your hand you carried it out as it is today.

¹⁶ "Now, LORD God of Israel, keep your promise to my father David, your servant. You said, 'You will never fail to have an heir sitting in front of me on the

throne of Israel if your descendants are faithful to me as you have been faithful to me.'

¹⁷ "So now, LORD God of Israel, may the promise you made to David, your servant, come true.

¹⁸ "Does God really live on earth with people? If heaven itself, the highest heaven, cannot hold you, then how can this temple that I have built?

¹⁹ Nevertheless, my LORD God, please pay attention to my prayer for mercy. Listen to my cry for help as I pray to you.

²⁰ Day and night may your eyes be on this temple, the place about which you said your name will be there. Listen to me as I pray toward this place.

²¹ Hear the plea for mercy that your people Israel and I pray toward this place. Hear us in heaven, the place where you live. Hear and forgive.

²² "If anyone sins against another person and is required to take an oath and comes to take the oath in front of your altar in this temple,

²³ then hear that person in heaven, take action, and make a decision.

Repay the guilty person with the proper punishment, but declare the innocent person innocent.

²⁴ "An enemy may defeat your people Israel because they have sinned against you. But when your people turn, praise your name, pray, and plead with you in this temple,

²⁵ then hear them in heaven, forgive the sins of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land that you gave to them and their ancestors.

²⁶ "When the sky is shut and there's no rain because they are sinning against you and they pray toward this place, praise

your name, and turn away from their sin because you made them suffer,

²⁷ then hear them in heaven. Forgive the sins of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the proper way to live. Then send rain on the land, which you gave to your people as an inheritance.

²⁸ "There may be famine in the land. Plant diseases, heat waves, funguses, locusts, or grasshoppers may destroy crops. Enemies may blockade Israel's city gates. During every plague or sickness

²⁹ hear every prayer for mercy made by one person or by all the people in Israel, all who know suffering or pain, who stretch out their hands toward this temple.

³⁰ Hear them in heaven, where you live. Forgive them, and give each person the proper reply. (You know what is in their hearts, because you alone know what is in people's hearts.)

³¹ Then, as long as they live in the land that you gave to our ancestors, they will fear you and follow you.

³² "People who are not Israelites will come from distant countries because of your great name, mighty hand, and powerful arm. When they come to pray facing this temple,

³³ then hear them in heaven, the place where you live. Do everything they ask you so that all the people of the world may know your name and fear you like your people Israel and learn that this temple which I built bears your name.

³⁴ "When your people go to war against their enemies (wherever you may send them) and they pray to you toward this city you have chosen and the temple I built for your name,

³⁵ then hear their prayer for mercy in heaven, and do what is right for them.

³⁶ "They may sin against you. (No one is sinless.) You may become angry with them and hand them over to an enemy who takes them to another country as captives, whether it is far or near.

³⁷ If they come to their senses, are sorry for what they've done, and plead with you in the land where they are captives, saying, 'We have sinned. We have done wrong. We have been wicked,'

³⁸ if they change their attitude toward you in the land where they are captives, if they pray to you toward the land that you gave their ancestors, and the city you have chosen, and the temple I have built for your name,

³⁹ then in heaven, the place where you live, hear their prayer for mercy. Do what is right for them. Forgive your people, who have sinned against you.

⁴⁰ "Finally, my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

⁴¹ "Now arise, and come to your resting place, LORD God— you and the ark of your power. Clothe your priests, LORD God, with salvation. Let your godly ones rejoice in what is good.

⁴² LORD God, do not reject your anointed one. Remember your mercy to your servant David!"

7 ¹ When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and the other sacrifices, and the LORD'S glory filled the temple.

² The priests couldn't go into the LORD'S temple because the LORD'S glory had filled the LORD'S temple.

³ When all the Israelites saw the fire come down and the LORD'S glory on the temple, they knelt down with their faces

on the pavement. They worshiped and praised the LORD, by saying, "He is good; his mercy endures forever."

⁴ Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices to the LORD.

⁵ King Solomon offered 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep as sacrifices to the LORD. So the king and all the people dedicated God's temple.

⁶ The priests were standing at their posts. So were the Levites who had the LORD'S musical instruments which King David made for praising the LORD with "his mercy endures forever" and which he used to offer praise. The priests were opposite the Levites blowing trumpets while all Israel was standing there.

⁷ Solomon designated the courtyard in front of the LORD'S temple as a holy place. He sacrificed the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat because the bronze altar that he had made and that

was in front of the LORD was not able to hold all of them.

⁸ At that time Solomon and all Israel celebrated the Festival of Booths. A very large crowd had come from the territory between the border of Hamath and the River of Egypt.

⁹ On the eighth day there was an assembly. They had observed the dedication of the altar for seven days and celebrated the festival for another seven days.

¹⁰ On the twenty-third day of the seventh month, Solomon dismissed the people to their tents. They rejoiced with cheerful hearts for all the blessings the LORD had given David, Solomon, and his people Israel.

¹¹ Solomon finished the LORD'S temple and the royal palace and completed everything he had in mind for the LORD'S temple and his own palace.

¹² Then the LORD appeared to him at night. He said to Solomon, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices.

¹³ I may shut the sky so that there is no rain, or command grasshoppers to devour the countryside, or send an epidemic among my people.

¹⁴ However, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves, pray, search for me, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear their prayer from heaven, forgive their sins, and heal their country.

¹⁵ My eyes will be open, and my ears will pay attention to those prayers at this place.

¹⁶ I have chosen and declared this temple holy so that my name may be placed there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

¹⁷ "If you will be faithful to me as your father David was, do everything I command, and obey my laws and rules,

¹⁸ then I will establish your royal dynasty as I said in a promise to your father David, 'You will never fail to have an heir ruling Israel.'

¹⁹ But if you and your descendants turn away from me and abandon my commands and laws that I gave you, and follow and serve other gods and worship them,

²⁰ then I will uproot Israel from the land I gave them. I will reject this temple that I declared holy for my name. I will make it an example and an object of ridicule for all the people of the world.

²¹ Everyone passing by this impressive temple will be appalled. They will ask, 'Why did the LORD do these things to this land and this temple?'

²² They will answer themselves, ‘They abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors, who brought them out of Egypt. They adopted other gods, worshiped, and served them. That is why he brought this disaster on them.’”

8 ¹ It took Solomon 20 years to build the LORD’S house and his own house.

² He rebuilt the cities Hiram gave him, and he had Israelites live in them.

³ Then Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and conquered it.

⁴ He rebuilt Tadmor in the desert and built all the storage cities in Hamath.

⁵ He rebuilt Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon into cities fortified with walls, double–door gates, and bars.

⁶ He also rebuilt Baalath and all the storage cities that he owned. He built all the cities for his chariots, all the cities for his war horses, and whatever else he

wanted to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, or the entire territory that he governed.

⁷ The Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites had been left in the land because the Israelites had not been able to destroy them. They were not Israelites,

⁸ but they had descendants who were still in the land. Solomon drafted them for slave labor. (They are still slaves today.)

⁹ But Solomon didn't make any of the Israelites slaves for his projects. Instead, they were the soldiers, officers, generals, and commanders of his chariot and cavalry units.

¹⁰ These were the officers in charge of King Solomon's projects: 250 foremen for the people who did the work.

¹¹ Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter from the City of David to a palace he had built for her. He said, "My wife will not

live in the palace of King David of Israel because these places where the LORD'S ark has come are holy."

¹² Then Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings to the LORD on the LORD'S altar that he built in front of the entrance hall.

¹³ He sacrificed every day, on weekly worship days, on the New Moon Festivals, and on the three annual festivals (the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Booths) as Moses had commanded.

¹⁴ As Solomon's father David had directed, he set up the divisions of priests for their service and the divisions of Levites for their appointed places. The Levites were to lead in praising the LORD and to serve beside the priests by doing whatever needed to be done each day. Solomon also set up divisions

of doorkeepers at every gate because this is what David, the man of God, had commanded.

¹⁵ No one neglected the king's orders to the priests or the Levites in any matter, including the temple's finances.

¹⁶ All of Solomon's work was carried out from the day the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid until it was completed. The LORD'S temple was now finished.

¹⁷ Then Solomon went to the coast near Ezion Geber and Elath in Edom.

¹⁸ Hiram sent his own servants and his experienced sailors with ships to Solomon. They went with Solomon's servants to Ophir, got 33,750 pounds of gold, and brought it to King Solomon.

9¹ The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's reputation. So she came to Jerusalem to test him with riddles. She arrived with a large group of servants,

with camels carrying spices, a large quantity of gold, and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she talked to him about everything she had on her mind.

² Solomon answered all her questions. No question was too difficult for Solomon to answer.

³ When the queen of Sheba saw Solomon's wisdom, the palace he built, ⁴ the food on his table, his officers' seating arrangement, the organization of his officials and the uniforms they wore, his cupbearers and their uniforms, and the burnt offerings that he sacrificed at the LORD'S temple, she was breathless.

⁵ She told the king, "What I heard in my country about your words and your wisdom is true!

⁶ But I didn't believe the reports until I came and saw it with my own eyes. I wasn't even told about half of the extent

of your wisdom. You've surpassed the stories I've heard.

⁷ How blessed your men must be! How blessed these servants of yours must be because they are always stationed in front of you and listen to your wisdom!

⁸ Thank the LORD your God, who is pleased with you. He has put you on his throne to be king on behalf of the LORD your God. Because of your God's love for the people of Israel, he has established them permanently and made you king over them so that you would maintain justice and righteousness."

⁹ She gave the king 9,000 pounds of gold, a very large quantity of spices, and precious stones. Never was there such a large quantity of spices in Israel as those that the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon.

¹⁰ Hiram's servants and Solomon's servants who brought gold from Ophir

also brought sandalwood and precious stones.

¹¹ With the sandalwood the king made gateways to the LORD'S temple and the royal palace, and lyres and harps for the singers. No one had ever seen anything like them in Judah.

¹² King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba anything she wanted, whatever she asked for, more than what she had brought him. Then she and her servants went back to her country.

¹³ The gold that came to Solomon in one year weighed 49,950 pounds,

¹⁴ not counting the gold which the merchants and traders brought. All the Arab kings and governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon.

¹⁵ King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold, using 15 pounds of gold on each shield.

¹⁶ He also made 300 small shields of hammered gold, using 7½ pounds of gold on each shield. The king put them in the hall named the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁷ The king also made a large ivory throne and covered it with pure gold.

¹⁸ Six steps led to the throne, which had a gold footstool attached to it. There were armrests on both sides of the seat. Two lions stood beside the armrests.

¹⁹ Twelve lions stood on six steps, one on each side. Nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom.

²⁰ All King Solomon's cups were gold, and all the utensils for the hall named the Forest of Lebanon were fine gold. (Silver wasn't considered valuable in Solomon's time.)

²¹ The king had ships going to Tarshish with Hiram's sailors. Once every three years the Tarshish ships would bring gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.

²² In wealth and wisdom King Solomon was greater than all the other kings of the world.

²³ All the kings of the world wanted to listen to the wisdom that God gave Solomon.

²⁴ So everyone who came brought him gifts: articles of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, spices, horses, and mules. This happened year after year.

²⁵ Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots, and 12,000 war horses. He stationed some in chariot cities and others with himself in Jerusalem.

²⁶ He ruled all the kings from the Euphrates River to the country of the Philistines and as far as the Egyptian border.

²⁷ The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as fig trees in the foothills.

²⁸ Horses were imported for Solomon from Egypt and from all other countries.

²⁹ Aren't the rest of Solomon's acts from first to last written in the records of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah from Shiloh, and in Iddo the seer's visions about Jeroboam (son of Nebat)?

³⁰ Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years.

³¹ Solomon lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. His son Rehoboam succeeded him as king.

10 ¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem because all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king.

² Jeroboam (Nebat's son) was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon. When he heard about Rehoboam, he returned from Egypt.

³ Israel sent for Jeroboam and invited him back. Jeroboam and all Israel went to speak to Rehoboam. They said,

⁴ "Your father made us carry a heavy burden. Reduce the hard work and lighten the heavy burden he put on us, and we will serve you."

⁵ He said to them, "Come back the day after tomorrow." So the people left.

⁶ King Rehoboam sought advice from the older leaders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive. He asked, "What do you advise? How should I respond to these people?"

⁷ They told him, "If you are good to these people and try to please them by speaking gently to them, then they will always be your servants."

⁸ But he ignored the advice the older leaders gave him. He sought advice from the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.

⁹ He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we respond to these people who are asking me to lighten the burden my father put on them?"

¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him answered, "This is what you should tell them: 'My little finger is heavier than my father's whole body.

¹¹ If my father put a heavy burden on you, I will add to it. If my father punished you with whips, I will punish you with scorpions.'"

¹² So Jeroboam and all the people came back to Rehoboam two days later, as the king had instructed them.

¹³ The king answered them harshly. He ignored the older leaders' advice.

¹⁴ He spoke to them as the young men advised. He said, "If my father made your burden heavy, I will add to it. If my father punished you with whips, I will use scorpions."

¹⁵ The king refused to listen to the people because the LORD was directing these events to carry out the promise he had made to Jeroboam (Nebat's son) through Ahijah from Shiloh.

¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, the people answered the king, "What share do we have in David's kingdom? We won't receive an inheritance from Jesse's son. Everyone to his own tent, Israel! Now look after your own house, David!" So all Israel went home to their own tents.

¹⁷ But Rehoboam ruled the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸ Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram to the Israelites. He was in charge of forced labor, but they stoned him to death. So King Rehoboam got on his chariot as fast as he could and fled to Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Israel has rebelled against David's dynasty to this day.

11 ¹ When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he gathered the people of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 of the best soldiers, to fight against Israel and return the kingdom to Rehoboam.

² But God spoke his word to Shemaiah, the man of God. He said,

³ "Speak to Judah's King Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and all Israel in Judah and Benjamin.

⁴ This is what the LORD says: Don't wage war against your relatives. Everyone, go home. What has happened is my doing." So they obeyed the word of the LORD. They turned back from their attack on Jeroboam.

⁵ Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built fortified cities in Judah.

⁶ He rebuilt Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,

⁷ Beth Zur, Soco, Adullam,

⁸ Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,

⁹ Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,

¹⁰ Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These were fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin.

¹¹ He strengthened them and put army officers with reserves of food, olive oil, and wine in them.

¹² In each city he stored shields and spears. He made the cities very secure. So Rehoboam held on to Judah and Benjamin.

¹³ The priests and Levites in every region of Israel sided with Rehoboam.

¹⁴ The priests abandoned their land and property and went to Judah and Jerusalem because Jeroboam and his descendants rejected them as the LORD'S priests.

¹⁵ Instead, Jeroboam appointed his own priests for the illegal worship sites and

the goat and calf statues he had made as idols.

¹⁶ People from every tribe of Israel who were determined to seek the LORD God of Israel followed the Levitical priests to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their ancestors.

¹⁷ So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah by supporting Rehoboam, son of Solomon, for three years. During those three years they lived the way David and Solomon had lived.

¹⁸ Rehoboam married Mahalath, daughter of Jerimoth. (Jerimoth was the son of David and Abihail. Abihail was the daughter of Eliab, son of Jesse.)

¹⁹ Mahalath gave birth to the following sons: Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham.

²⁰ After marrying Mahalath, he married Maacah, Absalom's granddaughter. She gave birth to Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.

²¹ Rehoboam loved Maacah, Absalom's granddaughter, more than all his other wives and concubines. (He had 18 wives and 60 concubines. He fathered 28 sons and 60 daughters.)

²² Rehoboam appointed Abijah, son of Maacah, as family head and prince among his brothers. By doing this, Rehoboam could make him king.

²³ He wisely placed his sons in every region of Judah and Benjamin, in every fortified city. He gave them allowances and obtained many wives for them.

12 ¹ When Rehoboam had established his kingdom and made himself strong, he and all Israel abandoned the LORD'S teachings.

² In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. This happened because all Israel was not loyal to the LORD.

³ Shishak had 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horses, and an army of countless Libyans, Sukkites, and Sudanese from Egypt.

⁴ He captured the fortified cities in Judah and then came to Jerusalem.

⁵ The prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who had gathered in Jerusalem because of Shishak. Shemaiah said to them, "This is what the LORD says: You have abandoned me, so I will abandon you. I will hand you over to Shishak."

⁶ Then the commanders of Israel and the king humbled themselves. "The LORD is right!" they said.

⁷ When the LORD saw that they had humbled themselves, he spoke his word to Shemaiah: "They have humbled themselves. I will not destroy them. In a little while I will give them an escape. I

will not use Shishak to pour my anger on Jerusalem.

⁸ But they will become his servants so that they can learn the difference between serving me and serving foreign kings."

⁹ King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and took the treasures from the LORD'S temple and the royal palace. He took them all. He took the gold shields Solomon had made.

¹⁰ So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and put them by the entrance to the royal palace, where the captains of the guards were stationed.

¹¹ Whenever the king went into the LORD'S temple, guards carried the shields and then returned them to the guardroom.

¹² After Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD was no longer angry with him

and didn't completely destroy him. So things went well in Judah.

¹³ King Rehoboam strengthened his position in Jerusalem and ruled. He was 41 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 17 years in Jerusalem, the city that the LORD chose from all the tribes of Israel, the city where the LORD put his name. (Rehoboam's mother was an Ammonite woman named Naamah.)

¹⁴ He did evil things because he was not serious about dedicating himself to serving the LORD.

¹⁵ Aren't the events concerning Rehoboam from first to last written in the records of the prophet Shemaiah and the records of the seer Iddo in the genealogies? There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam as long as they lived.

¹⁶ Rehoboam lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in the City

of David. His son Abijah succeeded him as king.

13 ¹ In the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam, Abijah began to rule Judah.

² He ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother was named Micaiah, daughter of Uriel from Gibeah. There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.

³ Abijah prepared for battle with an army of 400,000 of the best soldiers, while Jeroboam arranged to oppose him with 800,000 of the best professional soldiers.

⁴ Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim in the mountains of Ephraim. He called out, "Jeroboam and all Israel, listen to me!

⁵ Don't you know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom of Israel to David and his descendants forever in a permanent promise?

⁶ But Jeroboam (Nebat's son) rebelled against his master. He had been the servant of David's son Solomon.

⁷ Worthless, good-for-nothing men gathered around him. They opposed Rehoboam, son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was too young and inexperienced to challenge them.

⁸ Do you now intend to challenge the LORD'S kingdom, which has been placed in the hands of David's descendants? You are a large crowd, and you have the gold calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods.

⁹ You forced out the LORD'S priests who were Aaron's descendants, and you forced out the Levites so that you could appoint your own priests, as the people in foreign countries do. Anyone who has a young bull and seven rams can be ordained as a priest of nonexistent gods.

¹⁰ "However, the LORD is our God. We haven't abandoned him. The priests who serve the LORD are Aaron's descendants, and the Levites assist them.

¹¹ They sacrifice burnt offerings to the LORD every morning and every evening. They offer sweet-smelling incense and rows of bread on the clean table. The lamps on the gold lamp stand burn every evening. We're following the instructions the LORD our God gave us, but you have abandoned him.

¹² God is with us as our leader. His priests will sound their trumpets to call the army to fight you. Men of Israel, don't wage war against the LORD God of your ancestors. You won't succeed."

¹³ But Jeroboam had set an ambush to attack them from behind. So Jeroboam's army was in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them.

¹⁴ When Judah's soldiers looked around, the battle was in front of them and behind them. They cried out to the LORD, the priests blew the trumpets,

¹⁵ and the men of Judah shouted. When they shouted, God attacked Jeroboam and all Israel in front of Abijah and Judah.

¹⁶ The Israelites fled from Judah's army, and God handed them over to Judah.

¹⁷ So Abijah and his men defeated them decisively, and 500,000 of the best men of Israel were killed.

¹⁸ So the Israelites were humbled at that time, and the men of Judah won because they trusted the LORD God of their ancestors.

¹⁹ Abijah pursued Jeroboam and captured some of his cities: Bethel and its villages, Jeshanah and its villages, and Ephron and its villages.

²⁰ Jeroboam never regained power during Abijah's time. The LORD caused Jeroboam to become sick, and Jeroboam died.

²¹ But Abijah became strong. He married 14 wives and fathered 22 sons and 16 daughters.

²² Everything else about Abijah—how he lived and what he said—is written in the history by the prophet Iddo.

14 ¹ Abijah lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. His son Asa succeeded him as king. In Asa's time the land had peace for ten years.

² Asa did what the LORD his God considered good and right.

³ He got rid of the altars of foreign gods, broke down the sacred stones, and cut down the poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah.

⁴ He told the people of Judah to dedicate their lives to serving the LORD God of their ancestors and follow his teachings and commands.

⁵ He got rid of the illegal places of worship and the altars for incense in all the cities of Judah. The kingdom was at peace during his reign.

⁶ He built fortified cities in Judah because the land had peace. There was no war during those years because the LORD gave him a time of peace.

⁷ So Asa told Judah, "Let's build these cities and make walls around them with towers and doors that can be barred. The country is still ours because we have dedicated our lives to serving the LORD our God. We have dedicated our lives to him, and he has surrounded us with peace." So they built the cities, and everything went well.

⁸ Asa had an army of 300,000 Judeans who were armed with large shields and spears and 280,000 Benjaminites who were armed with small shields and bows. All of these men were good fighting men.

⁹ Then Zerah from Sudan came with 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots to attack Asa. Zerah got as far as Mareshah.

¹⁰ Asa went to confront him, and the two armies set up their battle lines in the Zephathah Valley at Mareshah.

¹¹ Asa called on the LORD his God. He said, "LORD, there is no one except you who can help those who are not strong so that they can fight against a large army. Help us, LORD our God, because we are depending on you. In your name we go against this large crowd. You are the LORD our God. Don't let anyone successfully oppose you."

¹² The LORD attacked the Sudanese army in front of Asa and Judah. The Sudanese army fled.

¹³ Asa and his troops pursued them as far as Gerar. Many of the Sudanese died in battle. As a result, the Sudanese army couldn't fight again. It was crushed in front of the LORD and his army. The LORD'S army captured a lot of goods.

¹⁴ It attacked all the cities around Gerar because the cities were afraid of the LORD. The army looted all the cities because there were many things to take.

¹⁵ It also attacked those who were letting their cattle graze and captured many sheep and camels. Then it returned to Jerusalem.

15 ¹ God's Spirit came to Azariah, son of Oded.

² Azariah went to Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa and all you men from Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with

you when you are with him. If you will dedicate your lives to serving him, he will accept you. But if you abandon him, he will abandon you.

³ For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest who taught correctly, and without Moses' Teachings.

⁴ But when they were in trouble, they turned to the LORD God of Israel. When they searched for him, he let them find him.

⁵ At those times no one could come and go in peace, because everyone living in the land had a lot of turmoil.

⁶ One nation crushed another nation; one city crushed another. God had tormented them with every kind of trouble.

⁷ But you must remain strong and not become discouraged. Your actions will be rewarded."

⁸ When Asa heard the prophet Oded's words of prophecy, he was encouraged and put away the detestable idols from all of Judah, Benjamin, and the cities he had captured in the mountains of Ephraim. He also repaired the LORD'S altar in front of the LORD'S entrance hall.

⁹ Then Asa gathered all the people from Judah and Benjamin and the foreigners who had come from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon. (Many of them had come to him from Israel when they saw that Asa's God, the LORD, was with him.)

¹⁰ In the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign, they gathered in Jerusalem.

¹¹ On that day they sacrificed to the LORD a part of the loot they had brought with them: 700 cattle and 7,000 sheep.

¹² They made an agreement with one another to dedicate their lives to serving

the LORD God of their ancestors with all their heart and soul.

¹³ All people (young or old, male or female) who refused to dedicate their lives to the LORD God of Israel were to be killed.

¹⁴ Asa and the people swore their oath to the LORD with shouts, singing, and the blowing of trumpets and rams' horns.

¹⁵ All the people of Judah were overjoyed because of the oath, since they took the oath wholeheartedly. They took great pleasure in looking for the LORD, and he let them find him. So the LORD surrounded them with peace.

¹⁶ King Asa also removed his grandmother Maacah from the position of queen mother because she made a statue of the repulsive goddess Asherah. Asa cut the statue down,

crushed it, and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

¹⁷ Although the illegal worship sites in Israel were not taken down, Asa remained committed to the LORD his entire life.

¹⁸ He brought into God's temple the silver, the gold, and the utensils he and his father had set apart as holy.

¹⁹ There was no war until the thirty–fifth year of Asa's reign.

16 ¹ In the thirty–sixth year of Asa's reign, King Baasha of Israel invaded Judah and fortified Ramah to keep anyone from going to or coming from King Asa of Judah.

² Then Asa brought out all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the LORD'S temple and the royal palace. He sent them to Damascus to Aram's King Benhadad.

³ He said, "There's a treaty between you and me as there was between your father and my father. I'm sending you silver and gold. Now break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel so that he will leave me alone."

⁴ Benhadad did what King Asa requested. He sent his generals and their armies to attack the cities of Israel. He conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the storage cities in the territory of Naphtali.

⁵ When Baasha heard the news, he stopped fortifying Ramah and abandoned his work on it.

⁶ Then King Asa took everyone in Judah to Ramah. He made them carry the stones and lumber from Ramah. Baasha had been using those to fortify the city. Asa used the materials to fortify Geba in Benjamin and Mizpah.

⁷ At that time the seer Hanani came to King Asa of Judah and said to him, "Because you depended on the king of Syria and did not depend on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped your grasp.

⁸ Weren't the Sudanese and Libyans a large army with many chariots and drivers? But when you depended on the LORD, he handed them over to you.

⁹ The LORD'S eyes scan the whole world to find those whose hearts are committed to him and to strengthen them. You acted foolishly in this matter. So from now on, you will have to fight wars."

¹⁰ Asa was furious at the seer. He was so angry with Hanani that he put Hanani in prison. Asa also oppressed some of the people at that time in his reign.

¹¹ Everything about Asa from first to last is written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

¹² In the thirty–ninth year of his reign, Asa got a foot disease that became progressively worse. Instead of asking the LORD for help, he went to doctors.

¹³ Asa lay down in death with his ancestors. He died in the forty–first year of his reign.

¹⁴ They buried him in the tomb that he had prepared for himself in the City of David. They laid him on a bed full of spices and blended perfumes. And they burned a bonfire in his honor.

17 ¹ Asa’s son Jehoshaphat succeeded him as king.

Jehoshaphat strengthened himself to wage war against Israel.

² He put troops in all the fortified cities of Judah and placed military posts in

Judah and in the cities of Ephraim that his father Asa had captured.

³ The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, who lived in the old way like his ancestor David. Jehoshaphat didn't dedicate his life to serving other gods—the Baals.

⁴ Instead, he dedicated his life to his ancestor's God and lived by God's commands. Jehoshaphat did not do what Israel was doing.

⁵ So the LORD established Jehoshaphat's power over the kingdom. All the people of Judah gave gifts to Jehoshaphat, and he had a lot of riches and honor.

⁶ He had the confidence to live the way the LORD wanted him to live. He also got rid of the illegal places of worship and poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah in Judah.

⁷ In the third year of his reign, he sent his officers Ben Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah,

Nethanel, and Micaiah to teach in the cities of Judah.

⁸ With them were the Levites Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, Tob Adonijah, and the priests Elishama and Jehoram.

⁹ They taught in Judah. They had the Book of the LORD'S Teachings with them when they taught the people in all the cities of Judah.

¹⁰ Fear of the LORD came to all the kingdoms around Judah. As a result, they didn't wage war against Jehoshaphat.

¹¹ Some of the Philistines brought gifts and silver as taxes. The Arabs also brought him flocks: 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats.

¹² So Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful. He built fortresses and cities where supplies were stored in Judah.

¹³ He had large supplies of food in the cities of Judah and an army of professional soldiers with him in Jerusalem.

¹⁴ The following is a breakdown of these soldiers. They are listed by families. Judah's regimental commanders were Commander Adnah (with 300,000 fighting men),

¹⁵ next to him Commander Jehohanan (with 280,000),

¹⁶ and next to him Amasiah, Zichri's son, who volunteered to serve the LORD (with 200,000 fighting men).

¹⁷ From Benjamin there was the fighting man Eliada (with 200,000 armed men with bows and shields),

¹⁸ and next to him was Jehozabad (with him was an army of 180,000 armed men).

¹⁹ These were the men who served the king in addition to those whom the king

put in the fortified cities throughout Judah.

18¹ Jehoshaphat was wealthy and honorable and became Ahab's in-law.

² A few years later he went to visit Ahab in Samaria. Ahab slaughtered many sheep and cattle for a banquet in honor of Jehoshaphat and the people who were with him. And Ahab persuaded Jehoshaphat to attack Ramoth in Gilead with him.

³ King Ahab of Israel asked King Jehoshaphat of Judah, "Will you go with me to Ramoth in Gilead?" Jehoshaphat told the king of Israel, "I will do what you do. My troops will do what your troops do. We will join your troops in battle."

⁴ Then Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "But first, find out what the word of the LORD is in this matter."

⁵ So the king of Israel called 400 prophets together. He asked them, "Should we go to war against Ramoth in Gilead or not?" "Go," they said. "God will hand over Ramoth to you."

⁶ But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD whom we could ask?"

⁷ The king of Israel told Jehoshaphat, "We can ask the LORD through Micaiah, son of Imla, but I hate him. Nothing he prophesies about me is good; it's always evil." Jehoshaphat answered, "The king must not say that."

⁸ The king of Israel called for an officer and said, "Quick! Get Micaiah, son of Imla!"

⁹ The king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah were dressed in royal robes and seated on thrones. They were sitting on the threshing floor at the entrance to the gate of Samaria. All the

prophets were prophesying in front of them.

¹⁰ Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, made iron horns and said, "This is what the LORD says: With these horns you will push the Arameans to their destruction."

¹¹ All the other prophets made the same prophecy. They said, "Attack Ramoth in Gilead, and you will win. The LORD will hand it over to you."

¹² The messenger who went to call Micaiah told him, "The prophets have all told the king the same good message. Make your message agree with their message. Say something good."

¹³ Micaiah answered, "I solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, I will tell him whatever my God says to me."

¹⁴ When he came to the king, the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth in Gilead or not?"

Micaiah said, "Attack and you will win. They will be handed over to you."

¹⁵ The king asked him, "How many times must I make you take an oath in the LORD'S name to tell me nothing but the truth?"

¹⁶ So Micaiah said, "I saw Israel's troops scattered in the hills like sheep without a shepherd. The LORD said, 'These sheep have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'"

¹⁷ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you he wouldn't prophesy anything good about me?"

¹⁸ Micaiah added, "Then hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and the entire army of heaven was standing on his right and his left.

¹⁹ The LORD asked, 'Who will deceive King Ahab of Israel so that he will attack and be killed at Ramoth in Gilead?' Some

answered one way, while others were saying something else.

²⁰ "Then the Spirit stepped forward, stood in front of the LORD, and said, 'I will deceive him.' "How?' the LORD asked.

²¹ "The Spirit answered, 'I will go out and be a spirit that tells lies through the mouths of all of Ahab's prophets.' "The LORD said, 'You will succeed in deceiving him. Go and do it.'

²² "So the LORD has put into the mouths of these prophets of yours a spirit that makes them tell lies. The LORD has spoken evil about you."

²³ Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah, went to Micaiah and struck him on the cheek. "Which way did the Spirit go when he left me to talk to you?" he asked.

²⁴ Micaiah answered, "You will find out on the day you go into an inner room to hide."

²⁵ The king of Israel then said, "Send Micaiah back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the prince.

²⁶ Say, 'This is what the king says: Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return home safely.'"

²⁷ Micaiah said, "If you really do come back safely, then the LORD wasn't speaking through me. Pay attention to this, everyone!"

²⁸ So the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to Ramoth in Gilead.

²⁹ The king of Israel told Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you should wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

³⁰ The king of Aram had given orders to the chariot commanders. He said, "Don't fight anyone except the king of Israel."

³¹ When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "He must be the king of Israel." So they surrounded him in order to fight him. But when Jehoshaphat cried out, the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him,
³² and the chariot commanders realized that Jehoshaphat wasn't the king of Israel. Then they turned away from him.

³³ One man aimed his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between his scale armor and his breastplate. Ahab told the chariot driver, "Turn around, and get me away from these troops. I'm badly wounded."

³⁴ But the battle got worse that day, and the king propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. At sundown he died.

19 ¹ King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned safely to his home in Jerusalem.

² Jehu, son of the seer Hanani, asked King Jehoshaphat, "Why do you help wicked people and love those who hate the LORD? The LORD'S anger is directed toward you because you have done this.

³ However, you've done some good things: You've burned the Asherah poles in this country, and you've wholeheartedly dedicated your life to serving God."

⁴ While Jehoshaphat was living in Jerusalem, he regularly went to the people between Beersheba and the mountains of Ephraim. He brought the people back to the LORD God of their ancestors.

⁵ He appointed judges in the country, in each fortified city of Judah.

⁶ He told the judges, "Pay attention to what you're doing. When you judge, you aren't doing it for a human but for

the LORD. He will be with you when you hear a case.

⁷ May you have the fear of the LORD in you. Be careful about what you do. The LORD our God is never unjust. He is impartial and never takes bribes."

⁸ In Jerusalem Jehoshaphat also appointed some Levites, priests, and family heads from Israel to administer the LORD'S laws and decide cases. They lived in Jerusalem.

⁹ He ordered them, "Do this wholeheartedly—with the fear of the LORD and with faithfulness.

¹⁰ Warn your relatives living in other cities about every case they bring to you, even if the case involves bloodshed or commands, rules, or regulations derived from Moses' Teachings. Then your relatives will not become guilty in front of the LORD. Otherwise, he will become

angry with you and your relatives. Do this, and you won't be guilty of anything.

¹¹ Now, the chief priest Amariah will be in charge of you in every matter involving the LORD. Zebadiah, who is the son of Ishmael and the leader of the tribe of Judah, will be in charge of every matter involving the king. The Levites will serve as officers of the court. Be strong, and do your job. May the LORD be with those who do right."

20 ¹ Later the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat.

² Some men reported to Jehoshaphat, "A large crowd is coming against you from the other side of the Dead Sea, from Edom. The crowd is already in Hazazon Tamar" (also called En Gedi).

³ Frightened, Jehoshaphat decided to ask for the LORD'S help. He announced a fast throughout Judah.

⁴ The people of Judah gathered to seek the LORD'S help. They came from every city in Judah.

⁵ In the new courtyard at the LORD'S temple, Jehoshaphat stood in front of the people.

⁶ He said, "LORD God of our ancestors, aren't you the God in heaven? You rule all the kingdoms of the nations. You possess power and might, and no one can oppose you.

⁷ Didn't you, our God, force those who were living in this country out of Israel's way? Didn't you give this country to the descendants of your friend Abraham to have permanently?

⁸ His descendants have lived in it and built a holy temple for your name in it. They said,

⁹ 'If evil comes in the form of war, flood, plague, or famine, we will stand in front of this temple and in front of you

because your name is in this temple. We will cry out to you in our troubles, and you will hear us and save us.'

¹⁰ "The Ammonites, Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir have come here. However, you didn't let Israel invade them when they came out of Egypt. The Israelites turned away from them and didn't destroy them.

¹¹ They are now paying us back by coming to force us out of your land that you gave to us.

¹² You're our God. Won't you judge them? We don't have the strength to face this large crowd that is attacking us. We don't know what to do, so we're looking to you."

¹³ All the people from Judah, their infants, wives, and children were standing in front of the LORD.

¹⁴ Then the LORD'S Spirit came to Jahaziel. (He was the son of Zechariah,

grandson of Benaiah, great-grandson of Jeiel, whose father was Mattaniah, a Levite descended from Asaph.)

¹⁵ Jahaziel said, "Pay attention to me, everyone from Judah, everyone living in Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat. This is what the LORD says to you: Don't be frightened or terrified by this large crowd. The battle isn't yours. It's God's.

¹⁶ Tomorrow go into battle against them. They will be coming up the Ziz Pass. You will find them at the end of the valley in front of the Jeruel Desert.

¹⁷ You won't fight this battle. Instead, take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the LORD for you, Judah and Jerusalem. Don't be frightened or terrified. Tomorrow go out to face them. The LORD is with you."

¹⁸ Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face touching the ground. Everyone from Judah and the people who lived in

Jerusalem immediately bowed down in front of the LORD.

¹⁹ The Levites, descendants of Kohath and Korah, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with very loud songs.

²⁰ They got up early in the morning and went to the desert of Tekoa. As they were leaving, Jehoshaphat stopped and said, "Listen to me, people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem. Trust the LORD your God, and believe. Believe his prophets, and you will succeed."

²¹ After he had advised the people, he appointed people to sing to the LORD and praise him for the beauty of his holiness. As they went in front of the troops, they sang, "Thank the LORD because his mercy endures forever!"

²² As they started to sing praises, the LORD set ambushes against the Ammonites, Moabites, and the people

of Mount Seir who had come into Judah. They were defeated.

²³ Then the Ammonites and Moabites attacked the people from Mount Seir and annihilated them. After they had finished off the people of Seir, they helped destroy one another.

²⁴ The people of Judah went to the watchtower in the desert and looked for the crowd. Corpses were lying on the ground. No one had escaped.

²⁵ When Jehoshaphat and his troops came to take the loot, they found among them a lot of goods, clothes, and valuables. They found more than they could carry. They spent three days collecting the loot.

²⁶ On the fourth day they gathered in the valley of Beracah. Because they thanked the LORD there, that place is still called the valley of Beracah [Thanks] today.

²⁷ All the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned to Jerusalem. They rejoiced while Jehoshaphat led them. The LORD gave them a reason to rejoice about what had happened to their enemies.

²⁸ So they brought harps, lyres, and trumpets to the LORD'S temple in Jerusalem.

²⁹ The fear of the LORD came over the kingdoms in that area when they heard how the LORD waged war against Israel's enemies.

³⁰ Jehoshaphat's kingdom was peaceful, since his God surrounded him with peace.

³¹ Jehoshaphat ruled as king of Judah. He was 35 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah, daughter of Shilhi.

³² Jehoshaphat carefully followed the example his father Asa had set and did what the LORD considered right.

³³ But the illegal worship sites on the hills were not torn down. The people still didn't have their hearts set on the God of their ancestors.

³⁴ Everything else about Jehoshaphat from first to last is written in the records of Jehu, son of Hanani, which is included in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

³⁵ After this, King Jehoshaphat of Judah allied himself with King Ahaziah of Israel, who led him to do evil.

³⁶ Jehoshaphat joined him in making ships to go to Tarshish. They made the ships in Ezion Geber.

³⁷ Then Eliezer, son of Dodavahu from Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat. He said, "The LORD will destroy your work because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah." So the

ships were wrecked and couldn't go to Tarshish.

21 ¹ Jehoshaphat lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. His son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

² He had the following brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael, and Shephatiah. All were the sons of King Jehoshaphat of Israel.

³ Their father gave them many gifts: silver, gold, and other expensive things, along with fortified cities in Judah. But Jehoshaphat gave the kingdom to Jehoram, who was the firstborn.

⁴ After Jehoram had taken over his father's kingdom, he strengthened his position and then executed all his brothers and some of the officials of Israel.

⁵ Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king, and he ruled for 8 years in Jerusalem.

⁶ He followed the ways of the kings of Israel, as Ahab's family had done, because his wife was Ahab's daughter. So he did what the LORD considered evil.

⁷ But the LORD, recalling the promise he had made to David, didn't want to destroy David's family. The LORD had told David that he would always give him and his descendants a shining lamp.

⁸ During Jehoram's time Edom rebelled against Judah and chose its own king.

⁹ Jehoram took all his chariot commanders to attack. The Edomites and their chariot commanders surrounded him, but he got up at night and broke through their lines.

¹⁰ So Edom rebelled against Judah's rule and is still independent today. At the same time Edom rebelled,

Libnah rebelled because Jehoram had abandoned the LORD God of his ancestors.

¹¹ Jehoram made illegal places of worship in the hills of Judah. This caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to chase after foreign gods as if they were prostitutes. So he led Judah astray.

¹² Then a letter came to him from the prophet Elijah. It read, "This is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: You haven't followed the ways of your father Jehoshaphat or the ways of King Asa of Judah.

¹³ Instead, you have followed the ways of the kings of Israel. You, like Ahab's family, have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to chase after foreign gods as if they were prostitutes. You have killed your brothers, your father's family. Your brothers were better than you.

¹⁴ The LORD will strike a great blow to your people, your sons, your wives, and all your property because you did this.

¹⁵ You will suffer from a chronic intestinal disease until your intestines come out."

¹⁶ The LORD prompted the Philistines and the Arabs who lived near the people of Sudan to attack Jehoram.

¹⁷ They fought against Judah, broke into the country, and took away everything that could be found in the royal palace. They even took Jehoram's sons and wives. The only son left was Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest son.

¹⁸ After this, the LORD struck Jehoram with an incurable intestinal disease.

¹⁹ Two years later, as his life was coming to an end, his intestines fell out because of his sickness. He died a painful death. His people did not make a bonfire in his honor as they had done for his ancestors.

²⁰ He was 32 years old when he became king, and he ruled for 8 years in Jerusalem. No one was sorry to see him die. He was buried in the City of David but not in the tombs of the kings.

22 ¹ The people of Jerusalem made Jehoram's youngest son Ahaziah king in his place, because the raiders who came to the camp with the Arabs had killed all the older sons. So Jehoram's son Ahaziah became king of Judah.

² Ahaziah was 42 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for one year in Jerusalem. His mother was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri.

³ Ahaziah also followed the ways of Ahab's family, because his mother gave him advice that led him to sin.

⁴ He did what the LORD considered evil, as Ahab's family had done. After his father died, they advised him to do what

Ahab's family had done. They did this to destroy him.

⁵ Ahaziah followed their advice and went with Ahab's son King Joram of Israel to fight against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. There the Arameans wounded Joram.

⁶ Joram returned to Jezreel to let his wounds heal. (He had been wounded by the Arameans at Ramah when he fought against King Hazael of Aram.) Then Jehoram's son Ahaziah went to Jezreel to see Ahab's son Joram, who was sick.

⁷ God brought about Ahaziah's downfall when he went to Joram. He went with Joram to meet Jehu, grandson of Nimshi. (The LORD had anointed Jehu to destroy Ahab's family.)

⁸ When Jehu was executing judgment on Ahab's family, he found Judah's leaders (Ahaziah's nephews) who were serving Ahaziah, and he killed them.

⁹ He searched for Ahaziah, and Jehu's men captured him while he was hiding in Samaria. They brought him to Jehu and killed him. Then they buried him. They explained, "Ahaziah is Jehoshaphat's grandson. Jehoshaphat dedicated his life to serving the LORD with all his heart." But no one in Ahaziah's family was able to rule as king.

¹⁰ When Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, saw that her son was dead, she began to destroy the entire royal family of the house of Judah.

¹¹ But Jehoshebeth, daughter of the king and sister of Ahaziah, took Ahaziah's son Joash. She saved him from being killed with the king's other sons, and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Jehoshebeth was the daughter of King Jehoram and wife of Jehoiada the priest. Because she was also Ahaziah's sister,

she hid Joash from Athaliah. So he wasn't killed.

¹² Joash was with the priests. He was hidden in God's temple for six years while Athaliah ruled the country.

23 ¹ In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada strengthened his position by making an agreement with the company commanders: Azariah, son of Jeroham, Ishmael, son of Jehohanan, Azariah, son of Obed, Maaseiah, son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat, son of Zichri.

² They went around Judah, gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah and the leaders of the families of Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

³ The whole assembly made an agreement with the king in God's temple. Then Jehoiada said to them, "Here is the king's son. He should be king, as the LORD said about David's descendants.

⁴ This is what you must do: One third of you, the priests and Levites who are on duty on the day of worship, must guard the gates.

⁵ Another third must be at the royal palace. And another third must be at Foundation Gate. All the people must be in the courtyards of the LORD'S temple.

⁶ No one should come into the LORD'S temple except the priests and the Levites who are on duty with them. They may enter because they are holy, but all other people should follow the LORD'S regulations.

⁷ The Levites should surround the king. Each man should have his weapon in his hand. Kill anyone who tries to come into the temple. Stay with the king wherever he goes."

⁸ So the Levites and all the Judeans did what the priest Jehoiada had ordered them. Each took his men who were

coming on duty on the day of worship as well as those who were about to go off duty. Jehoiada had not dismissed the priestly divisions.

⁹ Jehoiada gave the commanders the spears and the small and large shields that had belonged to King David but were now in God's temple.

¹⁰ All the troops stood with their weapons drawn. They were stationed around the king and around the altar and the temple (from the south side to the north side of the temple).

¹¹ Then they brought out the king's son, gave him the crown and the religious instructions, and Jehoiada and his sons made him king by anointing him. They said, "Long live the king!"

¹² When Athaliah heard the people running and praising the king, she went into the LORD'S temple, where the people were.

¹³ She looked, and the king was standing by the pillar at the entrance. The commanders and the trumpeters were by his side. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. The singers were leading the celebration with songs accompanied by musical instruments. As Athaliah tore her clothes in distress, she said, "Treason, treason!"

¹⁴ Then the priest Jehoiada brought the company commanders who were in charge of the army out of the temple. He said to them, "Take her out of the temple. Use your sword to kill anyone who follows her." (The priest had said, "Don't kill her in the LORD'S temple.")

¹⁵ So they arrested her as she entered Horse Gate of the royal palace, and they killed her there.

¹⁶ Jehoiada made a promise to the LORD on behalf of the king and his

people that they would be the LORD'S people.

¹⁷ Then all the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed Baal's altars and his statues and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, in front of the altars.

¹⁸ Next, Jehoiada appointed officials to be in charge of the LORD'S temple under the direction of the priests and Levites. (David had arranged them in divisions for the LORD'S temple. They were appointed to sacrifice burnt offerings to the LORD as it is written in Moses' Teachings. They made these offerings with joy and singing as David had directed.)

¹⁹ Jehoiada appointed gatekeepers for the gates of the LORD'S temple so that no one who was unclean for any reason could enter.

²⁰ He took the company commanders, the nobles, the people's governors,

and all the people of the land, and they brought the king from the LORD'S temple. They went through Upper Gate to the royal palace and seated the king on the royal throne. The nobles, the governors of the people, and

²¹ all the people of the land were celebrating. But the city was quiet because they had killed Athaliah with a sword.

24 ¹ Joash was 7 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zibiah from Beersheba.

² Joash did what the LORD considered right, as long as the priest Jehoiada lived.

³ Jehoiada got Joash two wives, and Joash had sons and daughters.

⁴ After this, Joash wanted to renovate the LORD'S temple.

⁵ He gathered the priests and the Levites and said to them, "Go to the

cities of Judah, and collect money throughout Israel to repair the temple of your God every year. Do it immediately!" But the Levites didn't do it immediately.

⁶ So the king called for the chief priest Jehoiada and asked him, "Why didn't you require the Levites to bring the contributions from Judah and Jerusalem? The LORD'S servant Moses and the assembly had required Israel to give contributions for the use of the tent containing the words of God's promise."

⁷ (The sons of that wicked woman Athaliah had broken into God's temple and used all the holy things of the LORD'S temple to worship other gods—the Baals.)

⁸ The king issued an order, and they made a box and placed it outside the gate of the LORD'S temple.

⁹ Then they issued a proclamation in Judah and Jerusalem that the

contributions should be brought to the LORD. (In the desert the LORD'S servant Moses had required Israel to make contributions.)

¹⁰ All the officials and all the people were overjoyed. They brought the money and dropped it into the box until it was full.

¹¹ Whenever the Levites brought the box to the king's officers and they saw a lot of money, the king's scribe and the chief priest's officer would empty the box and put it back in its place. They would do this every day, so they collected a lot of money.

¹² The king and Jehoiada would give the money to the foremen who were working on the LORD'S temple, and they hired masons and carpenters to renovate the LORD'S temple. They also hired men who worked with iron and bronze to repair the LORD'S temple.

¹³ As the men worked, the project progressed under the foremen's guidance. They restored God's temple to its proper condition and reinforced it.

¹⁴ When they finished, they brought the rest of the money to the king and Jehoiada, who used it to make utensils for the LORD'S temple. They made dishes and gold and silver utensils for the service and for the offerings. As long as Jehoiada lived, they sacrificed burnt offerings in the LORD'S temple.

¹⁵ When Jehoiada was old and had lived out his years, he died. He was 130 years old when he died.

¹⁶ He was buried in the City of David with the kings because of the good he had done in Israel for God and the temple.

¹⁷ After he died, the officials of Judah bowed in front of the king with their

faces touching the ground. Then the king listened to their advice.

¹⁸ They abandoned the temple of the LORD God of their ancestors and worshiped idols and the poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah. This offense of theirs brought God's anger upon Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁹ The LORD sent them prophets to bring them back to himself. The prophets warned them, but they wouldn't listen.

²⁰ God's Spirit gave Zechariah, son of the priest Jehoiada, strength. Zechariah stood in front of the people and said to them, "This is what God says: Why are you breaking the LORD'S commands? You won't prosper that way! The LORD has abandoned you because you have abandoned him."

²¹ But they plotted against Zechariah, and by the king's order they stoned him

to death in the courtyard of the LORD'S temple.

²² King Joash did not remember how kind Zechariah's father, Jehoiada, had been to him. Instead, he killed Jehoiada's son. As Zechariah died, he said, "May the LORD see this and get revenge!"

²³ At the end of the year, the Aramean army attacked Joash. They came to Judah and Jerusalem and destroyed all the people's leaders. The Arameans sent all the loot they took from Judah and Jerusalem to the king of Damascus.

²⁴ The Aramean army had come with a small number of men, but the LORD handed Joash's large army over to them because Joash's soldiers had abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors. So the Arameans carried out the LORD'S judgment on Joash.

²⁵ When the Arameans withdrew, they left him suffering from many wounds.

His own officials plotted against him for murdering the son of the priest Jehoiada. They killed Joash in his bed. When he died, they buried him in the City of David, but they didn't bury him in the tombs of the kings.

²⁶ These were the men who conspired against him: Zabad, son of an Ammonite woman named Shimeath, and Jehozabad, son of a Moabite woman named Shimrith.

²⁷ The record about his sons, the many divine revelations against him, and the rebuilding of God's temple is in the notes made in the Book of the Kings. His son Amaziah succeeded him as king.

25 ¹ Amaziah was 25 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jehoaddan from Jerusalem.

² He did what the LORD considered right, but he did not do it wholeheartedly.

³ As soon as he had firm control over the kingdom, he executed the officials who killed his father, the former king.

⁴ But he didn't execute their children. He obeyed the LORD'S command written in the Book of Moses' Teachings: "Parents must never be put to death for the crimes of their children, and children must never be put to death for the crimes of their parents. Each person must be put to death for his own crime."

⁵ Amaziah called the people of Judah together and assigned them by families to regiment and battalion commanders for all of Judah and Benjamin. He organized those who were at least 20 years old and found that he had 300,000 of the best men for the army, those who could handle a spear and a shield.

⁶ He also hired 100,000 soldiers from Israel for 7,500 pounds of silver.

⁷ But a man of God came to him and said, "Your Majesty, Israel's army must not go with you, because the LORD isn't with Israel. He's not with these men from Ephraim.

⁸ If you go into battle with them, no matter how courageous you are, God will use the enemy to defeat you, because God has the power to help you or to defeat you."

⁹ Amaziah asked the man of God, "What should I do about the 7,500 pounds of silver I gave the troops from Israel?" The man of God answered, "The LORD can give you much more than that."

¹⁰ Then Amaziah dismissed the troops that had come to him from Ephraim. But they became furious with Judah and returned home.

¹¹ Amaziah courageously led his troops. When he came to the Dead Sea region, he killed 10,000 men from Seir.

¹² The Judeans captured another 10,000 alive, took them to the top of a cliff, and threw them off the top of the cliff so that they were dismembered.

¹³ The troops that Amaziah sent back so that they couldn't go with him into battle raided the towns in Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon. They killed 3,000 people and took a lot of goods.

¹⁴ After Amaziah came back from defeating the Edomites, he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up as his gods, bowed down to them, and burned sacrifices to them.

¹⁵ The LORD became angry with Amaziah. He sent him a prophet who asked him, "Why do you dedicate your life to serving the gods of those people? Those gods couldn't save their own people from you."

¹⁶ As he was talking, the king asked him, "Did we make you an adviser to the

king? Stop! Do you want me to have you killed?" The prophet stopped. He said, "I know that God has decided to destroy you because you did this, but you refuse to listen to my advice."

¹⁷ After getting advice from his advisers, King Amaziah of Judah sent messengers to King Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz and grandson of Jehu of Israel, to declare war on Israel.

¹⁸ King Jehoash of Israel sent this message to King Amaziah of Judah: "A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon. It said, 'Let your daughter marry my son,' but a wild animal from Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle.

¹⁹ You say you defeated Edom, and now you've become arrogant enough to look for more fame. Stay home! Why must you invite disaster and your own defeat and take Judah with you?"

²⁰ But Amaziah wouldn't listen. (God made this happen because he wanted to hand over the Judeans to Jehoash because they had sought help from Edom's gods.)

²¹ So King Jehoash of Israel attacked, and King Amaziah of Judah met him in battle at Beth Shemesh in Judah.

²² Israel defeated the army of Judah, and the Judeans fled to their homes.

²³ King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah, son of Joash and grandson of Ahaziah of Judah, at Beth Shemesh and brought him to Jerusalem. He tore down a 600-foot section of the wall around Jerusalem from Ephraim Gate to Corner Gate.

²⁴ He took all the gold, silver, and all the utensils he found in God's temple with Obed Edom and in the royal palace treasury. He also took hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

²⁵ Joash's son King Amaziah of Judah lived 15 years after the death of Jehoahaz's son King Jehoash of Israel.

²⁶ Isn't everything else about Amaziah, from beginning to end, written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel?

²⁷ After Amaziah turned away from the LORD, conspirators in Jerusalem plotted against him. Amaziah fled to Lachish, but they sent men to Lachish after him and killed him there.

²⁸ They brought him back by horse and buried him in the city of Judah with his ancestors.

26 ¹ All the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was 16 years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah.

² Uzziah rebuilt Elath and returned it to Judah after King Amaziah lay down in death with his ancestors.

³ Uzziah was 16 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jecoliah from Jerusalem.

⁴ He did what the LORD considered right, as his father Amaziah had done.

⁵ He dedicated his life to serving God in the days of Zechariah, who taught him to fear God. As long as he dedicated his life to serving the LORD, the LORD gave him success.

⁶ Uzziah went to wage war against the Philistines. He tore down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. He built cities near Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines.

⁷ God helped him when he attacked the Philistines, the Arabs who lived in Gur Baal, and the Meunites.

⁸ The Ammonites paid taxes to Uzziah, and his fame spread to the border of Egypt because he became very powerful.

⁹ Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at Corner Wall, Valley Gate, and the Angle, and he reinforced them.

¹⁰ He built towers in the desert. He dug many cisterns because he had a lot of herds in the foothills and the plains. He had farmers and vineyard workers in the mountains and the fertile fields because he loved the soil.

¹¹ Uzziah had an army of professional soldiers. They were ready to go to war in their companies based on the number organized by the scribe Jeiel and the officer Maaseiah. They were commanded by Hananiah, one of the king's officials.

¹² The total number of family heads among these warriors was 2,600.

¹³ Under them was an army of 307,500 soldiers. They were a powerful force that could support the king against the enemy.

¹⁴ For the entire army Uzziah prepared shields, spears, helmets, armor, bows, and stones for slings.

¹⁵ In Jerusalem he made machines designed by inventive people. The machines were placed on the towers and corners to shoot arrows and hurl large stones. Uzziah's fame spread far and wide because he had strong support until he became powerful.

¹⁶ But when he became powerful, his pride destroyed him. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God. He went into the LORD'S temple to burn incense on the incense altar.

¹⁷ The priest Azariah went in after him with 80 of the LORD'S courageous priests.

¹⁸ They opposed King Uzziah. They said to him, "Uzziah, you have no right to burn incense as an offering to the LORD. That right belongs to the priests, Aaron's

descendants, who have been given the holy task of burning incense. Get out of the holy place because you have been unfaithful. The LORD God will not honor you for this."

¹⁹ Uzziah, who held an incense burner in his hand, became angry. While he was angry with the priests, a skin disease broke out on his forehead. This happened in front of the priests in the LORD'S temple as Uzziah was at the incense altar.

²⁰ When the chief priest Azariah and all the priests turned toward him, a skin disease was on his forehead. They rushed him away. Uzziah was in a hurry to get out because the LORD had inflicted him with the disease.

²¹ King Uzziah had a skin disease until the day he died. Since he had a skin disease, he lived in a separate house and was barred from the LORD'S temple. His

son Jotham was in charge of the royal palace and governed the country.

²² Everything else about Uzziah, from beginning to end, is recorded by the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz.

²³ Uzziah lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried with them in a field containing tombs that belonged to the kings. People said, "He had a skin disease." His son Jotham succeeded him as king.

27 ¹ Jotham was 25 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jerushah, daughter of Zadok.

² He did what the LORD considered right, as his father Uzziah had done. But unlike his father, he didn't illegally enter the LORD'S temple. Nevertheless, the people continued their corrupt ways.

³ Jotham built the Upper Gate of the LORD'S temple and did extensive building of the wall at the Ophel.

⁴ He built cities in the hills of Judah, and he built forts and towers in the wooded areas.

⁵ He fought with the king of the Ammonites and conquered them. That year the Ammonites gave him 7,500 pounds of silver, 60,000 bushels of wheat, and 60,000 bushels of barley. The Ammonites gave him the same amount for two more years.

⁶ Jotham grew powerful because he was determined to live as the LORD his God wanted.

⁷ Everything else about Jotham—all his wars and his life—is written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

⁸ He was 25 years old when he began to rule as king. He ruled for 16 years in Jerusalem.

⁹ Jotham lay down in death with his ancestors, and they buried him in the City of David. His son Ahaz succeeded him as king.

28 ¹ Ahaz was 20 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 26 years in Jerusalem. He didn't do what the LORD considered right, as his ancestor David had done.

² He followed the example of the kings of Israel and even made metal idols for worshiping other gods—the Baals.

³ He burned sacrifices in the valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his son by burning him alive, one of the disgusting things done by the nations that the LORD had forced out of the Israelites' way.

⁴ He offered sacrifices and burned incense as an offering at the illegal worship sites, which were on hills and under every large tree.

⁵ So the LORD his God handed him over to the king of Aram, who defeated him, captured many prisoners, and brought them to Damascus. He also handed him over to the king of Israel, who decisively defeated him.

⁶ In one day Pekah, son of Remaliah, killed 120,000 soldiers in Judah because they had abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors.

⁷ Zichri, a fighting man from Ephraim, killed Maaseiah, who was the king's son, Azrikam, who was in charge of the palace, and Elkanah, who was the king's second-in-command.

⁸ The Israelites captured 200,000 women, boys, and girls from their relatives the Judeans. They also took a lot of goods from Judah and brought them to Samaria.

⁹ A prophet of the LORD named Oded was there. He went to meet the army

coming home to Samaria. He said to them, "The LORD God of your ancestors handed Judah over to you in his anger. You killed them in a rage that reaches up to heaven.

¹⁰ Now you intend to enslave the men and women of Judah and Jerusalem. But aren't you also guilty of sinning against the LORD your God?

¹¹ Listen to me. Return these prisoners you have captured from your relatives, because the LORD is very angry with you."

¹² Then Azariah, son of Jehohan, Berechiah, son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah, son of Shallum, and Amasa, son of Hadlai (some leaders of Ephraim) opposed those coming home from the army.

¹³ They said to the army, "Don't bring the prisoners here. You'll make us responsible for this sin against the LORD.

Do you intend to add to all our sins? The LORD is very angry with Israel because we have already sinned."

¹⁴ So the army left the prisoners and the loot in front of the leaders and the whole assembly.

¹⁵ Then the men who were mentioned by name took charge of the prisoners and gave clothes from the loot to all the prisoners who were naked. They provided clothes for them, gave them sandals, gave them something to eat and drink, and let them bathe. They put everyone who was exhausted on donkeys and brought them to Jericho (the City of Palms) near their own people. Then they returned to Samaria.

¹⁶ At that time King Ahaz sent for help from the kings of Assyria.

¹⁷ The Edomites had again invaded and defeated Judah and captured prisoners.

¹⁸ The Philistines had raided the foothills and the Negev in Judah. They captured and began living in Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco and its villages, Timnah and its villages, and Gimzo and its villages.

¹⁹ The LORD humbled Judah because of King Ahaz of Israel. Ahaz had spread sin throughout Judah and was unfaithful to the LORD.

²⁰ King Tillegath Pilneser of Assyria attacked Ahaz. Instead of strengthening Ahaz, Tillegath Pilneser made trouble for him.

²¹ Ahaz took some of the things from the LORD'S temple, the royal palace, and the princes, and he gave them to the king of Assyria. But that didn't help him.

²² When he had this trouble, King Ahaz became more unfaithful to the LORD.

²³ He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, the gods who had defeated

him. He thought, "The gods of the kings of Aram are helping them. I'll sacrifice to them so that they will help me." But they ruined him and all Israel.

²⁴ Ahaz collected the utensils in God's temple, cut them up, and closed the doors to the LORD'S temple. He made altars for himself on every corner in Jerusalem.

²⁵ And in each city of Judah, he made places of worship to sacrifice to other gods. So he made the LORD God of his ancestors angry.

²⁶ Everything else about him—everything from beginning to end—is written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

²⁷ Ahaz lay down in death with his ancestors and was buried in the city of Jerusalem because they didn't put him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. His son Hezekiah succeeded him as king.

29 ¹ Hezekiah began to rule as king when he was 25 years old. He ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Abijah, daughter of Zechariah.

² He did what the LORD considered right, as his ancestor David had done.

³ In the first month of his first year as king, he opened the doors of the LORD'S temple and repaired them.

⁴ He brought the priests and Levites together in the square on the east side of the temple.

⁵ He said to them, "Listen to me, Levites. Perform the ceremonies to make the temple of the LORD God of your ancestors holy. Remove anything that has been corrupted from the holy place.

⁶ Our ancestors were unfaithful and did what the LORD our God considered evil. They deserted him. They turned away

from the LORD'S tent and turned their backs on him.

⁷ They also shut the doors of the temple's entrance hall, extinguished the lamps, and didn't burn incense or sacrifice burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel.

⁸ So the LORD was angry with Judah and Jerusalem. He made them something that shocks and terrifies people and that people ridicule, as you can see with your own eyes.

⁹ Our fathers were killed in battle, and our sons, daughters, and wives are prisoners because of this.

¹⁰ Now I intend to make a pledge to the LORD God of Israel so that he may turn his burning anger away from us.

¹¹ Don't be negligent, my sons. The LORD has chosen you to stand in front of him, serve him, be his servants, and burn sacrifices."

¹² So the Levites started to work. From Kohath's descendants were Mahath, son of Amasai, and Joel, son of Azariah. From Merari's descendants were Kish, son of Abdi, and Azariah, son of Jehallelel. From Gershon's descendants were Joah, son of Zimmah, and Eden, son of Joah.

¹³ From Elizaphan's descendants were Shimri and Jeiel. From Asaph's descendants were Zechariah and Mattaniah.

¹⁴ From Heman's descendants were Jehiel and Shimei. From Jeduthun's descendants were Shemaiah and Uzziel.

¹⁵ These men gathered their relatives and performed the ceremonies to make themselves holy. Then they obeyed the king's order from the LORD'S word and entered the temple to make it clean.

¹⁶ The priests entered the LORD'S temple to make it clean. They carried into the courtyard every unclean thing

that they found in the LORD'S temple. Then the Levites took the unclean items outside the city to the Kidron Brook.

¹⁷ They started on the first day of the first month. On the eighth day they went into the LORD'S entrance hall, and for eight days they performed the ceremonies to make the LORD'S temple holy. They finished on the sixteenth day of the first month.

¹⁸ Then they went to King Hezekiah. They said to him, "We have made all of the LORD'S temple clean. This includes the altar for burnt offerings, all its utensils, the table for the rows of bread and all its utensils,

¹⁹ and all the utensils King Ahaz refused to use during his reign when he was unfaithful. We have restored them and made them holy. They are in front of the LORD'S altar."

²⁰ Early in the morning Hezekiah gathered the leaders of the city and went to the LORD'S temple.

²¹ They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats as an offering for sin for the kingdom, the holy place, and Judah. Hezekiah told the priests, Aaron's descendants, to sacrifice the animals on the LORD'S altar.

²² So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests sprinkled the blood on the altar. Then they slaughtered the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. After that, they slaughtered the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar.

²³ Then they brought the male goats for the offering for sin in front of the king and the assembly, who laid their hands on them.

²⁴ The priests slaughtered the goats and made their blood an offering for sin at the altar to make peace with the

LORD for Israel. The king had said that the burnt offerings and offerings for sin should be for all Israel.

²⁵ He had the Levites stand in the LORD'S temple with cymbals, harps, and lyres as David, the king's seer Gad, and the prophet Nathan had ordered. This command came from the LORD through his prophets.

²⁶ The Levites stood with David's instruments, and the priests had the trumpets.

²⁷ Then Hezekiah ordered the sacrificing of burnt offerings on the altar. When the burnt offerings started, the songs to the LORD started. These songs were accompanied by trumpets and the instruments of King David of Israel.

²⁸ The whole assembly bowed down with their faces touching the ground, singers began to sing, and the trumpets

blew until the burnt offering was finished.

²⁹ When the burnt offerings were finished, the king and everyone who was with him kneeled and bowed down.

³⁰ Then King Hezekiah and the leaders told the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and the seer Asaph. They joyfully sang praises, bowed down, and worshiped.

³¹ Hezekiah said, "You have dedicated your lives to the LORD. Come, bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the LORD'S temple." The assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and everyone who was willing brought burnt offerings.

³² The burnt offerings brought by the assembly totaled 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs. All of these were burnt offerings to the LORD.

³³ The animals dedicated as holy sacrifices were 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep.

³⁴ But the priests needed more help to skin all the burnt offerings. So their relatives, the Levites, helped them until the work was completed and the priests could make themselves holy. The Levites were more diligent in making themselves holy than the priests were.

³⁵ There were many burnt offerings in addition to the fat of the fellowship offerings and wine offerings that accompanied the burnt offerings. So the worship in the LORD'S temple was reestablished.

³⁶ Hezekiah and all the people were overjoyed because of what God had done for the people. Everything had happened so quickly.

30 ¹ Hezekiah sent a message to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters

to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. He invited them to come to the LORD'S temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover of the LORD God of Israel.

² The king, his officials, and the whole assembly in Jerusalem decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month.

³ They couldn't celebrate it at the regular time because not enough priests had performed the ceremonies to make themselves holy and the people hadn't gathered in Jerusalem.

⁴ The king and the whole assembly considered their plan to be the right thing to do.

⁵ So they decided to send an announcement throughout Israel from Beersheba to Dan. They summoned everyone to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover of the LORD God of Israel. These people had not

celebrated it in large numbers as the written instructions said they should.

⁶ Messengers took letters from the king and his officials throughout Israel and Judah. The king's order said, "Israelites, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Then he will return to the few of you who escaped from the power of the kings of Assyria.

⁷ Don't be like your ancestors and your relatives who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their ancestors. He made them something that shocks people, as you have seen.

⁸ Don't be impossible to deal with like your ancestors. Reach out for the LORD. Come to his holy place that he made holy forever. Serve the LORD your God, and he will turn his burning anger away from you.

⁹ When you return to the LORD, your relatives and children will find

compassion from those who captured them. They will return to this land. The LORD your God is merciful and compassionate. He will not turn his face away from you if you return to him."

¹⁰ So the messengers went from city to city in the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun. But the people ridiculed them.

¹¹ However, some people from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.

¹² Also, God guided the people of Judah so that they united to carry out the command which the king and the leaders gave from the LORD'S word.

¹³ Many people gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month. They formed a large assembly.

¹⁴ Then the people got rid of the idols' altars in Jerusalem. They got rid of all

the altars for incense by dumping them in the Kidron Valley.

¹⁵ They slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and Levites were ashamed, so they performed the ceremonies to make themselves holy. Then they brought burnt offerings to the LORD'S temple.

¹⁶ They stood in their regular places as instructed by Moses' Teachings. (Moses was a man of God.) The priests sprinkled the blood they received from the Levites.

¹⁷ Many people in the assembly had not made themselves holy. So the Levites had to kill the Passover lambs for all who weren't clean and couldn't make their lambs holy for the LORD.

¹⁸ Many people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not made themselves clean. So they ate the Passover, but not in the way the

written instructions said they should. Hezekiah prayed for them: "May the good LORD forgive

¹⁹ those who have their hearts set on dedicating their lives to serving God. May the LORD God of their ancestors do this for those who are not clean as required for the holy place."

²⁰ The LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

²¹ So the Israelites in Jerusalem celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy. Each day the Levites and priests praised the LORD in song. They played the LORD'S instruments loudly.

²² Hezekiah spoke encouraging words to all the Levites who had the skills to serve the LORD. They ate the festival meals for seven days, sacrificed fellowship offerings, and confessed their sins to the LORD God of their ancestors.

²³ Then the whole assembly decided to celebrate the festival for seven more days. So they joyfully celebrated for seven more days.

²⁴ King Hezekiah of Judah provided 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep as sacrifices for the assembly. The leaders provided 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep for the assembly. So a large number of priests were able to perform the ceremonies to make themselves holy.

²⁵ The whole assembly from Judah, the priests, the Levites, the whole assembly from Israel, the foreigners who came from Israel, and those who lived in Judah rejoiced.

²⁶ The city of Jerusalem was filled with joy. Nothing like this had happened in Jerusalem since the days of King Solomon of Israel.

²⁷ Then the Levitical priests blessed the people. Their voices were heard, and

their prayers went to God's holy place in heaven.

31 ¹ When this was over, all the Israelites who were there went to the cities in Judah. They crushed the sacred stones, cut down the poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah, and tore down the illegal places of worship and the altars throughout Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. The Israelites destroyed all of these things. Then all the Israelites returned to their own cities. Each person went to his own property.

² Hezekiah assigned the priests and the Levites to divisions. Each priest or Levite was put in a division based on the service he performed: sacrificing burnt offerings, sacrificing fellowship offerings, serving, giving thanks, or praising within the gates of the LORD'S camp.

³ He set aside part of the king's property for burnt offerings, the morning and evening offerings, burnt offerings on the weekly worship days, the New Moon Festivals, and the annual festivals, as it is written in the LORD'S Teachings.

⁴ He told the people living in Jerusalem to give the priests and Levites the portions they were due so that they could devote themselves to the LORD'S Teachings.

⁵ As soon as the word spread, the Israelites brought plenty of offerings from the first of their produce: grain, new wine, fresh olive oil, honey, and every crop from the fields. They brought large quantities, a tenth of everything.

⁶ The people of Israel and Judah who were living in the cities of Judah brought a tenth of their cattle and sheep and a tenth of the holy things they had

dedicated to the LORD their God. They piled these holy things in heaps.

⁷ In the third month they started piling them up, and in the seventh month they finished.

⁸ When Hezekiah and the leaders saw the heaps, they praised the LORD and his people Israel.

⁹ Hezekiah asked the priests and the Levites about the heaps.

¹⁰ The chief priest Azariah from Zadok's family said, "Since the people started to bring the offerings to the LORD'S temple, we have had all we wanted to eat and plenty to spare. The LORD has blessed his people, and there's a lot left over."

¹¹ Then Hezekiah told them to prepare storerooms in the LORD'S temple. After they had prepared them,

¹² they faithfully brought in the contributions, the offerings of one-tenth of the crops, and the gifts dedicated to

God. The Levite Conaniah was in charge of these things, and his brother Shimei was his assistant.

¹³ King Hezekiah and Azariah, who was in charge of God's temple, appointed Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah to serve under Conaniah and his brother Shimei.

¹⁴ Kore, son of Imnah the Levite, was the gatekeeper at East Gate and had to take care of the freewill offerings made to God. His responsibility was to distribute the offerings made to the LORD and the holy gifts dedicated to God.

¹⁵ Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah served under him in the cities belonging to the priests. They were to distribute the offerings faithfully to all their relatives, young and old, by their divisions.

¹⁶ They were appointed to distribute them to males who were at least three years old. The way they were enrolled in the genealogical records did not matter. The six men who served under Kore were to distribute the offerings to everyone who went to the LORD'S temple to perform the daily service that each division was responsible for.

¹⁷ They were to distribute offerings to the priests who were enrolled by families and to the Levites who were at least 20 years old. Distribution was based on the way they served in their divisions.

¹⁸ The priests and Levites were enrolled with their wives, sons, daughters, and other people who depended on them—the whole community. The priests and Levites had to be faithful in keeping themselves holy for the holy work.

¹⁹ Men were appointed to give a portion of the offerings to all the males in the priestly families and to everyone listed in the genealogies of the Levites. These men were Aaron's descendants, priests who lived in the pasturelands of every Levite city.

²⁰ This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah. He did what was good and right and true to the LORD his God.

²¹ Hezekiah incorporated Moses' Teachings and commands into worship and dedicated his life to serving God. Whatever he did for the worship in God's temple, he did wholeheartedly, and he succeeded.

32 ¹ After everything Hezekiah had done so faithfully, King Sennacherib of Assyria came to invade Judah. He set up camp to attack the fortified cities. He intended to conquer them himself.

² When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come to wage war against Jerusalem,

³ he, his officers, and his military staff made plans to stop the water from flowing out of the springs outside the city. They helped him do it.

⁴ A large crowd gathered as they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land. They said, "Why should the kings of Assyria find plenty of water?"

⁵ Hezekiah worked hard. He rebuilt all the broken sections of the wall, made the towers taller, built another wall outside the city wall, strengthened the Millo in the City of David, and made plenty of weapons and shields.

⁶ He appointed military commanders over the troops and gathered the commanders in the square by the

city gate. He spoke these words of encouragement:

⁷ "Be strong and courageous. Don't be frightened or terrified by the king of Assyria or the crowd with him. Someone greater is on our side.

⁸ The king of Assyria has human power on his side, but the LORD our God is on our side to help us and fight our battles." So the people were encouraged by what King Hezekiah of Judah said.

⁹ After this, while King Sennacherib of Assyria and all his royal forces were attacking Lachish, he sent his officers to King Hezekiah of Judah and to all of the people in Judah who were in Jerusalem to say:

¹⁰ "This is what King Sennacherib of Assyria says: Why are you so confident as you live in Jerusalem while it is blockaded?

¹¹ Isn't Hezekiah misleading you and abandoning you to die from hunger and thirst when he says, 'The LORD our God will rescue us from the king of Assyria?'

¹² Isn't this the same Hezekiah who got rid of the LORD'S places of worship and altars and told Judah and Jerusalem, 'Worship and sacrifice at one altar?'

¹³ Don't you know what I and my predecessors have done to the people of all other countries? Were any of the gods of these other nations ever able to rescue their countries from me?

¹⁴ Were the gods of these nations able to rescue their people from my control? My predecessors claimed and destroyed those nations. Is your God able to rescue you from my control?

¹⁵ Don't let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this. Don't believe him. No god of any nation or kingdom could save his people from me or my

ancestors. Certainly, your God will not rescue you from me!"

¹⁶ Sennacherib's officers said more against the LORD God and his servant Hezekiah.

¹⁷ Sennacherib wrote letters cursing the LORD God of Israel. These letters said, "As the gods of the nations in other countries couldn't rescue their people from me, Hezekiah's God cannot rescue his people from me."

¹⁸ Sennacherib's officers shouted loudly in the Judean language to the troops who were on the wall of Jerusalem. They tried to frighten and terrify the troops so that they could capture the city.

¹⁹ They spoke about the God of Jerusalem as if he were one of the gods made by human hands and worshiped by the people in other countries.

²⁰ Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, prayed about this and called to heaven.

²¹ The LORD sent an angel who exterminated all the soldiers, officials, and commanders in the Assyrian king's camp. Humiliated, Sennacherib returned to his own country. When he went into the temple of his god, some of his own sons killed him with a sword.

²² So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people living in Jerusalem from King Sennacherib of Assyria and from everyone else. The LORD gave them peace with all their neighbors.

²³ Many people still went to Jerusalem to bring gifts to the LORD and expensive presents to King Hezekiah of Judah. From then on, he was considered important by all the nations.

²⁴ In those days Hezekiah became sick and was about to die. He prayed to the

LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign.

²⁵ But Hezekiah was conceited, so he didn't repay the LORD for his kindness. The LORD became angry with him, with Judah, and with Jerusalem.

²⁶ Hezekiah and the people living in Jerusalem humbled themselves when they realized they had become conceited. So the LORD didn't vent his anger on them during Hezekiah's time.

²⁷ Hezekiah became richer and was highly honored. He prepared storerooms for himself to hold silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields, and all kinds of valuables.

²⁸ He made sheds to store his harvests of grain, new wine, and fresh olive oil, and he made barns for all his cattle and stalls for his flocks.

²⁹ He made cities for himself because he had many sheep and cattle. God had given him a lot of property.

³⁰ Hezekiah was the one who stopped the water from flowing from the upper outlet of Gihon. He channeled the water directly underground to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah succeeded in everything he did.

³¹ When the leaders of Babylon sent ambassadors to ask him about the miraculous sign that had happened in the land, God left him. God did this to test him, to find out everything that was in Hezekiah's heart.

³² Everything else about Hezekiah, including his devotion to God, is written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, and in the records of the kings of Judah and Israel.

³³ Hezekiah lay down in death with his ancestors. He was buried in the upper

tombs of David's descendants. When Hezekiah died, all of Judah and the people in Jerusalem honored him. His son Manasseh succeeded him as king.

33 ¹ Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 55 years in Jerusalem.

² He did what the LORD considered evil by copying the disgusting things done by the nations that the LORD had forced out of the Israelites' way.

³ He rebuilt the illegal places of worship that his father Hezekiah had torn down. He set up altars dedicated to other gods—the Baals—and made a pole dedicated to the goddess Asherah as King Ahab of Israel had done. Manasseh, like Ahab, worshiped and served the entire army of heaven.

⁴ He built altars in the LORD'S temple, where the LORD had said, "My name will be in Jerusalem forever."

⁵ In the two courtyards of the LORD'S temple, he built altars for the entire army of heaven.

⁶ He burned his son as a sacrifice in the valley of Ben Hinnom, consulted fortunetellers, cast evil spells, practiced witchcraft, and appointed royal mediums and psychics. He did many things that made the LORD furious.

⁷ Manasseh had a carved idol made. Then he set it up in God's temple, where God had said to David and his son Solomon, "I have chosen this temple and Jerusalem from all the tribes of Israel. I will put my name here forever.

⁸ I will never again remove Israel from the land that I set aside for their ancestors if they will obey all the commands, all the teachings, the ordinances, and the regulations I gave through Moses."

⁹ Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that they did more evil things than the nations that the LORD had destroyed when the Israelites arrived in the land.

¹⁰ When the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, they wouldn't even pay attention.

¹¹ So the LORD made the army commanders of the king of Assyria invade Judah. They took Manasseh captive, put a hook in his nose, put him in bronze shackles, and brought him to Babylon.

¹² When he experienced this distress, he begged the LORD his God to be kind and humbled himself in front of the God of his ancestors.

¹³ He prayed to the LORD, and the LORD accepted his prayer and listened to his request. The LORD brought him

back to his kingdom in Jerusalem. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God.

¹⁴ After this, Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David from west of Gihon Spring in the valley to the entrance of Fish Gate. He made the wall go around the Ophel, and he built it very high. He put army commanders in every fortified city in Judah.

¹⁵ Manasseh got rid of the foreign gods and the idol in the LORD'S temple. He got rid of the altars he had built in the temple on the LORD'S mountain and in Jerusalem.

¹⁶ He built the LORD'S altar and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it. And he told Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁷ The people continued to sacrifice at the illegal places of worship, but they sacrificed only to the LORD their God.

¹⁸ Everything else about Manasseh—including his prayer to his God and the words that the seers spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel—are in the records of the kings of Israel.

¹⁹ His prayer and how God accepted it are written in the records of Hozai. The things he did before he humbled himself are also written there. This includes all his sins and unfaithfulness and the places where he built illegal worship sites and set up idols and poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah.

²⁰ Manasseh lay down in death with his ancestors. They buried him in his own palace. His son Amon succeeded him as king.

²¹ Amon was 22 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 2 years in Jerusalem.

²² He did what the LORD considered evil, as his father Manasseh had done.

Amon sacrificed to all the idols his father Manasseh had made, and he worshiped them.

²³ He didn't humble himself in front of the LORD as his father Manasseh had humbled himself. Instead, Amon continued to sin.

²⁴ His officials plotted against him and killed him in his palace.

²⁵ Then the people of the land killed everyone who had plotted against King Amon. They made his son Josiah king in his place.

34 ¹ Josiah was 8 years old when he began to rule, and he was king for 31 years in Jerusalem.

² He did what the LORD considered right. He lived in the ways of his ancestor David and never stopped living this way.

³ In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still a boy, he began to dedicate his life to serving the God of his ancestor

David. In his twelfth year as king, he began to make Judah and Jerusalem clean by destroying the illegal places of worship, poles dedicated to the goddess Asherah, carved idols, and metal idols.

⁴ He had the altars of the various Baal gods torn down. He cut down the incense altars that were above them. He destroyed the Asherah poles, carved idols, and metal idols. He ground them into powder and scattered the powder over the tombs of those who had sacrificed to them.

⁵ He burned the bones of the priests on their altars. So he made Judah and Jerusalem clean.

⁶ In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, he removed all their temples,

⁷ tore down the altars, beat the Asherah poles and idols into powder, and cut down all the incense altars

everywhere in Israel. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

⁸ In the eighteenth year of his reign as he was making the land and the temple clean, Josiah sent Shaphan, son of Azaliah, Maaseiah, the mayor of the city, and Joah, the royal historian and son of Joahaz, to repair the temple of the LORD his God.

⁹ They came to the chief priest Hilkiah and gave him the money that had been brought to God's temple, the money that the Levite doorkeepers had collected from the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all who were left in Israel, from everyone in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

¹⁰ They gave the money to the foremen who were in charge of the LORD'S temple. These foremen gave it to the

workmen who were restoring and repairing the temple.

¹¹ (These workers included carpenters and builders.) They were to buy quarried stones and wood for the fittings and beams of the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to become run-down.

¹² The men did their work faithfully under the supervision of Jahath and Obadiah (Levites descended from Merari), and Zechariah and Meshullam (descendants of Kohath). The Levites, who were skilled musicians,

¹³ also supervised the workers and directed all the workmen on the various jobs. Some of the Levites served as scribes, officials, or gatekeepers.

¹⁴ When they brought out the money that had been deposited in the LORD'S temple, the priest Hilkiah found the

book of the LORD'S Teachings written by Moses.

¹⁵ Hilkiyah told the scribe Shaphan, "I have found the book of the Teachings in the LORD'S temple." Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan.

¹⁶ Shaphan took the book to the king and reported, "We are doing everything you told us to do.

¹⁷ We took the money that was donated in the LORD'S temple and gave it to the supervisors and the workmen."

¹⁸ Then the scribe Shaphan told the king, "The priest Hilkiyah has given me a book." And Shaphan read it to the king.

¹⁹ When the king heard what the Teachings said, he tore his clothes in distress.

²⁰ Then the king gave an order to Hilkiyah, Ahikam (son of Shaphan), Abdon (son of Micah), the scribe Shaphan, and the royal official Asaiah. He said,

²¹ "On behalf of those who are left in Israel and Judah and me, ask the LORD about the words in this book that was found. The LORD'S fierce anger has been poured on us because our ancestors did not obey the word of the LORD by doing everything written in this book."

²² So Hilkiah and the king's officials went to talk to the prophet Huldah about this matter. She was the wife of Shallum, son of Tokhath and grandson of Hasrah. Shallum was in charge of the royal wardrobe. Huldah was living in the Second Part of Jerusalem.

²³ She told them, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Tell the man who sent you to me,

²⁴ 'This is what the LORD says: I'm going to bring disaster on this place and on the people living here according to the curses written in the book that was read to the king of Judah.

²⁵ I will do this because they have abandoned me and sacrificed to other gods in order to make me furious. Therefore, my anger will be poured on this place and will never come to an end.'"

²⁶ Huldah added, "Tell Judah's king who sent you to me to ask the LORD a question, 'This is what the LORD God of Israel says about the words you heard:

²⁷ You had a change of heart and humbled yourself in front of God when you heard my words against this place and those who live here. You humbled yourself, tore your clothes in distress, and cried in front of me. So I will listen to you, declares the LORD.

²⁸ That is why I'm going to bring you to your ancestors. I'm going to bring you to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see any of the disaster I'm going to

bring on this place and those who live here.'" So they reported this to the king.

²⁹ Then the king sent for all the respected leaders of Judah and Jerusalem to join him.

³⁰ The king, everyone in Judah, everyone living in Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites, and all the people (young and old) went up to the LORD'S temple. He read everything written in the Book of the Promise found in the LORD'S temple so that they could hear it.

³¹ The king stood in his place and made a promise to the LORD that he would follow the LORD and obey his commands, instructions, and laws with all his heart and soul. He said he would live by the terms of the promise written in this book.

³² He also made all those found in Jerusalem and Benjamin join with him in the promise. Then the people of

Jerusalem lived according to the promise of God, the God of their ancestors.

³³ Josiah got rid of all the disgusting idols throughout Israelite territory. He made all people found in Israel serve the LORD their God. As long as he lived, they didn't stop following the LORD God of their ancestors.

35 ¹ Josiah celebrated the Passover for the LORD in Jerusalem. The Passover lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth day of the first month.

² Josiah appointed the priests to their duties and encouraged them to serve in the LORD'S temple.

³ He told the Levites, who instructed all Israel and performed ceremonies to make themselves holy to the LORD, "Put the holy ark in the temple that Solomon, son of David and king of Israel, built. It shouldn't be carried on your shoulders

any longer. Serve the LORD your God and his people Israel.

⁴ Get yourselves ready with the family groups of your divisions, which are listed in the records of King David of Israel and the records of his son Solomon.

⁵ Stand in the holy place representing the family divisions of your relatives, the people of Israel. Let the Levites be considered a part of each family.

⁶ Slaughter the Passover lamb, perform the ceremonies to make yourselves holy, and prepare the lambs for the other Israelites as the LORD instructed us through Moses."

⁷ Josiah provided the people with 33,000 sheep and goats to be sacrificed as Passover offerings for all who were present. In addition, he provided 3,000 bulls. (These animals were the king's property.)

⁸ His officials also voluntarily gave animals to the people, priests, and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the men in charge of God's temple, gave the priests 2,600 sheep and goats and 300 bulls for Passover sacrifices.

⁹ Conaniah and his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad, the leaders of the Levites, gave the Levites 5,000 sheep and goats and 500 bulls as Passover sacrifices.

¹⁰ So the service was prepared. The priests took their positions with the Levites according to their divisions, as the king had ordered.

¹¹ They slaughtered the Passover lambs. The priests sprinkled the blood with their hands while the Levites skinned the lambs.

¹² They set aside the burnt offerings to give them to the laypeople according to their family divisions. The laypeople

could then present them to the LORD as written in the Book of Moses. The Levites did the same with the bulls.

¹³ They roasted the Passover lambs according to the directions. They boiled the holy offerings in pots, kettles, and pans and immediately served them to all the people.

¹⁴ Later, they prepared the animals for themselves and for the priests because the priests (Aaron's descendants) were sacrificing the burnt offerings and the fat until that evening. So the Levites prepared the animals for themselves and the priests.

¹⁵ The singers (Asaph's descendants) were in their places as David, Asaph, Heman, and the king's seer Jeduthun had commanded. The gatekeepers were stationed at each gate. They didn't need to leave their work, because their

relatives, the Levites, prepared animals for them.

¹⁶ So everything was arranged that day for the worship of the LORD. The Passover was celebrated, and the burnt offerings were sacrificed on the LORD'S altar as King Josiah had commanded.

¹⁷ The Israelites who were present celebrated the Passover at that time. They also celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

¹⁸ Never had a Passover like this been celebrated in Israel during the time of the prophet Samuel or the kings of Israel. They did not celebrate the Passover as Josiah celebrated it with priests, Levites, all of Judah, the people of Israel who could be found, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, this Passover was celebrated.

²⁰ After all this, when Josiah had repaired the temple, King Neco of Egypt came to fight a battle at Carchemish at the Euphrates River. Josiah went to attack him.

²¹ But Neco sent messengers to Josiah to say, "What's your quarrel with me, king of Judah? I'm not attacking you. I've come to fight those who are at war with me. God told me to hurry. God is with me, so stop now or else he will destroy you."

²² But Josiah would not stop his attack. He disguised himself as he went into battle. He refused to listen to Neco's words, which came from God, and he went to fight in the valley of Megiddo.

²³ Some archers shot King Josiah. The king told his officers, "Take me away because I'm badly wounded."

²⁴ His officers took him out of the chariot and brought him to Jerusalem

in his other chariot. He died and was buried in the tombs of his ancestors. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

²⁵ Jeremiah sang a funeral song about Josiah. All the male and female singers still sing funeral songs about Josiah today. This became a tradition in Israel. They are written in the Book of the Funeral Songs.

²⁶ Everything else about Josiah—including his devotion to God by following what is written in the LORD'S Teachings

²⁷ and his acts from first to last—are written in the records of the kings of Israel and Judah.

36 ¹ Then people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz and made him king in Jerusalem in place of his father.

² Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king, and he was king in Jerusalem for 3 months.

³ The king of Egypt removed him from office in Jerusalem and fined the country 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold.

⁴ The king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother Eliakim king of Judah and Jerusalem and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Neco took Jehoahaz away to Egypt.

⁵ Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 11 years in Jerusalem. He did what the LORD his God considered evil.

⁶ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Jehoiakim and put him in bronze shackles to take him to Babylon.

⁷ Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the utensils of the LORD'S temple to

Babylon. He put them in his palace in Babylon.

⁸ Everything else about Jehoiakim—the disgusting things he did and all the charges against him—is written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. His son Jehoiakin succeeded him as king.

⁹ Jehoiakin was eight years old when he began to rule as king. He was king for three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what the LORD considered evil.

¹⁰ In the spring King Nebuchadnezzar sent for Jehoiakin and brought him to Babylon with the valuable utensils from the LORD'S temple. Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiakin's uncle Zedekiah king of Judah and Jerusalem.

¹¹ Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to rule, and he ruled for 11 years in Jerusalem.

¹² He did what the LORD his God considered evil and didn't humble

himself in front of the prophet Jeremiah, who spoke for the LORD.

¹³ Zedekiah also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar had made Zedekiah swear an oath of allegiance to him in God's name. But Zedekiah became so stubborn and so impossible to deal with that he refused to turn back to the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁴ All the officials, the priests, and the people became increasingly unfaithful and followed all the disgusting practices of the nations. Although the LORD had made the temple in Jerusalem holy, they made the temple unclean.

¹⁵ The LORD God of their ancestors repeatedly sent messages through his messengers because he wanted to spare his people and his dwelling place.

¹⁶ But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words, and made fun of his prophets until the LORD became angry

with his people. He could no longer heal them.

¹⁷ So he had the Babylonian king attack them and execute their best young men in their holy temple. He didn't spare the best men or the unmarried women, the old people or the sick people. God handed all of them over to him.

¹⁸ He brought to Babylon each of the utensils from God's temple, the treasures from the LORD'S temple, and the treasures of the king and his officials.

¹⁹ They burned God's temple, tore down Jerusalem's walls, burned down all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value.

²⁰ The king of Babylon took those who weren't executed to Babylon to be slaves for him and his sons. They remained captives until the Persian Empire began to rule.

²¹ This happened so that the LORD'S words spoken through Jeremiah would be fulfilled. The land had its years of rest and was made acceptable again. While it lay in ruins, the land had its 70 years of rest.

²² The promise the LORD had spoken through Jeremiah was about to come true in Cyrus' first year as king of Persia. The LORD inspired the king to make this announcement throughout his whole kingdom and then to put it in writing.

²³ This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: The LORD God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the world. Then he ordered me to build a temple for him in Jerusalem (which is in Judah). May the LORD God be with all of you who are his people. You may go.

Ezra

1 ¹ The promise the LORD had spoken through Jeremiah was about to come true in Cyrus' first year as king of Persia. The LORD inspired the king to make this announcement throughout his whole kingdom and then to put it in writing.

² This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: The LORD God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the world. Then he ordered me to build a temple for him in Jerusalem (which is in Judah).

³ May God be with all of you who are his people. You may go to Jerusalem (which is in Judah) and build a temple for the LORD God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

⁴ All who choose to remain behind, wherever they may be living, should

provide the people who are leaving with silver, gold, supplies, livestock, and freewill offerings to be used in God's temple in Jerusalem.

⁵ Then the heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin, the priests, and the Levites—everyone God had inspired—came forward to rebuild the LORD'S temple in Jerusalem.

⁶ All their neighbors who were remaining behind provided them with articles made from silver and gold, supplies, livestock, and valuable gifts besides everything that was freely offered.

⁷ King Cyrus brought out the utensils belonging to the LORD'S temple. Nebuchadnezzar had taken these utensils from Jerusalem and put them in the temple of his own god.

⁸ King Cyrus of Persia put the treasurer Mithredath in charge of bringing them

out. So Mithredath made a list of them for Prince Sheshbazzar of Judah.

⁹ This is the inventory: gold dishes —30; silver dishes—1,000; knives —29;

¹⁰ gold bowls—30; other silver bowls—410; other utensils—1,000;

¹¹ The gold and silver utensils totaled 5,400. Sheshbazzar took all these utensils with him when the exiles left Babylon to go to Jerusalem.

2 ¹ These were the people in the province. They were the ones who left the place where the exiles had been taken captive. (King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had taken them to Babylon.) These exiles returned to Jerusalem and Judah. All of them went to their own cities.

² They went with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and

Baanah. This is the number of Israelite men from the people in exile:

- ³ the descendants of Parosh— 2,172
- ⁴ of Shephatiah— 372
- ⁵ of Arah— 775
- ⁶ of Pahath Moab, that is, of Jeshua and Joab— 2,812
- ⁷ of Elam— 1,254
- ⁸ of Zattu— 945
- ⁹ of Zaccai— 760
- ¹⁰ of Bani— 642
- ¹¹ of Bebai— 623
- ¹² of Azgad— 1,222
- ¹³ of Adonikam— 666
- ¹⁴ of Bigvai— 2,056
- ¹⁵ of Adin— 454
- ¹⁶ of Ater, that is, Hezekiah— 98
- ¹⁷ of Bezai— 323
- ¹⁸ of Jorah— 112
- ¹⁹ of Hashum— 223
- ²⁰ of Gibbar— 95
- ²¹ The people of Bethlehem— 123

- 22 of Netophah— 56
- 23 of Anathoth— 128
- 24 of Azmaveth— 42
- 25 of Kiriath Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth— 743
- 26 of Ramah and Geba— 621
- 27 of Michmas— 122
- 28 of Bethel and Ai— 223
- 29 of Nebo— 52
- 30 of Magbish— 156
- 31 of the other Elam— 1,254
- 32 of Harim— 320
- 33 of Lod, Hadid, and Ono— 725
- 34 of Jericho— 345
- 35 of Senaah— 3,630
- 36 These priests returned from exile: the descendants of Jedaiah (through the family of Jeshua)— 973
- 37 of Immer— 1,052
- 38 of Pashhur— 1,247
- 39 of Harim— 1,017

⁴⁰ These Levites returned from exile: the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel, that is, of Hodaviah— 74

⁴¹ These singers returned from exile: the descendants of Asaph— 128

⁴² These gatekeepers returned from exile: the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai— 139

⁴³ These temple servants returned from exile: the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,

⁴⁴ Keros, Siaha, Padon,

⁴⁵ Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub,

⁴⁶ Hagab, Shalmal, Hanan,

⁴⁷ Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah,

⁴⁸ Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam,

⁴⁹ Uzza, Paseah, Besai,

⁵⁰ Asnah, Meunim, Nephusim,

⁵¹ Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,

⁵² Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha,

⁵³ Barkos, Sisera, Temah,

⁵⁴ Neziah, and Hatipha.

⁵⁵ These descendants of Solomon's servants returned from exile: the descendants of Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda,

⁵⁶ Jaalah, Darkon, Giddel,

⁵⁷ Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth Hazzebaim, and Ami.

⁵⁸ The temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants totaled 392.

⁵⁹ The following people came from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer, but they couldn't prove they were Israelites on the basis of their father's family or their genealogy:

⁶⁰ the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda. These people totaled 652.

⁶¹ These descendants of the priests couldn't prove their families were Israelites: the descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai (who had married

one of the daughters of Barzillai from Gilead and took that family name).

⁶² These people searched for their family names in the genealogical records, but their names couldn't be found there. For this reason they were considered contaminated and couldn't be priests.

⁶³ The governor told them not to eat any of the most holy food until a priest could use the Urim and Thummim to settle the problem.

⁶⁴ The whole assembly totaled 42,360.

⁶⁵ In addition to the male and female servants who numbered 7,337, they also had 200 male and female singers.

⁶⁶ They had 736 horses, 245 mules,

⁶⁷ 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

⁶⁸ When some of the heads of the families came to the LORD'S temple in Jerusalem, they contributed freewill offerings to help rebuild God's temple on its former site.

⁶⁹ They contributed as much as they could to the treasury for this work: 1,030 pounds of gold, 5,740 pounds of silver, and 100 robes for the priests.

⁷⁰ The priests, the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants settled in their own cities. All the other Israelites settled in their own cities.

3¹ When the seventh month came, the people gathered together in Jerusalem. (The Israelites had already settled in their cities.)

² Then Jozadak's son Jeshua and his relatives who were priests and Shealtiel's son Zerubbabel and his relatives built an altar for the God of Israel. They built it in order to sacrifice burnt offerings. They followed the directions written in Moses' Teachings. (Moses was a man of God.)

³ So they rebuilt the altar on its original site, though they were afraid of the people in the neighboring regions. They sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD every morning and evening.

⁴ Following the written directions, they celebrated the Festival of Booths. Each day they sacrificed the required number of burnt offerings.

⁵ After that, they sacrificed the daily burnt offerings, the offerings for the New Moon Festival and all the other holy festivals of the LORD, and all the freewill offerings brought to the LORD.

⁶ They started to bring these burnt offerings to the LORD on the first day of the seventh month, even though the foundation of the LORD'S temple had not yet been laid.

⁷ So they gave money to the stonecutters and carpenters. Then they gave food, drink, and olive oil to the men

from Sidon and Tyre in exchange for cedar, which the men would bring by sea from Lebanon to Joppa as King Cyrus of Persia had authorized them to do.

⁸ Zerubbabel (who was Shealtiel's son), Jeshua (who was Jozadak's son), and the rest of the Jews, (the priests, Levites, and all the others who had come back from exile to Jerusalem) began to rebuild the temple. This happened in the second month of the second year following their return to the site of God's house in Jerusalem. They began by appointing the Levites who were at least 20 years old to direct the work on the LORD'S house.

⁹ Then Jeshua with his sons and relatives and Kadmiel with his sons who were Judah's descendants joined Henadad's family and their sons and relatives, the Levites, in directing those working on God's house.

¹⁰ The builders laid the foundation of the LORD'S temple. Then the priests who were dressed in their robes took their places with trumpets, and the Levites who were Asaph's descendants took their places with cymbals to praise the LORD according to the instructions of King David of Israel.

¹¹ As they praised and gave thanks to the LORD, they sang antiphonally: "He is good; his mercy toward Israel endures forever." Then all the people shouted, "Praise the LORD," because the foundation for the house of the LORD had been laid.

¹² But many of the priests, Levites, and the heads of the families who were old enough to have seen the first temple with their own eyes began to sob when they saw the foundation of this temple. Many others shouted for joy.

¹³ No one could distinguish between the joyful shouts and the loud sobbing because the people were shouting so loudly. The noise was heard from far away.

4 ¹ When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people who returned from exile were building a temple for the LORD God of Israel,

² they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of the families. They told them, "We want to help you build because we worship the same God you worship. We have been sacrificing to him since the time of King Esarhaddon of Assyria, who brought us here."

³ But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of Israel's families told them, "It isn't right for your people and our people to build a temple for our God together. We must build it alone for

the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus of Persia ordered us to do."

⁴ Then the people of that region discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to continue building.

⁵ They bribed officials to keep the people of Judah from carrying out their plans throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia until the reign of King Darius of Persia.

⁶ When Xerxes began to rule, the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem wrote a letter in which they made an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

⁷ Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their group wrote to him when Artaxerxes was king of Persia. The letter was written with the Aramaic script and translated into the Aramaic language.

⁸ Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote another letter against

the people of Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes.

⁹ At that time, Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe were with the others of their group—the people from Denya, Partakka, Tarpel, Persia, Erech, Babylon, Susa, (that is, those of Elam),
¹⁰ and the rest of the people whom the great and noble Assurbanipal deported. (Assurbanipal settled them in the cities of Samaria and the rest of the lands west of the Euphrates River.)

¹¹ This is the copy of the letter they sent to him: To King Artaxerxes, From your servants, the people west of the Euphrates:

¹² Your Majesty, you should know that the Jews who came to us from you are now in Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are close to finishing the walls. The foundations are already in place.

¹³ You should also know that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are finished, the Jews will no longer pay taxes, fees, and tolls. Ultimately, this will hurt the king's income.

¹⁴ Now, because we are paid by your palace, it isn't right for us to watch something happen that will dishonor the king. So we are sending this letter to inform you

¹⁵ that you should search the official records of your predecessors. You will find in those official records that this city has been rebellious and has been a threat to kings and provinces. This city has a history of rebelliousness. That's why this city was destroyed.

¹⁶ We want the king to know that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are finished, you will have nothing left of your province west of the Euphrates River.

¹⁷ Then the king sent this reply: To Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their group living in Samaria, and to others west of the Euphrates River: I wish you peace and prosperity!

¹⁸ The letter you sent me has been read word for word in my presence.

¹⁹ I gave the order, and a search was made. I discovered that this city has a long history of uprisings against kings. Its inhabitants are guilty of treason and rebellion.

²⁰ Jerusalem has had powerful kings who have ruled the whole province west of the Euphrates. Taxes, fees, and tolls were paid to them.

²¹ So order these men to stop rebuilding. Keep this city from being rebuilt until I give the order.

²² Be careful not to neglect your duty in this matter. Why should I, the king, suffer any more harm?

²³ Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and their group hurried to Jerusalem after hearing a copy of King Artaxerxes' letter. They forced the Jews to stop rebuilding.

²⁴ Then the work on God's temple in Jerusalem was stopped. Nothing more was done until Darius' second year as king of Persia.

5 ¹ The prophet Haggai and Zechariah, grandson of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of Israel's God, who was over them.

² Then Zerubbabel, who was Shealtiel's son, and Jeshua, who was Jozadak's son, began to rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem. God's prophets were with them and supported them.

³ At the same time, Governor Tattenai from the province west of the Euphrates River, Shethar Bozenai, and their group went to the Jews and asked them, "Who gave you permission to rebuild this temple and finish its walls?"

⁴ They also asked the Jews for the names of the men who were working on this building.

⁵ But the leaders of the Jews were under God's watchful eye. They couldn't be stopped until Darius received a report and sent a reply to it.

⁶ Here is a copy of the letter Governor Tattenai from the province west of the Euphrates River, Shethar Bozenai and his group (the Persians west of that river) sent to King Darius.

⁷ They sent him the following report: To King Darius, We wish you peace and prosperity in everything you do.

⁸ Your Majesty should know that we went to the province of Judah, to the temple of the great God. The temple is being built with large stones and with wooden beams laid in its walls. The builders are doing an excellent job and making rapid progress.

⁹ We asked their leaders the following question: "Who gave you permission to rebuild this temple and finish its walls?"

¹⁰ For your information, we also asked them for their names so that we would have a record of the men who were their leaders.

¹¹ This was their reply to us: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth. We are rebuilding the temple that was originally built many years ago by a great king of Israel.

¹² But because our ancestors made the God of heaven angry, he handed them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon

(a Chaldean). So Nebuchadnezzar destroyed this temple and deported its people to Babylon.

¹³ "However, in the first year of the reign of King Cyrus of Babylon, Cyrus gave permission for God's temple to be rebuilt.

¹⁴ In addition, Cyrus took out of a temple in Babylon the gold and silver utensils that belonged to God's temple. (Nebuchadnezzar had taken them out of God's temple in Jerusalem and brought them into a temple in Babylon.) Cyrus gave them to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor.

¹⁵ Cyrus told him, 'Take these utensils. Place them in the temple in Jerusalem. Rebuild God's temple on its original site.'

¹⁶ Then Sheshbazzar laid the foundation of God's temple in Jerusalem. The temple has been under construction from that time until now, but it still isn't finished."

¹⁷ If it pleases Your Majesty, allow someone to search the king's archives in Babylon to determine whether King Cyrus gave permission for the temple of God to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. Then please send us Your Majesty's decision on this matter.

6 ¹ Then King Darius gave the order to search the library where the archives were stored in Babylon.

² A scroll was found in the palace of Ecbatana, which is in the province of Media. This was written on it:

MEMORANDUM

³ Date: Cyrus' first year as king From: King Cyrus Subject: God's temple in Jerusalem. The temple should be rebuilt as a place to offer sacrifices. Its foundation should be laid. It should be 90 feet high and 90 feet wide

⁴ with three rows of large stones and a row of wood. The king's palace will pay for it.

⁵ In addition, Cyrus took out of a temple in Babylon the gold and silver utensils that belonged to God's temple. (Nebuchadnezzar had taken them out of God's temple in Jerusalem and brought them into a temple in Babylon.) They should be returned to their proper place in the temple in Jerusalem. You should put each one in God's temple.

⁶ Governor Tattenai from the province west of the Euphrates, Shethar Bozenai, and those of your group (the Persians west of the river): You must stay away from there.

⁷ Don't interfere with the work on God's temple. Let the governor of the Jews and the leaders of Judah rebuild God's temple on its original foundation.

⁸ I am issuing this decree about how you must help the Jewish leaders rebuild God's temple: The cost for this should be paid out of the king's own money from the taxes on the province west of the Euphrates. Full payment should be made to these men so that the work is not interrupted.

⁹ Also, whatever the priests in Jerusalem need for burnt offerings to the God of heaven—young bulls, rams, lambs, wheat, salt, wine, and olive oil—should be provided for them each day. Make sure that nothing is omitted.

¹⁰ Then they can offer sacrifices that please the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons.

¹¹ I am also issuing a decree that if anyone tampers with my orders, that person should be impaled on a beam torn from his own house and his house should be turned into a pile of rubble.

¹² May the God whose name is worshiped there cause the downfall of each king and nation who tries to tamper with my orders or tries to destroy the temple of the God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued a decree. It's to be carried out exactly as ordered.

¹³ Then Governor Tattenai from the province west of the Euphrates River, Shethar Bozenai, and their group did exactly what King Darius had ordered.

¹⁴ So the Jewish leaders continued to make progress because of the message from the prophet Haggai and Zechariah, the grandson of Iddo. They finished building as the God of Israel had ordered and as Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes (the kings of Persia) had ordered.

¹⁵ This temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar in the sixth year of King Darius' reign.

¹⁶ Then the people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the others who had returned from exile celebrated at the dedication of God's temple.

¹⁷ At the dedication of God's temple, they sacrificed 100 bulls, 200 rams, and 400 lambs. They sacrificed 12 male goats as an offering for sin, one goat for each of the tribes of Israel.

¹⁸ The priests were assigned to their divisions and the Levites to their groups to lead the worship of God in Jerusalem by following the directions written in the Book of Moses.

¹⁹ On the fourteenth day of the first month, those who had returned from exile celebrated the Passover.

²⁰ Since the priests and Levites had cleansed themselves, all of them were now clean. They killed the Passover lambs for all the people who had

returned from exile, for the rest of the priests, and for themselves.

²¹ The lambs were eaten by the Israelites who had returned from exile and by all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of the non-Jews in the land to worship the LORD God of Israel.

²² So for seven days they celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread because the LORD had made them joyful. The LORD had made the king of Assyria change his mind so that he supported the people in their work on the temple of God, the God of Israel.

7¹ After these things, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia, Ezra left Babylon. Ezra was the son of Seraiah, who was the son of Azariah, who was the son of Hilkiah,

² who was the son of Shallum, who was the son of Zadok, who was the son of Ahitub,

³ who was the son of Amariah, who was the son of Azariah, who was the son of Meraioth,

⁴ who was the son of Zerariah, who was the son of Uzzi, who was the son of Bukki,

⁵ who was the son of Abishua, who was the son of Phinehas, who was the son of Eleazer, who was the son of Aaron (the first priest).

⁶ As a scribe, Ezra was an expert in Moses' Teachings, which the LORD God of Israel had given. The king gave Ezra everything he requested because the LORD his God was guiding him.

⁷ Some Israelites (including priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and temple servants) went to Jerusalem in Artaxerxes' seventh year as king.

⁸ In that same year in the fifth month, Ezra arrived in Jerusalem.

⁹ He had left Babylon on the first day of the first month, and on the first day of the fifth month, he arrived in Jerusalem, since his God was good to him.

¹⁰ Ezra was determined to study the LORD'S Teachings, live by them, and teach their rules and regulations in Israel.

¹¹ This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest and scribe, a man with a thorough knowledge of the LORD'S commands and laws for Israel:

¹² From: Artaxerxes, king of kings To: Ezra the priest, a scribe for the Teachings of the God of Heaven: I wish you peace and prosperity!

¹³ I have issued a decree that any Israelites who are in my kingdom and want to go with you to Jerusalem may

go. This also includes the priests and Levites.

¹⁴ I, the king, and my seven advisers are sending you to evaluate the situation in Judah and Jerusalem on the basis of your God's Teachings, which you hold in your hands.

¹⁵ Also, you must take the silver and gold that the king and his advisers willingly contributed to the God of Israel, the God whose temple is in Jerusalem.

¹⁶ Take any silver and gold that you find in the whole province of Babylon when you take the gifts contributed by the people and the priests. They willingly contributed these gifts for the temple of their God in Jerusalem.

¹⁷ You must use this money to buy bulls, rams, lambs, grain, and wine to offer on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem.

¹⁸ You and your relatives may do whatever you think is right with the rest of the silver and gold. However, what you do must conform to the will of your God.

¹⁹ The utensils that have been given to you so that they can be used in your God's temple must all be presented to the God of Jerusalem.

²⁰ You may use the king's treasury to pay for anything else that you must provide for your God's temple.

²¹ I, King Artaxerxes, order all the treasurers in the province west of the Euphrates River to do exactly what Ezra the priest, a scribe for the Teachings of the God of Heaven, asks you to do.

²² You may give him up to 7,500 pounds of silver, 100 measures of wheat, 600 gallons of wine, 600 gallons of olive oil, and as much salt as he needs.

²³ Whatever the God of heaven has commanded must be carried out in detail for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should God become angry with the king's empire and his sons?

²⁴ Furthermore, we are notifying you that you are forbidden to make any priest, Levite, singer, gatekeeper, servant, or worker in the temple of this God pay any taxes, fees, or tolls.

²⁵ You, Ezra, using your God's wisdom—the Teachings you hold in your hands—will appoint judges and administrators for all the people who know your God's Teachings and live in the province west of the Euphrates River. In addition, you will teach anyone who doesn't know the Teachings.

²⁶ Whoever will not strictly follow your God's Teachings and the king's orders should be promptly exiled, have his

goods confiscated, be imprisoned or be sentenced to die.

²⁷ I, Ezra, said: Thanks be to the LORD God of our ancestors. He put this into the king's mind to make the LORD'S temple in Jerusalem beautiful.

²⁸ He made the king, his advisers, and all the king's powerful officials treat me kindly. I was encouraged because the LORD my God was guiding me. So I gathered leaders in Israel to go with me.

8 ¹ These are the leaders of the families and the genealogy of those who left Babylon with me during the reign of King Artaxerxes:

² from the family of Phinehas—
Gershom from the family of Ithamar—
Daniel

³ from the family of David— Hattush, son of Shecaniah from the family of Parosh— Zechariah, with 150 males whose genealogies were known

⁴ from the family of Pahath Moab—
Eliehoenai, son of Zerariah, with 200
males

⁵ from the family of Zattu —Shecaniah,
son of Jahaziel, with 300 males

⁶ from the family of Adin— Ebed, son
of Jonathan, with 50 males

⁷ from the family of Elam— Jeshaiiah,
son of Athaliah, with 70 males

⁸ from the family of Shephatiah—
Zebadiah, son of Michael, with 80 males

⁹ from the family of Joab— Obadiah,
son of Jehiel, with 210 males

¹⁰ from the family of Bani —Shelomith,
son of Josiphiah, with 160 males

¹¹ from the family of Bebai— Zechariah,
son of Bebai, with 38 males

¹² from the family of Azgad— Johanan,
son of Hakkatan, with 110 males

¹³ from the family of Adonikam—
Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah, who
arrived later with 60 males

¹⁴ from the family of Bigvai— Uthai and Zabbud, with 70 males.

¹⁵ I had this group gather by the river that flows to Ahava, and we camped there for three days. I noticed laypeople and priests there, but I didn't find any Levites.

¹⁶ Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam (who were leading men) and for Joiarib and Elnathan (who were wise).

¹⁷ I sent them to Iddo, the leader in Casiphia. I told them to tell Iddo and his relatives, the temple servants in Casiphia, that they should bring us men who can serve in our God's temple.

¹⁸ God was guiding us, so Iddo and his relatives brought us someone competent, Sherebiah, who was a descendant of Mahli, Levi, and Israel.

They brought us 18 of Sherebiah's sons and relatives.

¹⁹ They also brought Hashabiah, Jeshaiiah (who was a descendant of Merari), 20 of Jeshaiiah's relatives and their sons,

²⁰ and 220 temple servants. They were descended from the temple servants whom David and his officials had appointed to work for the Levites. These were all listed by name.

²¹ Then I announced a fast there at the Ahava River so that we might humble ourselves in the presence of our God to ask him for a safe journey for ourselves, for our little ones, and for all our goods.

²² I was ashamed to ask the king for an armed escort with cavalry to help us against an enemy attack on the way. We had already told the king, "Our God works things out for the good of everyone who dedicates his life to

serving him, but his power and his anger oppose everyone who abandons him."

²³ So we fasted and asked our God for a safe journey, and he answered our prayer.

²⁴ Then I selected 12 leaders from the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and 10 of their relatives.

²⁵ I weighed for them the silver, the gold, and the utensils. These were the contributions that the king, his advisers, his officials, and all the Israelites had contributed for our God's temple.

²⁶ I weighed the contributions for them to guard: about 24 tons of silver, 100 silver utensils weighing 150 pounds apiece, 7,500 pounds of gold,

²⁷ 20 gold bowls weighing 18 pounds apiece, and two utensils of fine polished bronze that were as precious as gold.

²⁸ I told them, "You and the utensils are holy to the LORD. The silver and gold are

freewill offerings to the LORD God of your ancestors.

²⁹ Guard them carefully. In Jerusalem, inside the storerooms of the LORD'S temple, weigh these items. Do this in front of the chief priests, Levites, and the leaders of Israel's families."

³⁰ So the priests and the Levites took charge of the silver, the gold, and the utensils. They were responsible for bringing these items to the temple of our God in Jerusalem.

³¹ Then we left the Ahava River on the twelfth day of the first month to go to Jerusalem. God was guiding us, and he rescued us from our enemies and from ambushes along the way.

³² When we reached Jerusalem, we rested for three days.

³³ On the fourth day we weighed the silver, the gold, and the utensils in our God's temple. We put them under the

supervision of Meremoth, son of the priest Uriah, as well as Eleazar, the son of Phinehas. The Levites, Jeshua's son Jozabad, and Binnui's son Noadiah, assisted them.

³⁴ Everything was counted and weighed, and the entire weight was recorded at that time.

³⁵ The exiles who had come back from captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel: 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 lambs, and 12 male goats for an offering for sin. All of these animals were burnt offerings for the LORD.

³⁶ The exiles delivered the king's orders to the king's satraps and governors in the province west of the Euphrates River. These officials then gave their support to the people and the temple of God.

9¹ After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the

priests and Levites, have failed to keep themselves separate from the neighboring groups of people and from the disgusting practices of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites.

² The Israelites and their sons have married some of these foreign women. They have mixed our holy race with the neighboring groups of people. Furthermore, the leaders and officials have led the way in being unfaithful."

³ When I heard this, I tore my clothes in distress, pulled hair from my scalp and my beard, and sat down in shock.

⁴ Since the former exiles had been unfaithful, everyone who gathered around me there trembled at the words of the God of Israel. I sat in shock until the evening sacrifice.

⁵ At the evening sacrifice I got up from my misery, and with my clothes torn, I knelt down, stretched out my hands to the LORD my God in prayer,

⁶ and said, "I am ashamed, my God. I am embarrassed to look at you. Our sins have piled up over our heads, and our guilt is so overwhelming that it reaches heaven.

⁷ From our ancestors' days until now, we have been deep in guilt. Our kings and our priests have been handed over to foreign kings to be executed. We have been taken captive, robbed, and humiliated, as we still are today because of our sins.

⁸ And now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been kind enough to leave us a few survivors from Babylon and to give us a secure hold on his holy place. Our God has made our eyes light

up and has given us new opportunities while we were slaves.

⁹ We are slaves, but our God hasn't abandoned us in our slavery. Instead, he has made the kings of Persia treat us kindly. He did this to give us an opportunity to rebuild our God's temple and restore its ruins and to give us a protective wall in Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁰ "And now, our God, what can we say after all this? We have abandoned your commandments!

¹¹ The commandments you gave us through your servants the prophets, said, 'The land you are going to take possession of has been polluted by its perverted people and by their disgusting practices that have filled it with wickedness from one end to another.

¹² So never let your daughters marry their sons or your sons marry their

daughters, and never seek peace or trade with them. Then you will be strong, be able to eat the good things the land produces, and be able to give this land as a long-lasting inheritance to your children.'

¹³ "After all that has happened to us because of the evil things we have done and because of our overwhelming guilt, you, our God, have punished us far less than we deserve and have permitted a few of us to survive.

¹⁴ If we break your commandments again and intermarry with people doing these disgusting things, you will become even more angry with us until you finally destroy us and no survivors are left.

¹⁵ LORD God of Israel, because you are fair, a few of us continue to remain as survivors. Look at us. All of us are guilty. None of us can stand in your presence because of this."

10¹ While Ezra was praying, confessing these sins, crying, and throwing himself down in front of God's temple, a large crowd of Israelite men, women, and children gathered around him. They also began to cry bitterly.

² Then Shecaniah, son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, interrupted by saying to Ezra, "We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women who came from the people around us. However, there is still hope for Israel.

³ So we must now make a promise to our God to get rid of all foreign women and the children born from them, as my lord Ezra and the others who tremble at the commandments of our God have advised us to do. We must do what Moses' Teachings tell us.

⁴ Get up! It's your duty to take action. We are with you, so be strong and take action."

⁵ Then Ezra got up and made the leaders, priests, Levites, and all the rest of Israel swear to do what they had said. So they took an oath.

⁶ Then Ezra left the front of God's temple and went to the room of Jehohanan, son of Eliashib. Ezra didn't eat any food or drink any water while he was there. He was mourning because these former exiles had been so unfaithful.

⁷ Then he sent a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem that all the former exiles must gather in Jerusalem.

⁸ If any of them didn't come within three days as the leaders and the older men had advised, then they would lose all their property and be excluded from the community of former exiles.

⁹ Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered within three days in

Jerusalem. On the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people sat in the courtyard of God's temple. They were trembling because of this matter and shivering because of the heavy rain.

¹⁰ Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have been unfaithful by marrying foreign women, and now you have added to Israel's guilt.

¹¹ Confess to the LORD God of your ancestors what you have done, and do what he wants. Separate yourselves from the people of this land and from your foreign wives."

¹² Then the whole assembly shouted in reply, "Yes! We will do as you say.

¹³ But the crowd is too large, and it's the rainy season. We can't take care of this outside. Besides, there are so many of us who are involved in this sin that it can't be taken care of in a day or two.

¹⁴ Let our leaders represent the whole community. At a set time, everyone who has married a foreign woman must meet with the leaders and judges of each city until our God's burning anger has turned away from us in this matter."

¹⁵ (Only Jonathan, Asahel's son, and Jahzeiah, Tikvah's son, opposed this. Meshullam and Shabbethai, the Levite, supported Jonathan and Jahzeiah.)

¹⁶ The former exiles did this. Ezra the priest chose men who were heads of families. He chose one from each family division. (They were all listed by name.) They sat down on the first day of the tenth month to investigate the matter.

¹⁷ By the first day of the first month, they had finished dealing with all the men who had married foreign women.

¹⁸ Among the descendants of the priests, the following were married to foreign women: Maaseiah, Eliezer,

Jarib, and Gedaliah, a descendant of Jeshua (who was Jozadak's son) and his brothers.

¹⁹ They shook hands as a pledge that they would get rid of their wives. They sacrificed a ram from their flock as an offering for guilt because they were guilty.

²⁰ From the descendants of Immer—
Hanani and Zebadiah

²¹ From the descendants of Harim—
Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and
Uzziah

²² From the descendants of Pashhur—
Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel,
Jozabad, and Elasah

²³ From the Levites— Jozabad, Shimei,
Kelaiah (that is, Kelita), Pethahiah,
Judah, and Eliezer

²⁴ From the singers— Eliashib
From the gatekeepers— Shallum, Telem, and Uri

²⁵ From the other Israelites— From the descendants of Parosh— Ramiah, Izziah, Malchiah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchiah, and Benaiah

²⁶ From the descendants of Elam— Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah

²⁷ From the descendants of Zattu— Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza

²⁸ From the descendants of Bebai— Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai

²⁹ From the descendants of Bani— Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth

³⁰ From the descendants of Pahath Moab— Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh

³¹ From the descendants of Harim— Eliezer, Isshiah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

³² Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah

³³ From the descendants of Hashum—
Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet,
Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei

³⁴ From the descendants of Bani—
Maadai, Amram, Uel,

³⁵ Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluhi,

³⁶ Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

³⁷ Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasau

³⁸ From the descendants of Binnui—
Shimei,

³⁹ Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah,

⁴⁰ Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

⁴¹ Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah,

⁴² Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph

⁴³ From the descendants of Nebo—
Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai,
Joel, and Benaiah

⁴⁴ All of these men had married foreign
women. Some of these women had
given birth to children.

Nehemiah

1 ¹ These are the words of Nehemiah, son of Hacaliah: During the month of Chislev, in Artaxerxes' twentieth year as king, while I was in the fortress at Susa, ² one of my brothers, Hanani, arrived with some men from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had survived captivity and about Jerusalem.

³ They told me, "Those who survived captivity are in the province. They are enduring serious troubles and being insulted. The wall of Jerusalem has been broken down, and its gates have been destroyed by fire."

⁴ When I heard this, I sat down and cried. I mourned for days. I continued to fast and pray to the God of heaven.

⁵ I said, "LORD God of heaven, great and awe–inspiring God, you faithfully keep your promise and show mercy to those who love you and obey your commandments.

⁶ Open your eyes, and pay close attention with your ears to what I, your servant, am praying. I am praying to you day and night about your servants the Israelites. I confess the sins that we Israelites have committed against you as well as the sins that my father’s family and I have committed.

⁷ We have done you a great wrong. We haven’t obeyed the commandments, laws, or regulations that you gave us through your servant Moses.

⁸ Please remember what you told us through your servant Moses: ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations.

⁹ But if you return to me and continue to obey my commandments, though your people may be driven to the most distant point on the horizon, I will come and get you from there and bring you to the place where I chose to put my name.'

¹⁰ These are your servants and your people whom you have saved by your great power and your strong hand.

¹¹ Lord, please pay attention to my prayer and to the prayers of all your other servants who want to worship your name. Please give me success today and make this man, King Artaxerxes, show me compassion." I was cupbearer to the king at this time.

2 ¹ In the month of Nisan, in Artaxerxes' twentieth year as king, after some wine was brought for the king, I picked up the cup of wine and gave it to the king. I had never been sad in his presence before.

² The king asked me, "Why do you look so sad? You aren't sick, are you? You must be troubled about something." (I was really afraid.)

³ "May the king live forever!" I said to the king. "Why shouldn't I look sad when the city, the place where my ancestors are buried, is in ruins and its gates are burned down?"

⁴ "What do you want?" the king asked me. So I prayed to the God of heaven,

⁵ and I asked the king, "If it pleases Your Majesty, and you are willing to grant my request, let me go to Judah, to the city where my ancestors are buried, so that I can rebuild it."

⁶ Then, while the queen was sitting beside him, the king asked me, "How long will you be gone, and when will you come back?" When I gave him a specific date, he was willing to let me go.

⁷ I also asked the king, "If it pleases Your Majesty, let me have letters addressed to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River. In the letters tell them to grant me safe conduct until I arrive in Judah.

⁸ Also, let me have a letter addressed to Asaph, the supervisor of Your Majesty's forest. In the letter order him to give me wood for the gates of the fortress near the temple, for the city wall, and for the house I'll move into." (The king let me have the letters, because God was guiding me.)

⁹ I went to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River and gave them the king's letters. (The king had sent army officers and cavalry to be with me.)

¹⁰ But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, they were very upset that someone

had come to give the people of Israel so much assistance.

¹¹ I went to Jerusalem and was there for three days.

¹² During the night I went out with a few men without telling anyone what my God had inspired me to do for Jerusalem. The only animal I had was the one I was riding.

¹³ I went through Valley Gate that night toward Snake Fountain and Dung Gate and examined the places where the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and where its gates had been burned.

¹⁴ Passing through Fountain Gate, I arrived at King's Pool, but the animal I was riding couldn't get through.

¹⁵ So I went through the valley that night and examined the wall. Then I turned back, entered Valley Gate, and returned.

¹⁶ The officials didn't know where I had gone or what I had done. I hadn't yet told the Jews, the priests, the leaders, the other officials, or any of the rest who would be doing the work.

¹⁷ Then I told them, "You see the trouble we're in. Jerusalem is in ruins, and its gates are burned down. Let's rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be insulted."

¹⁸ Then I told them that my God had been guiding me and what the king had told me. They replied, "Let's begin to rebuild." So they encouraged one another to begin this God-pleasing work.

¹⁹ When Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite servant, and Geshem the Arab heard about this, they made fun of us and ridiculed us. They asked, "What are you doing? Are you going to rebel against the king?"

²⁰ "The God of heaven will give us success," I answered them. "We, his servants, are going to rebuild. You have no property or claim or historic right in Jerusalem."

3 ¹ The chief priest Eliashib and his relatives, the priests, started by rebuilding Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place. They rebuilt as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and then as far as the Tower of Hananel.

² The men from Jericho were rebuilding next to Eliashib. Zaccur, son of Imri, was next to them.

³ The sons of Hassenaah rebuilt Fish Gate. They laid its beams and set its doors, locks, and bars in place.

⁴ Next to them Meremoth, son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz, made repairs. Next to them Meshullam, son of Berechiah and grandson of Meshezabel,

made repairs. Next to them Zadok, son of Baana, made repairs.

⁵ Next to them the men from Tekoa made repairs. However, the nobles wouldn't lower themselves to work under supervisors.

⁶ Joiada, Paseah's son, and Meshullam, Besodeiah's son, made repairs on Old Gate. They laid its beams and set its doors, locks, and bars in place.

⁷ Next to them Melatiah from Gibeon and Jadon from Meronoth, with men from Gibeon and Mizpah, made repairs on the wall. They did this under the authority of the governor from the province west of the Euphrates River.

⁸ Next to them Uzziel, Harhaiah's son, a goldsmith, made repairs. Next to him Hananiah, a perfume maker, made repairs. They left out part of Jerusalem as far as Broad Wall.

⁹ Next to them Rephaiah, Hur's son, an official in charge of half a district of Jerusalem, made repairs.

¹⁰ Next to them Jedaiah, Harumaph's son, made repairs across from his own home. Next to them Hattush, Hashabneiah's son, made repairs.

¹¹ Malchiah, Harim's son, and Hasshub, Pahath Moab's son, made repairs on a section that included the Tower of the Ovens.

¹² Next to them Shallum, Hallohesh's son, an official in charge of half a district of Jerusalem, made repairs with the help of his daughters.

¹³ Hanun and the people of Zanoah repaired Valley Gate. They rebuilt it and set its doors, locks, and bars in place, and they repaired 1,500 feet of the wall, as far as Dung Gate.

¹⁴ Dung Gate itself was repaired by Malchiah, Rechab's son, the official in

charge of the district of Beth Hakkerem. He rebuilt it and set its doors, locks, and bars in place.

¹⁵ Shallun, Col Hozeh's son, the official in charge of the district of Mizpah, repaired Fountain Gate. He rebuilt it, put a roof over it, and set its doors, locks, and bars in place. He also made repairs on the wall of the Pool of Shelah by the King's Garden as far as the stairs going down from the City of David.

¹⁶ After him Nehemiah, Azbuk's son, the official in charge of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs all the way to a point across from the tombs of David as far as the pool and the soldiers' barracks.

¹⁷ After him the Levites, including Rehum (Bani's son), made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, the official in charge of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district.

¹⁸ After him their relatives made repairs. This included Binnui, Henadad's son, the official in charge of half the district of Keilah.

¹⁹ Next to him Ezer, Jeshua's son, the official in charge of Mizpah, repaired a section across from the ascent to the Armory at the Angle.

²⁰ After him Baruch, Zabbai's son, made repairs on a section from the Angle to the door of the house of the chief priest Eliashib.

²¹ After him Meremoth, son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz, made repairs on a section from the door of Eliashib's house to the end of Eliashib's house.

²² After him the priests who lived in that area made repairs.

²³ After them Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs across from their own homes. After them Azariah, son of

Maaseiah and grandson of Ananiah, made repairs next to his home.

²⁴ After him Binnui, Henadad's son, made repairs on a section from Azariah's home to the Angle and to the corner of the wall.

²⁵ Palal, Uzai's son, made repairs across from the Angle and the upper tower that projects from the king's palace to the guards' courtyard. After him Pedaiah, Parosh's son,

²⁶ and the temple servants who were living on the Ophel made repairs on the wall as far as a point across from Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower.

²⁷ After him the men from Tekoa repaired a section across from the large projecting tower as far as the Wall of the Ophel.

²⁸ Above Horse Gate the priests made repairs. Each priest made repairs across from his own home.

²⁹ After them Zadok, Immer's son, made repairs across from his own home. After him Shemaiah, Shecaniah's son, the guard at East Gate, made repairs.

³⁰ After him Hananiah, Shelemiah's son, and Hanun, Zalaph's sixth son, repaired another section. After him Meshullam, Berechiah's son, made repairs across from his living quarters.

³¹ After him Malchiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the building that housed the temple servants and merchants across from Inspection Gate and as far as the upper room at the corner.

³² The goldsmiths and merchants made repairs between the upper room at the corner and Sheep Gate.

4¹ When Sanballat heard we were rebuilding the wall, he became enraged and made fun of the Jews.

² In front of his allies and the army from Samaria, he said, "What do these miserable Jews think they're doing? Can they rebuild it by themselves? Are they going to offer sacrifices? Can they finish it in a day? Will they get the stones out of the rubbish heaps, burned as these stones are, and give them new strength?"

³ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was beside Sanballat, said, "Even a fox would make their stone wall collapse if it walked on top of what they're building!"

⁴ Nehemiah prayed, "Our God, hear us. We are despised. Turn their insults back on them, and let them be robbed in the land where they are prisoners.

⁵ Don't ignore their guilt, and don't let their sins disappear from your records.

They have insulted you in front of these builders."

⁶ So we rebuilt the wall, which was rebuilt to about half its original height. The people worked with determination.

⁷ When Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the people from Ashdod heard that the repair work on the walls of Jerusalem was making progress and that the gaps were being filled in, they became furious.

⁸ All of them plotted to attack Jerusalem to create confusion.

⁹ But we prayed to our God and set guards to protect us day and night.

¹⁰ Then the people of Judah said, "The work crews are worn out, and there is too much rubble. We can't continue to rebuild the wall."

¹¹ Our enemies said, "Before they know what is happening or see a thing, we will

be right in the middle of them. We'll kill them and bring the work to an end."

¹² Jews who were living near our enemies warned us ten times that our enemies would attack us from every direction.

¹³ That is why I positioned people by their families behind the wall where it was lowest and most exposed. The people were armed with swords, spears, and bows.

¹⁴ I looked them over and proceeded to tell the nobles, the leaders, and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of our enemies. Remember how great and awe-inspiring the LORD is. Fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

¹⁵ When our enemies heard that we knew about their plots and that God had prevented their plans from being successful, we all went back to the work

on the wall. Each person performed his own job.

¹⁶ From that day on, half of my men worked on the wall, and the other half were wearing body armor and holding spears, shields, and bows. The leaders stood behind all the Judeans

¹⁷ who were rebuilding the wall. The workers who were carrying loads did the work with one hand and held their weapons with the other,

¹⁸ and each builder had his sword fastened to his side. The man who was supposed to sound the trumpet alarm was with me.

¹⁹ I told the nobles, the leaders, and the rest of the people, "So much work has to be done in different places that we are widely separated from one another on the wall.

²⁰ When you hear the trumpet, assemble around me. Our God will fight for us!"

²¹ So we continued to work. Half of us held spears from early dawn until the stars came out.

²² At that time I told the people, "Every man and his servant should stay overnight in Jerusalem so that we can set a guard at night and work during the day."

²³ My brothers, my servants, and the guards assigned to me never changed their clothes. Neither did I. We each kept our weapons at hand.

5 ¹ Then some of the people, the men and their wives, complained publicly about their Jewish relatives.

² Some of them said, "We have large families! We need some grain if we are going to eat and stay alive."

³ Others said, "We've had to mortgage our fields, our vineyards, and our homes in order to get some grain because of this famine."

⁴ Others said, "We've had to borrow money to pay the king's taxes on our fields and vineyards."

⁵ We have the same flesh and blood as our relatives. Our children are just like theirs. Yet, we have to force our sons and daughters to become slaves. Some of our daughters have already become slaves. But we can't do anything else when our fields and vineyards belong to others."

⁶ I became furious when I heard their complaint and what they had to say.

⁷ After thinking it over, I confronted the nobles and the leaders. I told them, "You are charging interest on loans made to your own relatives." I arranged for a large meeting to deal with them.

⁸ Then I told them, "We have done our best to buy back our Jewish relatives who had been sold to other nations. Now you are selling your Jewish relatives so that we have to buy them back again!" They were unable to say anything.

⁹ I added, "What you're doing is wrong. Shouldn't you live in the fear of our God to keep our enemies from ridiculing us?"

¹⁰ My brothers, my servants, and I are lending money and grain to the poor. But we must stop charging them interest.

¹¹ You must return their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their homes today. Also, you must return the interest on the money, grain, new wine, and olive oil you've been charging them."

¹² They responded, "We'll return it and not try to get it from them again. We'll do what you say." Then I called the

priests and made them swear to do what they promised.

¹³ I brushed off my clothes and said, "In the same way, may God brush off from home and work everyone who refuses to keep this promise. In the same way, may everyone be brushed off and left with nothing." Then the whole congregation said amen and praised the LORD. The people did what they had promised.

¹⁴ During the 12 years that I was governor of Judah, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign to the thirty-second year of his reign, my brothers and I never ate any food that was paid for by the governor's food allowance.

¹⁵ Those who were governors before me had made life difficult for the people by taking from them food and wine plus one pound of silver. Even the governors' servants took advantage of their power

over the people. But I didn't do that, because I feared God.

¹⁶ Instead, I put my best effort into the work on this wall, and we bought no land. All my men gathered here for work.

¹⁷ I fed 150 Jewish leaders and their people who came to us from the surrounding nations.

¹⁸ Preparing one ox and six choice sheep was necessary every day. Poultry was prepared for me. Once every ten days a supply of wine was ordered. Yet, in spite of all this, I never demanded anything from the governor's food allowance, because these people were already carrying a heavy load.

¹⁹ Remember me, my God. Consider everything that I have done for these people.

6 ¹ Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall and that

no gaps had been left in it (although at that time I had not yet hung the doors in the city gates).

² Then Sanballat and Geshem sent this message to me: "Let's meet in Hakkephirim on the plain of Ono." They were planning to harm me.

³ I sent messengers to tell them, "I'm working on an important project and can't get away. Why should the work stop while I leave to meet with you?"

⁴ They sent the same message to me four times, and I answered them the same way.

⁵ When Sanballat sent me the same message a fifth time, his servant held in his hand an unsealed letter.

⁶ In it was written: It has been reported throughout the nations, and Geshem has confirmed it, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel. That's why you're

rebuilding the wall. According to this report, you want to become their king.

⁷ You've appointed prophets to announce about you in Jerusalem, 'There's a king in Judah!' This report will get back to the king. So let's talk about this.

⁸ Then I sent someone to tell him, "None of your accusations are true. You are making them up out of your own imagination."

⁹ They were all trying to intimidate us. They thought we would give up and not finish the work. But God made me strong.

¹⁰ One day I went to the home of Shemaiah, son of Delaiah and grandson of Mehetabel. Shemaiah who was confined to his house, said, "Let's meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and close the temple doors. Some men are coming at night to kill you."

¹¹ But I asked, "Should a man like me run away? Would a man like me go into the temple to save his life? I won't go."

¹² Then I realized that God hadn't sent him. Instead, Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him to prophesy against me.

¹³ He was hired to intimidate me into doing this so that I would sin. Then they could give me a bad reputation in order to discredit me.

¹⁴ Nehemiah prayed, "My God, remember what Tobiah and Sanballat have done. Also, remember the female prophet Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who have been trying to intimidate me."

¹⁵ The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul. The wall took 52 days to finish.

¹⁶ When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence.

They realized we had done this work with the help of our God.

¹⁷ In those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah sent many letters back to them.

¹⁸ Many in Judah had promised to support Tobiah because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah, Arah's son. In addition, Tobiah's son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam, Berechiah's son.

¹⁹ The nobles were singing Tobiah's praises to me and reporting to him what I said. Tobiah kept sending letters to intimidate me.

7 ¹ The gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites were assigned their duties after the wall had been rebuilt and I had hung the doors.

² I put my brother Hanani and Hananiah, the commander of the fortress, in charge of Jerusalem.

Hananiah was a trustworthy man, and he feared God more than most people do.

³ I told them, "The gates of Jerusalem should not be opened at the hottest time of the day. While the gatekeepers are still standing there, they should shut the doors and bar them. Order some of the men in Jerusalem to stand guard, some at their posts and others in front of their homes."

⁴ The city was large and wide—open. Few people were in it, and no houses were being built.

⁵ Then my God put the idea into my head that I should gather the nobles, leaders, and people so that they could check their genealogy. I found the book with the genealogy of those who came back the first time. I found the following written in it:

⁶ These were the people in the province. They were the ones who left the place where the exiles had been taken captive. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had taken them captive. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah. All of them went to their own cities.

⁷ They went with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah. This is the number of Israelite men from the people in exile:

⁸ the descendants of Parosh— 2,172

⁹ of Shephatiah— 372

¹⁰ of Arah— 652

¹¹ of Pahath Moab, that is, of Jeshua and Joab— 2,818

¹² of Elam— 1,254

¹³ of Zattu— 845

¹⁴ of Zaccai— 760

¹⁵ of Binnui— 648

¹⁶ of Bebai— 628

- 17 of Azgad— 2,322
- 18 of Adonikam— 667
- 19 of Bigvai— 2,067
- 20 of Adin— 655
- 21 of Ater, that is, Hezekiah— 98
- 22 of Hashum— 328
- 23 of Bezai— 324
- 24 of Hariph— 112
- 25 of Gibeon— 95
- 26 the people of Bethlehem and
Netophah— 188
- 27 of Anathoth— 128
- 28 of Beth Azmaveth— 42
- 29 of Kiriath Jearim, Chephirah, and
Beeroth— 743
- 30 of Ramah and Geba— 621
- 31 of Michmas— 122
- 32 of Bethel and Ai— 123
- 33 of the other Nebo— 52
- 34 of the other Elam— 1,254
- 35 of Harim— 320
- 36 of Jericho— 345

³⁷ of Lod, Hadid, and Ono— 721

³⁸ of Senaah— 3,930

³⁹ These priests returned from exile:
the descendants of Jedaiah (through the
family of Jeshua)— 973

⁴⁰ of Immer— 1,052

⁴¹ of Pashhur— 1,247

⁴² of Harim— 1,017

⁴³ These Levites returned from exile:
the descendants of Jeshua, that is, of
Kadmiel and of Hodeiah— 74

⁴⁴ These singers returned from exile:
the descendants of Asaph—148

⁴⁵ These gatekeepers returned from
exile: the descendants of Shallum, Ater,
Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai— 138

⁴⁶ These temple servants returned from
exile: the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha,
Tabbaoth,

⁴⁷ Keros, Sia, Padon,

⁴⁸ Lebanah, Hagabah, Shalmal,

⁴⁹ Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,

⁵⁰ Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,

⁵¹ Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,

⁵² Besai, Meunim, Nephusheshim,

⁵³ Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,

⁵⁴ Bazlith, Mehida, Harsha,

⁵⁵ Barkos, Sisera, Temah,

⁵⁶ Neziah, and Hatipha.

⁵⁷ These descendants of Solomon's servants returned from exile: the descendants of Sotai, Sophereth, Perida,

⁵⁸ Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,

⁵⁹ Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth Hazzebaim, and Amon.

⁶⁰ The temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants totaled 392.

⁶¹ The following people came from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer, but they couldn't prove they were Israelites on the basis of their father's family or their genealogy:

⁶² the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda. These people totaled 642.

⁶³ These priests couldn't prove they were Israelites: the descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai (who had married one of the daughters of Barzillai from Gilead and took that family name).

⁶⁴ These people searched for their family names in the genealogical records, but their names couldn't be found there. For this reason they were considered contaminated and couldn't be priests.

⁶⁵ The governor told them not to eat any of the most holy food until a priest could use the Urim and Thummim to settle the problem.

⁶⁶ The whole assembly totaled 42,360.

⁶⁷ In addition to the male and female servants who numbered 7,337, they also had 245 male and female singers.

⁶⁸ They had 736 horses, 245 mules,

⁶⁹ 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

⁷⁰ Some of the heads of the families contributed to this work. The governor contributed the following to the treasury: nearly 18 pounds of gold, 50 bowls, and 530 robes for the priests.

⁷¹ Some of the heads of the families contributed to the treasury for this work: 337 pounds of gold and 3,215 pounds of silver.

⁷² The rest of the people contributed 337 pounds of gold, 2,923 pounds of silver, and 67 robes for the priests.

⁷³ The priests, Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and the rest of Israel settled in their own cities. When the seventh month came, the people of Israel were in their own cities.

8 ¹ When the seventh month came, all the people gathered together in the courtyard in front of Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of

Moses' Teachings, which the Lord had commanded Israel to follow.

² Then Ezra the priest brought the Teachings in front of the assembly. This included men, women, and any children who could understand what they heard. This took place on the first day of the seventh month.

³ From daybreak until noon, he read from it in the courtyard in front of Water Gate to the men, women, and children who could understand it. All the people listened to the Book of Moses' Teachings.

⁴ Ezra the scribe stood on a raised wooden platform made for this occasion. Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah stood beside him on his right. Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchiah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam stood beside him on his left.

⁵ Ezra, standing higher than all the other people, opened the book in front of all the people. As he opened it, all the people stood up.

⁶ Ezra thanked the LORD, the great God. All the people responded, "Amen! Amen!" as they raised their hands and then bowed with their faces to the ground and worshiped the LORD.

⁷ The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah—explained the Teachings to the people while they were standing there.

⁸ They read the Book of God's Teachings clearly and explained the meaning so that the people could understand what was read.

⁹ Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people told them, "This

is a holy day for the LORD your God. Don't mourn or cry." All the people were crying as they listened to the reading of God's Teachings.

¹⁰ Then he told them, "Go, eat rich foods, drink sweet drinks, and send portions to those who cannot provide for themselves. Today is a holy day for the Lord. Don't be sad because the joy you have in the LORD is your strength."

¹¹ So the Levites calmed all the people by saying, "Listen. Today is a holy day. Don't be sad."

¹² Then all the people went to eat and drink and to send portions. They had a big, joyful celebration because they understood the words that had been explained to them.

¹³ On the second day the leaders of the families of all the people, including the priests and the Levites, met with Ezra

the scribe to study the words of God's Teachings.

¹⁴ They found written in the Teachings that the LORD had given an order through Moses that the people of Israel should live in booths during a festival in the seventh month.

¹⁵ They should announce this command and send this message throughout all their cities and Jerusalem: "Go to the mountains, and get branches—olive and wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other thick-leaved branches—to make booths as it is written."

¹⁶ So the people went to get branches to make booths for themselves. Some made booths on their roofs, others in their courtyards, in the courtyards of God's temple, in the open area by Water Gate, or in the open area at Ephraim Gate.

¹⁷ The whole assembly that had come back from exile made booths and lived in them. From the time of Jeshua (son of Nun) to that day, the people of Israel had not done this. There was a big, joyful celebration.

¹⁸ Day by day, from the first day of the festival to the last day, Ezra continued to read from the Book of God's Teachings. The people celebrated the festival for seven days, and on the eighth day, they had a closing festival assembly in accordance with the regulations.

9¹ When the Israelites assembled on the twenty-fourth day of this month, they fasted, wore sackcloth, and threw dirt on their heads.

² Those who were descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood and confessed their sins as well as the wicked things their ancestors had done.

³ They stood in their places, and for one-fourth of the day, they listened as the Book of the Teachings of the LORD their God was read, and for another fourth of the day, they confessed their sins and worshiped the LORD their God.

⁴ Then Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chanani stood on the stairs built for the Levites and cried loudly to the LORD their God.

⁵ Then the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah—said, "Stand up, and thank the LORD your God: From everlasting to everlasting your glorious name is praised and lifted high above all blessing and praise.

⁶ You alone are the LORD. You made heaven, the highest heaven, with all its armies. You made the earth and everything on it, the seas and everything

in them. You give life to them all, and the armies of heaven worship you.

⁷ You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and took him from Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham.

⁸ You found that his heart was faithful to you. You made a promise to him to give the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Girgashites to his descendants. You kept your promise because you are fair.

⁹ You saw how our ancestors suffered in Egypt, and you heard them crying at the Red Sea.

¹⁰ You performed miraculous signs and did amazing things to Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people in his land because you knew how arrogantly they were treating our ancestors. You made a name for yourself, a name which remains to this day.

¹¹ You divided the sea in front of them so that they could walk through the sea on dry ground. You threw into deep water those who pursued your people as someone throws a stone into raging water.

¹² You led them during the day by a column of smoke and during the night by a column of fire to give them light to see the way they should go.

¹³ You came from heaven to Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven. You gave them fair rules, trustworthy teachings, and good laws and commandments.

¹⁴ You taught them about your holy day of worship. You gave them commandments, laws, and teachings through your servant Moses.

¹⁵ You gave them bread from heaven to satisfy their hunger and made water flow from a rock to quench their thirst.

You told them to take possession of the land that you swore you would give them.

¹⁶ But they—our own ancestors—acted arrogantly. They became stubborn and wouldn't obey your commands.

¹⁷ They refused to listen. They forgot the miracles you performed for them. They became stubborn and appointed a leader to take them back to slavery in Egypt. But you are a forgiving God, one who is compassionate, merciful, patient, and always ready to forgive. You never abandoned them,

¹⁸ even when they made a metal statue of a calf for themselves and said, 'This is your god who took you out of Egypt.' They committed outrageous sins.

¹⁹ But because of your endless compassion, you didn't abandon them in the desert. The column of smoke didn't leave them during the day, but it led

them on their way. The column of fire didn't leave them during the night, but it gave them light to see the way they should go.

²⁰ You gave them your good Spirit to teach them. You didn't keep your manna to yourself. You gave them water to quench their thirst.

²¹ You provided for them in the desert for 40 years, and they had everything they needed. Their clothes didn't wear out, and their feet didn't swell.

²² You gave kingdoms and nations to the Israelites and assigned them their boundaries. So they took possession of the land of Sihon, the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of King Og of Bashan.

²³ You made their children as numerous as the stars in the sky. You brought them into the land you told their parents to enter and possess.

²⁴ Their children took possession of the land. You defeated for them the Canaanites, who lived in the land. You handed the Canaanite kings and their people over to them to do whatever they wanted with the Canaanites.

²⁵ The Israelites captured fortified cities and a rich land. They took possession of houses filled with all sorts of good things, cisterns, vineyards, olive trees, and plenty of fruit trees. So they ate and were satisfied and grew fat. They enjoyed the vast supply of good things you gave them.

²⁶ But they were defiant and rebelled against you. They threw your teachings over their shoulders and killed your prophets who warned them to turn back to you. They committed outrageous sins.

²⁷ You handed them over to their enemies, who made them suffer. When they began to suffer, they cried to you.

You heard them from heaven. You gave them saviors to rescue them from their enemies because of your endless compassion.

²⁸ As soon as they felt some relief, they were again doing what you considered evil. You abandoned them to their enemies, who conquered them. They cried to you again, and you heard them from heaven. You rescued them many times because of your compassion.

²⁹ You warned them in order to bring them back to your teachings, but they became arrogant and would not obey your commandments. They sinned by not following your regulations. If anyone follows them, he will find life in them. But they gave you the cold shoulder, became impossible to deal with, and wouldn't listen.

³⁰ You were patient with them for many years. You warned them by your Spirit

through your prophets. However, they wouldn't listen. So you handed them over to the people in the surrounding nations.

³¹ But your compassion is endless. You didn't destroy them or abandon them. You are a merciful and compassionate God.

³² And now, our God, you are the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God. You faithfully keep your promises. Do not consider all the hardships that we have been going through as unimportant. The hardships have come to our kings, leaders, priests, prophets, ancestors, and all your people from the time of the kings of Assyria until now.

³³ But you were fair about everything that has happened to us. You have been faithful, but we have been wicked.

³⁴ Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors didn't obey your teachings.

They didn't pay attention to your commandments or the warnings that you gave them.

³⁵ When they lived in their own kingdom and enjoyed the many good things that you gave them in a vast, fertile land which was set in front of them, they didn't serve you or turn away from their wicked lives.

³⁶ Look at us now. We're slaves! In the land you gave our ancestors, they could eat its produce and enjoy its good things. But now we're slaves!

³⁷ The many products from our land go to the kings you put over us. This is because of our sins. These kings have control over our bodies, and they do as they please with our livestock. We are in agony.

³⁸ "We are making a binding agreement and putting it in writing because of all

this. Our leaders, Levites, and priests are putting their seals on the document."

10¹ The following people sealed the agreement: Governor Nehemiah (son of Hacaliah), Zedekiah,
² Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,
³ Pashhur, Amariah, Malchiah,
⁴ Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,
⁵ Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,
⁶ Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,
⁷ Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,
⁸ Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah. These were the priests.

⁹ These were the Levites: Jeshua (son of Azaniah), Binnui (of the sons of Henadad), Kadmiel,

¹⁰ and their relatives Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,
¹¹ Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah,
¹² Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,
¹³ Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

¹⁴ These were the leaders of the people:
Parosh, Pahath Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,

¹⁵ Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

¹⁶ Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

¹⁷ Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,

¹⁸ Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,

¹⁹ Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

²⁰ Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

²¹ Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,

²² Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,

²³ Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,

²⁴ Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek,

²⁵ Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,

²⁶ Ahiah, Hanan, Anan,

²⁷ Malluch, Harim, and Baanah.

²⁸ The rest of the people took an oath.

These people included the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants, and all who had separated themselves from the inhabitants of the land for the sake of God's Teachings. Their wives, sons, daughters,

and everyone who is capable of understanding also took an oath.

²⁹ They joined their relatives, the nobles, in binding themselves with a curse and an oath to follow God's teachings given by Moses, God's servant. They also bound themselves to follow all the commandments, rules, and regulations of the LORD our Lord.

³⁰ We will not allow our daughters to marry the inhabitants of the land or allow their daughters to marry our sons.

³¹ If the inhabitants of the land bring merchandise or grain to sell on the day of worship, we won't buy anything from them on the day of worship or any other holy day. During the seventh year, we won't plant the fields or collect any debts.

³² Also, we take upon ourselves the obligation to give an eighth of an ounce

of silver every year for worship in our God's temple:

³³ for rows of the bread of the presence, and for the daily grain offerings and daily burnt offerings, on the weekly days of worship, and on the New Moon Festivals, and at the appointed annual festivals, for the holy gifts and offerings for sin that make peace with God for Israel, and for all the other work in the temple of our God.

³⁴ We priests, Levites, and laypeople have drawn lots to decide the order in which the heads of our families should bring wood to our God's temple to burn on the altar of the LORD our God at appointed times every year according to the directions in the Teachings.

³⁵ We have drawn lots to decide who should bring the first produce harvested and the first fruit from every tree each year to the LORD'S temple.

³⁶ Following the directions in the Teachings, we have drawn lots to decide who should bring the firstborn of our sons, our cattle, and our flocks to the priests serving in our God's temple.

³⁷ Also, we have drawn lots to decide who should bring the best of our coarse flour, contributions, fruit from every tree, new wine, and olive oil to the priests, to the storerooms. We will bring for the Levites one-tenth of the produce from our fields, because the Levites are the ones who collect one-tenth of the produce from all our farm communities.

³⁸ A priest—one of Aaron's descendants—should be with the Levites when they collect the tenth. Then the Levites should bring one-tenth of these tenths to our God's temple, into the rooms of the storehouses there.

³⁹ The Israelites and the Levites should bring into the storerooms their

contributions of grain, new wine, and olive oil. They should bring these products to the place where the utensils of the holy place are and where the priests who serve and the gatekeepers and the singers are. We won't neglect our God's temple.

11 ¹The leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem. The rest of the people drew lots to bring one out of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city. The remaining nine-tenths were supposed to live in the other cities.

²The people blessed everyone who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.

³These were the officials of the province who settled in Jerusalem. Some Israelites, priests, Levites, temple servants, and descendants of Solomon's servants settled in the cities of Judah. They lived on their own property in their own cities.

⁴ Some of the descendants of Judah and of Benjamin settled in Jerusalem. The descendants of Judah were Athaiah, who was the son of Uzziah, who was the son of Zechariah, who was the son of Amariah, who was the son of Shephatiah, who was the son of Mahalalel, who was the son of Perez;

⁵ Maaseiah was the son of Baruch, who was the son of Col Hozeh, who was the son of Hazaiah, who was the son of Adaiah, who was the son of Joiarib, who was the son of Zechariah, who was the son of Shiloni.

⁶ All the descendants of Perez who settled in Jerusalem were 468 outstanding men.

⁷ These are the descendants of Benjamin: Sallu, who was the son of Meshullam, who was the son of Joed, who was the son of Pedaiah, who was the son of Kolaiah, who was the son of

Maaseiah, who was the son of Ithiel,
who was the son of Jeshaiiah,

⁸ and after him, Gabbai and Sallai. The
number of Benjamin's descendants
totaled 928.

⁹ Joel, son of Zichri, was in charge,
and Judah, son of Senuah, was
second-in-command over the city.

¹⁰ These were the priests: Jedaiah (son
of Joiarib), Jachin,

¹¹ Seraiah, who was the son of Hilkiah,
who was the son of Meshullam, who
was the son of Zadok, who was the son
of Meraioth, who was the son of Ahitub,
who was the supervisor of God's temple.

¹² From Seraiah's relatives 822 did
the work in the temple. Also, Adaiiah
worked in the temple. He was the son of
Jeroham, who was the son of Pelaliah,
who was the son of Amzi, who was the
son of Zechariah, who was the son of
Pashhur, who was the son of Malchiah.

¹³ Adaiah's relatives, the heads of the families, totaled 242. Amashsai was the son of Azarel, who was the son of Ahzai, who was the son of Meshillemoth, who was the son of Immer.

¹⁴ Their relatives, who were warriors, totaled 128. The man in charge of them was Zabdiel, son of Haggedolim.

¹⁵ These were the Levites: Shemaiah who was the son of Hasshub, who was the son of Azrikam, who was the son of Hashabiah, who was the son of Bunni.

¹⁶ Shabbethai and Jozabad, Levite leaders, who were in charge of the work outside God's temple.

¹⁷ Mattaniah was the son of Mica, who was the son of Zabdi, who was the son of Asaph, the leader who led the prayer of thanksgiving. The Levite leader Bakbukiah was the second-in-command among his relatives; and so was Abda who was the son of Shammua, who was

the son of Galal, who was the son of Jeduthum.

¹⁸ All the Levites in the holy city totaled 284.

¹⁹ These were the gatekeepers: Akkub, Talmon, and their relatives who guarded the gates totaled 172.

²⁰ The rest of the Israelites, priests, and Levites lived in all the cities of Judah. Everyone lived on his own inherited property.

²¹ But the temple servants lived on Mount Ophel with Ziha and Gishpa in charge of them.

²² The man in charge of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi, who was the son of Bani, who was the son of Hashabiah, who was the son of Mattaniah, who was the son of Mica from Asaph's descendants who were the singers in charge of worship in God's temple.

²³ They were under orders from the king, orders that determined which duties they should perform day by day.

²⁴ Pethahiah, son of Meshezabel, one of the descendants of Zerah, Judah's son, was the king's adviser on all matters concerning the people.

²⁵ Many people lived in villages that had fields. Some people of Judah lived in Kiriath Arba and its villages, in Dibon and its villages, in Jekabzeel and its villages,

²⁶ in Jeshua, Moladah, and Beth Pelet,
²⁷ in Hazar Shual, in Beersheba and its villages,

²⁸ in Ziklag, and in Meconah and its villages,

²⁹ in En Rimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth,

³⁰ Zanoah, and Adullam and their villages, in Lachish and its fields, and in Azekah and its villages. So they settled in the land from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

³¹ Benjamin's descendants live in the area of Geba, in Michmash, Aija, Bethel and its villages,

³² in Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,

³³ Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,

³⁴ Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,

³⁵ Lod, Ono, and in the valley of the Craftsmen.

³⁶ Some divisions of Levites in Judah were assigned to Benjamin.

12 ¹ These are the priests and Levites who came back with Zerubbabel (Shealtiel's son) and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,

² Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,

³ Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,

⁴ Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah,

⁵ Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,

⁶ Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,

⁷ Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, and Jedaiah.

These were the leaders of the priests

and of their relatives at the time of Jeshua.

⁸ The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with his relatives was in charge of the thanksgiving hymns.

⁹ Their relatives Bakkukiah and Unno stood across from them in worship.

¹⁰ Jeshua was the father of Joiakim. Joiakim was the father of Eliashib. Eliashib was the father of Joiada.

¹¹ Joiada was the father of Jonathan. Jonathan was the father of Jaddua.

¹² At the time of Joiakim, these were the priests who were the leaders of their families: From Seraiah, Meraiah; from Jeremiah, Hananiah;

¹³ from Ezra, Meshullam; from Amariah, Jehohanan;

¹⁴ from Malluchi, Jonathan; from Shebaniah, Joseph;

¹⁵ from Harim, Adna; from Meraioth, Helkai;

¹⁶ from Iddo, Zechariah; from Ginnethon, Meshullam;

¹⁷ from Abijah, Zichri; from Miniamin, from Moadiah, Piltai;

¹⁸ from Bilgah, Shammua; from Shemaiah, Jehonathan;

¹⁹ from Joiarib, Mattenai; from Jedaiah, Uzzi;

²⁰ from Sallai, Kallai; from Amok, Eber;

²¹ from Hilkiah, Hashabiah; from Jedaiah, Nethanel.

²² The names of the family heads of the Levites and the priests at the time of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were recorded until the reign of Darius the Persian.

²³ The names of the family heads of the Levites were recorded in the Book of Chronicles until the time of Johanan, grandson of Eliashib.

²⁴ The heads of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua (son of Kadmiel). They and their relatives stood in groups across from one another to sing hymns of praise and thanksgiving antiphonally as David, the man of God, had ordered.

²⁵ Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers standing guard at the storehouses by the gates.

²⁶ They lived in the days of Joiakim, son of Jeshua, grandson of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest and scribe.

²⁷ When the wall of Jerusalem was going to be dedicated, they went to wherever the Levites lived and had them come to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication joyfully with hymns of thanksgiving, with songs and cymbals, and with harps and lyres.

²⁸ So the groups of singers came together from the countryside around Jerusalem, from the villages of Netophah,

²⁹ from Beth Gilgal, and from the region of Geba and Azmaveth. The singers had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem.

³⁰ The priests and the Levites cleansed themselves. Then they cleansed the people, the gates, and the wall.

³¹ Then I had the leaders of Judah come up on the wall, and I arranged two large choirs to give thanks and march in procession. One choir went to the right on the wall to Dung Gate.

³² Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah followed them.

³³ Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam,

³⁴ Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah also followed.

³⁵ So did some priests with trumpets: Zechariah, who was the son of Jonathan, who was the son of Shemaiah, who was the son of Mattaniah, who was the son of Micaiah, who was the son of Zaccur, who was the son of Asaph.

³⁶ Also, these relatives of Zechariah followed: Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani with the musical instruments of David, the man of God. Ezra the scribe led them.

³⁷ At Fountain Gate they went straight up the stairs of the City of David. There the wall rises past David's palace and reaches Water Gate on the east.

³⁸ The other choir went to the left. I followed them with the other half of the people. We walked on the wall, past the Tower of the Ovens, as far as Broad Wall,

³⁹ then past Ephraim Gate, over Old Gate and Fish Gate, and by the Tower of

Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, as far as Sheep Gate. The choir stopped at Guard's Gate.

⁴⁰ So both choirs stood in God's temple, as did I and the half of the leaders who were with me.

⁴¹ Likewise, these priests stood in God's temple: Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah with trumpets,

⁴² and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchiah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang under the direction of Jezrahiah.

⁴³ That day they offered many sacrifices and rejoiced because God had given them reason to rejoice. The women and children rejoiced as well. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard from far away.

⁴⁴ On that day men were put in charge of the storerooms for the contributions,

the first produce harvested, and a tenth of the people's money. They stored in those rooms the gifts designated by Moses' Teachings for the priests and Levites from the fields around the cities. The people of Judah were pleased with the ministry of the priests and Levites.

⁴⁵ They were doing what their God required, what needed to be done for cleansing. The singers and the gatekeepers did what David and his son Solomon had ordered them to do.

⁴⁶ Long ago in the time of David and Asaph, there had been directors for the singers to lead in singing the songs of praise and hymns of thanksgiving to God.

⁴⁷ At the time of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, all the Israelites were giving gifts for the daily support of the singers and the gatekeepers. They set aside holy gifts for the daily support of the Levites,

and the Levites set aside holy gifts for support of Aaron's descendants.

13 ¹ On that day the Book of Moses was read while the people were listening. They heard the passage that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into God's assembly.

² (After all, they didn't welcome the Israelites with food and water. Instead, they hired Balaam to curse the Israelites. But our God turned the curse into a blessing.)

³ After the people heard this Teaching, they separated the non-Israelites from the Israelites.

⁴ Even before this, the priest Eliashib, who was related to Tobiah and had been put in charge of the storerooms of our God's temple,

⁵ had provided a large room for Tobiah. Previously, this room had been used to store grain offerings, incense, utensils,

a tenth of all the grain harvested, new wine, and olive oil. These things belonged by law to the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers. The contributions for the priests had also been stored there.

⁶ While all of this was taking place, I wasn't in Jerusalem. In the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes' reign in Babylon, I returned to the king. Later, I asked the king for permission to return.

⁷ I went to Jerusalem and discovered the evil thing Eliashib had done by providing Tobiah with a room in God's temple.

⁸ I was furious. So I threw all of Tobiah's household goods out of the room.

⁹ Then I told them to cleanse the rooms, and I put back in there the utensils from God's temple, the offerings, and the incense.

¹⁰ I learned that the Levites had not been given their portions. So each of the

Levites and singers, who conducted the worship in the temple, had left for their own fields.

¹¹ I reprimanded the leaders. "Why is God's temple being neglected?" I asked. So I brought the Levites back together and put them back in their places of service.

¹² Then all Judah brought a tenth of all the grain harvested, new wine, and olive oil to the storerooms.

¹³ I appointed the following men to be in charge of the storerooms: Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah the Levite, and I appointed Hanan, son of Zaccur and grandson of Mattaniah to help them. Since they could be trusted, I made them responsible for distributing the portions to their relatives.

¹⁴ Nehemiah prayed, "Remember me for what I have done, my God, and don't wipe out the good things that I

have done for your temple and for the worship that is held there."

¹⁵ In those days I saw people in Judah stomping grapes in the winepresses on the day of worship. I saw them bringing in loads of wine, grapes, figs, and every other kind of load. They piled the loads on donkeys and brought them into Jerusalem on the day of worship. I warned them about selling food on that day.

¹⁶ People from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of goods. They were selling them on the day of worship to the people of Judah, even in Jerusalem.

¹⁷ I reprimanded the nobles of Judah and asked them, "What is this evil thing you're doing? How dare you treat the day of worship as unholy!

¹⁸ Isn't this what your ancestors did, with the results that our God brought all

these evils on us and on this city? Now you're making him even more angry with Israel by treating the day of worship as unholy."

¹⁹ Before the day of worship, when the gates of Jerusalem were cleared of traffic, I ordered the doors to be shut and not to be reopened until after the day of worship. I stationed some of my men by the gates to make sure that no loads could be brought in on the day of worship.

²⁰ Once or twice merchants and those who sell all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem.

²¹ I warned them. "Why are you spending the night in front of the wall?" I asked them. "If you do it again, I'll arrest you." After that, they no longer came on the day of worship.

²² Then I told the Levites to cleanse themselves and guard the gates to keep

the day of worship holy. Nehemiah prayed, "Remember me also for this, my God, and spare me, since you are very kind."

²³ In those days I saw some Jews who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.

²⁴ Half their children spoke the language of Ashdod or one of the other languages, but they couldn't understand the language of Judah well enough to speak it.

²⁵ So I reprimanded those Jews, cursed them, beat some of them, and pulled out their hair. I made them swear by God: "We won't allow our daughters to marry their sons, and we won't allow their daughters to marry us or our sons."

²⁶ I said, "Wasn't it because of marriages like these that King Solomon of Israel sinned? There wasn't a king like him among all nations. God loved him,

and God made him king of all Israel. But his non-Israelite wives led him to sin.

²⁷ Should we follow your example, commit such a serious crime against our God, and be unfaithful to him by marrying non-Israelite women?"

²⁸ Even one of Joiada's sons was a son-in-law of Sanballat from Beth Horon. (Joiada was the son of the chief priest Eliashib.) I chased Joiada's son away from me.

²⁹ Nehemiah prayed, "Remember them, my God, because they have contaminated the priestly office and the promise you made to the priests and Levites."

³⁰ So I cleansed them from everything that was foreign. I assigned duties to the priests and Levites. Each one had his own assignment.

³¹ I also arranged for delivering wood at regular times and for bringing the

first produce to be harvested. Nehemiah prayed, "Remember me, my God, for my benefit."

Esther

1 ¹ In the days of Xerxes the following events took place. This was the same Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces from India to Sudan.

² At the time when King Xerxes sat on the royal throne in the fortress of Susa, ³ he held a banquet in the third year of his reign. The banquet was for all his officials and advisers, that is, the military officers of the Persians and Medes, the nobles and officials of the provinces who had access to him.

⁴ He showed them the enormous wealth of his kingdom and the costly splendor of his greatness for many days, 180 to be exact.

⁵ When those days were over, the king held a banquet lasting seven days. This

banquet was held in the enclosed garden of the king's palace for all people in the fortress of Susa, whatever their rank.

⁶ The garden had white and violet linen curtains. These curtains were attached to silver rods and marble pillars by cords made of white and purple fine linen. Gold and silver couches were on a mosaic pavement of purple rock, white marble, pearl-like stone, and black marble.

⁷ People drank from golden cups. No two cups were alike. The king also provided plenty of royal wine out of his royal generosity.

⁸ The drinking followed this rule: Drink as you please. (The king had ordered all the waiters in his palace to let everyone do as he pleased.)

⁹ Queen Vashti also held a banquet for the women at the royal palace of King Xerxes.

¹⁰ On the seventh day when the king was drunk on wine, he ordered Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs who served under King Xerxes,
¹¹ to bring Queen Vashti in front of the king, wearing her royal crown. He wanted to show the people, especially the officials, her beauty, because she was very attractive.

¹² But Queen Vashti refused the king's command that the eunuchs delivered to her. As a result, the king became very angry, and his rage burned inside him.

¹³ Now, the king usually asked for advice from all the experts in royal decrees and decisions,

¹⁴ from those closest to him—Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. These seven officials of the Persians and Medes had access to the king and held the highest

rank in the kingdom. The king asked these wise men who knew the times,

¹⁵ "According to the royal decrees, what must we do with Queen Vashti since she did not obey King Xerxes' command, which the eunuchs delivered?"

¹⁶ Then Memucan spoke up in the presence of the king and the officials, "Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the officials and all the people in every province of King Xerxes.

¹⁷ The news of what the queen has done will spread to all women, and they will despise their husbands. They will say, 'King Xerxes ordered Queen Vashti to be brought to him, but she would not come.'

¹⁸ Today the wives of the officials in Persia and Media who have heard what the queen did will talk back to all the

king's officials. There will be contempt and short tempers.

¹⁹ If it pleases you, Your Majesty, issue a royal decree. It should be recorded in the decrees of the Persians and Medes, never to be repealed, that Vashti may never again appear in front of King Xerxes. Furthermore, Your Majesty, you should give her royal position to another woman who is more worthy than she.

²⁰ When you issue your decree, your whole kingdom, great as it is, will hear it. Then all the wives will honor their husbands, regardless of their status."

²¹ The king and his officials approved of this, and so the king did as Memucan suggested.

²² He sent official documents to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script and to the people in each province in their own language: "Let

every husband be the ruler in his own house and speak with authority."

2¹ Later, when King Xerxes got over his raging anger, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decided against her.

² So the king's personal staff said to him, "Search for attractive young virgins for the king.

³ And appoint scouts in all the provinces of your kingdom to gather all the attractive young virgins and bring them to the fortress of Susa, to the women's quarters. There, in the care of the king's eunuch Hegai, the guardian of the women, they will have their beauty treatment.

⁴ Then the young woman who pleases you, Your Majesty, will become queen instead of Vashti." The king liked the suggestion, and so he did just that.

⁵ In the fortress of Susa there was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai. He was the son of Jair, the grandson of Shimei, and the great-grandson of Kish.

⁶ (Kish had been taken captive from Jerusalem together with the others who had gone into exile along with Judah's King Jehoiakin, whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away.)

⁷ Mordecai had raised Hadassah, also known as Esther, his uncle's daughter, because she was an orphan. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was very attractive. When her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter.

⁸ When the king's announcement and decree were heard, many young women were gathered together and brought to the fortress of Susa. They were placed

in the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king's palace and placed in the care of Hegai, the guardian of the women.

⁹ The young woman pleased him and won his affection. So he immediately provided her with the beauty treatment, a daily supply of food, and seven suitable female servants from the king's palace. Then he moved her and her servants to the best place in the women's quarters.

¹⁰ Esther did not reveal her nationality or her family background, because Mordecai had ordered her not to.

¹¹ Every day Mordecai would walk back and forth in front of the courtyard of the women's quarters to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

¹² Each young woman had her turn to go to King Xerxes after she had completed the required 12-month treatment for women. The time of

beauty treatment was spent as follows: six months using oil of myrrh and six months using perfumes and other treatments for women.

¹³ After that, the young woman would go to the king. Anything she wanted to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace was given to her.

¹⁴ She would go in the evening and come back in the morning to the other quarters for women. There she would be in the care of the king's eunuch Shaashgaz, the guardian of the concubines. She never went to the king again unless the king desired her and requested her by name.

¹⁵ (Esther was the daughter of Abihail, Mordecai's uncle. Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter.) When Esther's turn came to go to the king, she asked only for what the king's eunuch Hegai,

the guardian of the women, advised. Everyone who saw Esther liked her.

¹⁶ So Esther was taken to King Xerxes in his royal palace in the month of Tebeth, the tenth month, in the seventh year of his reign.

¹⁷ Now, the king loved Esther more than all the other women and favored her over all the other virgins. So he put the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

¹⁸ Then the king held a great banquet for Esther. He invited all his officials and his advisers. He also declared that day a holiday in the provinces, and he handed out gifts from his royal generosity.

¹⁹ When the virgins were gathered a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.

²⁰ Esther still had not revealed her family background or nationality, as Mordecai had ordered her. Esther always

did whatever Mordecai told her, as she did when she was a child.

²¹ In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance, became angry and planned to kill King Xerxes.

²² But Mordecai found out about it and informed Queen Esther. Then Esther told the king, on behalf of Mordecai.

²³ When the report was investigated and found to be true, the dead bodies of Bigthan and Teresh were hung on a pole. The matter was written up in the king's presence in his official record of daily events.

3¹ Later, King Xerxes promoted Haman. (Haman was the son of Hammedatha and was from Agag.) He gave Haman a position higher in authority than all the other officials who were with him.

² All the king's advisers were at the king's gate, kneeling and bowing to Haman with their faces touching the ground, because the king had commanded it. But Mordecai would not kneel and bow to him.

³ Then the king's advisers at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why do you ignore the king's command?"

⁴ Although they asked him day after day, he paid no attention to them. So they informed Haman to see if Mordecai's actions would be tolerated, since Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew.

⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai did not kneel and bow to him, Haman was infuriated.

⁶ Because the king's advisers had informed him about Mordecai's nationality, he thought it beneath himself to kill only Mordecai. So Haman

planned to wipe out Mordecai's people—
—all the Jews in the entire kingdom of
Xerxes.

⁷ In Xerxes' twelfth year as king, Pur
(which means the lot) was thrown in
front of Haman for every day of every
month, from Nisan, the first month, until
Adar, the twelfth month.

⁸ Now, Haman told King Xerxes, "Your
Majesty, there is a certain nationality
scattered among—but separate from—
—the nationalities in all the provinces
of your kingdom. Their laws differ from
those of all other nationalities. They
do not obey your decrees. So it is not
in your interest to tolerate them, Your
Majesty.

⁹ If you approve, have the orders for
their destruction be written. For this I
will pay 750,000 pounds of silver to your
treasurers to be put in your treasury."

¹⁰ At that, the king removed his signet ring and gave it to Haman, the enemy of the Jews. (Haman was the son of Hammedatha and was from Agag.)

¹¹ The king told Haman, "You can keep your silver and do with the people whatever you like."

¹² On the thirteenth day of the first month the king's scribes were summoned. All Haman's orders were written to the king's satraps, the governors of every province, and the officials of every people. They wrote to each province in its own script and to the people in each province in their own language. The orders were signed in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with the king's ring.

¹³ Messengers were sent with official documents to all the king's provinces. The people were ordered to wipe out, kill, and destroy all the Jews—young

and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. Their possessions were also to be seized.

¹⁴ A copy of the document was made public in a decree to every province. All the people were to be ready for this day.

¹⁵ The messengers hurried out as the king told them. The decree was also issued at the fortress of Susa. So the king and Haman sat down to drink a toast, but the city of Susa was in turmoil.

4 ¹ When Mordecai found out about everything that had been done, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes. He went into the middle of the city and cried loudly and bitterly.

² He even went right up to the king's gate. (No one could enter it wearing sackcloth.)

³ In every province touched by the king's command and decree, the Jews

went into mourning, fasting, weeping, and wailing. Many put on sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ Esther's servants and eunuchs came and informed her about Mordecai. The queen was stunned. She sent clothing for Mordecai to put on in place of his sackcloth, but he refused to accept it.

⁵ Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs appointed to serve her. She commanded him to go to Mordecai and find out what was going on and why.

⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square in front of the king's gate.

⁷ Mordecai informed him about everything that had happened to him. He told him the exact amount of silver that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasury to destroy the Jews.

⁸ He also gave him a copy of the decree that was issued in Susa. The decree gave

permission to exterminate the Jews. Hathach was supposed to show it to Esther to inform and command her to go to the king, beg him for mercy, and appeal to him for her people.

⁹ So Hathach returned and told Esther what Mordecai had said.

¹⁰ Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to say to Mordecai,

¹¹ "All the king's advisers and the people in the king's provinces know that no one approaches the king in the throne room without being summoned. By law that person must be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to him will he live. I, myself, have not been summoned to enter the king's presence for 30 days now."

¹² So Esther's servants told Mordecai what Esther said.

¹³ Mordecai sent this answer back to Esther, "Do not imagine that just

because you are in the king's palace you will be any safer than all the rest of the Jews.

¹⁴ The fact is, even if you remain silent now, someone else will help and rescue the Jews, but you and your relatives will die. And who knows, you may have gained your royal position for a time like this."

¹⁵ Esther sent this reply back to Mordecai,

¹⁶ "Assemble all the Jews in Susa. Fast for me: Do not eat or drink at all for three entire days. My servants and I will also fast. After that, I will go to the king, even if it is against a royal decree. If I die, I die."

¹⁷ Mordecai did just as Esther had commanded him.

5 ¹ On the third day Esther put on her royal robes. She stood in the courtyard of the king's palace, facing the

king's throne room. The king was sitting on the royal throne inside the palace, facing the entrance.

² When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the entrance, she won his favor. So the king held out the golden scepter that was in his hand to Esther. Esther went up to him and touched the top of the scepter.

³ Then the king asked her, "What is troubling you, Queen Esther? What would you like? Even if it is up to half of the kingdom, it will be granted to you."

⁴ So Esther answered, "If it pleases you, Your Majesty, come today with Haman to a dinner I have prepared for you."

⁵ The king replied, "Bring Haman right away, and do whatever Esther asks." So the king and Haman came to the dinner that Esther had prepared.

⁶ While they were drinking wine, the king asked Esther, "What is your request?"

It will be granted to you. What would you like? Even if it is up to half of the kingdom, it will be granted."

⁷ Esther answered, "My request? What would I like?

⁸ Your Majesty, come with Haman to a dinner I will prepare for you. And tomorrow I will answer you, Your Majesty. If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, Your Majesty, may you then grant my request and do what I would like."

⁹ When Haman left that day, he was happy and feeling good. But when Haman saw Mordecai at the king's gate, neither getting up nor trembling in his presence, Haman was furious with Mordecai.

¹⁰ However, Haman controlled himself. He went home and sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh.

¹¹ Then Haman began to relate in detail to them how very rich he was, the many sons he had, and all about how the king promoted him to a position over the officials and the king's advisers.

¹² Haman went on to say, "What's more, Queen Esther allowed no one except me to come with the king to the dinner she had prepared. And again tomorrow I am her invited guest together with the king.

¹³ Yet, all this is worth nothing to me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

¹⁴ Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a pole set up, 75 feet high, and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai's dead body hung on it. Then go with the king to the dinner in good spirits." Haman liked the idea, so he had the pole set up.

6 ¹ That night the king could not sleep. So he told a servant to bring the

official daily records, and they were read to the king.

² The records showed how Mordecai had informed him that Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance, had plotted a rebellion against King Xerxes.

³ The king asked, "How did I reward and promote Mordecai for this?" The king's personal staff replied, "Nothing was done for him."

⁴ The king asked, "Who is in the courtyard?" At that moment, Haman came through the courtyard to the king's palace to ask the king about hanging Mordecai on the pole he had prepared for him.

⁵ The king's staff answered him, "Haman happens to be standing in the courtyard." "Let him come in," the king said.

⁶ So Haman came in. The king then asked him, "What should be done for the man whom the king wishes to reward?" Haman thought to himself, "Whom would the king wish to reward more than me?"

⁷ So Haman told the king, "This is what should be done:

⁸ The servants should bring a royal robe that the king has worn and a horse that the king has ridden, one that has a royal crest on its head.

⁹ Give the robe and the horse to one of the king's officials, who is a noble. Put the robe on the man whom the king wishes to reward and have him ride on the horse in the city square. The king's servants are also to shout ahead of him, 'This is what is done for the man whom the king wishes to reward.'

¹⁰ The king told Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse as you said. Do

this for Mordecai the Jew who sits at the king's gate. Do not omit anything you have said."

¹¹ So Haman took the robe and the horse. He put the robe on Mordecai and had him ride in the city square, shouting ahead of him, "This is what is done for the man whom the king wishes to reward."

¹² After that, Mordecai returned to the king's gate, but Haman hurried home. He was in despair and covered his head.

¹³ There, Haman began to relate in detail to his wife Zeresh and to all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his counselors and his wife Zeresh told him, "You are starting to lose power to Mordecai. If Mordecai is of Jewish descent, you will never win out over him. He will certainly lead to your downfall."

¹⁴ While they were still speaking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and quickly took Haman to the dinner Esther had prepared.

7 ¹ So the king and Haman came to have dinner with Queen Esther.

² On the second day, while they were drinking wine, the king asked Esther, "What is your request, Queen Esther? It will be granted to you. And what would you like? Even if it is up to half of the kingdom, it will be granted."

³ Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, Your Majesty, spare my life. That is my request. And spare the life of my people. That is what I ask for.

⁴ You see, we—my people and I—have been sold so that we can be wiped out, killed, and destroyed. If our men and women had only been sold as slaves,

I would have kept silent because the enemy is not worth troubling you about, Your Majesty."

⁵ Then King Xerxes interrupted Queen Esther and said, "Who is this person? Where is the person who has dared to do this?"

⁶ Esther answered, "Our vicious enemy is this wicked man Haman!" Then Haman became panic-stricken in the presence of the king and queen.

⁷ The king was furious as he got up from dinner and went into the palace garden. But Haman stayed to beg Queen Esther for his life, because he saw that the king had a terrible end in mind for him.

⁸ When the king returned from the palace garden to the palace dining room, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was lying. The king thought, "Is he even going to rape the queen while I'm in the palace?" Then the king passed

sentence on him, and servants covered Haman's face.

⁹ Harbona, one of the eunuchs present with the king, said, "What a coincidence! The 75-foot pole Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke up for the well-being of the king, is still standing at Haman's house." The king responded, "Hang him on it!"

¹⁰ So servants hung Haman's dead body on the very pole he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king got over his raging anger.

8 ¹ On that same day King Xerxes gave the property of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther. Also, Mordecai came to the king because Esther had told him how Mordecai was related to her.

² Then the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and

gave it to Mordecai. And Esther put Mordecai in charge of Haman's property.

³ Esther spoke again to the king. She fell down at his feet crying and begged him to have mercy and to undo the evil plot of Haman, who was from Agag, and his conspiracy against the Jews.

⁴ The king held out his golden scepter to Esther, and Esther got up and stood in front of the king.

⁵ She said, "Your Majesty, if it pleases you, and if I have found favor with you, if you consider my cause to be reasonable and if I am pleasing to you, cancel the official orders concerning the plot of Haman (who was the son of Hammedatha and was from Agag). He signed the order to destroy the Jews in all your provinces, Your Majesty.

⁶ I cannot bear to see my people suffer such evil. And I simply cannot bear to see the destruction of my relatives."

⁷ King Xerxes said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "I have given Haman's property to Esther, and Haman's dead body was hung on the pole because he tried to kill the Jews.

⁸ You write what you think is best for the Jews in the king's name. Seal it also with the king's signet ring, because whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring cannot be canceled."

⁹ At that time on the twenty-third day of Sivan, the third month, the king's scribes were summoned. What Mordecai had ordered was written to the Jews and to the satraps, governors, and officers of the 127 provinces from India to Sudan. It was written to each province in its own script, to each people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and their own language.

¹⁰ Mordecai wrote in King Xerxes' name and sealed the official documents with the king's signet ring. Then he sent them by messengers who rode special horses bred for speed. He wrote

¹¹ that the king had given permission for the Jews in every city to assemble, to defend themselves, to wipe out, to kill, and to destroy every armed force of the people and province that is hostile to them, even women and children, and to seize their goods.

¹² This was permitted on one day in all the provinces of King Xerxes, on the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month.

¹³ The copy of the document was made public in a decree to every province for all people. On that day the Jews were to be ready to take revenge on their enemies.

¹⁴ The messengers rode the king's fastest horses. They left quickly, in keeping with the king's command. The decree was issued also in the fortress of Susa.

¹⁵ Mordecai went out from the presence of the king wearing the royal violet and white robe, a large gold crown, and a purple outer robe of fine linen. And the city of Susa cheered and rejoiced.

¹⁶ So the Jews were cheerful, happy, joyful, and successful.

¹⁷ In every province and every city where the king's message and decree arrived, the Jews were happy and joyful, feasting and enjoying a holiday. Then many common people pretended to be Jews because they were terrified of the Jews.

9 ¹ On the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month, the king's command

and decree were to be carried out. On that very day, when the enemies of the Jews expected to overpower them, the exact opposite happened: The Jews overpowered those who hated them.

² The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes to kill those who were planning to harm them. No one could stand up against them, because all the people were terrified of them.

³ All the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the king's treasurers assisted the Jews because they were terrified of Mordecai.

⁴ Mordecai was an important man in the king's palace. Moreover, his reputation was spreading to all the provinces, since Mordecai was becoming more and more powerful.

⁵ Then with their swords, the Jews attacked all their enemies, killing them,

destroying them, and doing whatever they pleased to those who hated them.

⁶ In the fortress of Susa the Jews killed and wiped out 500 men.

⁷ They also killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,

⁸ Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,

⁹ Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha.

¹⁰ These were the ten sons of Haman, who was the son of Hammedatha and the enemy of the Jews. But the Jews did not seize any of their possessions.

¹¹ On that day the number of those killed in the fortress of Susa was reported to the king.

¹² So the king said to Queen Esther, "In the fortress of Susa the Jews have killed and wiped out 500 men and Haman's 10 sons. What must they have done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now, what is your request? It will be granted to you.

And what else would you like? It, too, will be granted."

¹³ Esther said, "If it pleases you, Your Majesty, allow the Jews in Susa to do tomorrow what was decreed for today. Let them hang Haman's ten sons on poles."

¹⁴ The king commanded this, issuing a decree in Susa. And so they hung Haman's ten sons on poles.

¹⁵ The Jews in Susa also assembled on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed 300 men in Susa, but they did not seize any of their possessions.

¹⁶ The other Jews who were in the king's provinces had also assembled to defend and free themselves from their enemies. They killed 75,000 of those who hated them, but they did not seize any of their possessions.

¹⁷ This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. On the fourteenth they

rested and made it a day of feasting and celebration.

¹⁸ But the Jews in Susa had assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth. They rested on the fifteenth and made it a day of feasting and celebration.

¹⁹ That is why the Jews who live in the villages and in the unwalled towns make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar a holiday for feasting and celebration. They also send gifts of food to one another.

²⁰ Now, Mordecai wrote these things down and sent official letters to all the Jews in all the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far.

²¹ He established the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as days they must observe every year.

²² They were to observe them just like the days when the Jews freed themselves from their enemies. In that

month their grief turned to joy and their mourning into a holiday. He declared that these days are to be days for feasting and celebrating and for sending gifts of food to one another, especially gifts to the poor.

²³ So the Jews accepted as tradition what they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them.

²⁴ It was because Haman, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them. (Haman was the son of Hammedatha and was from Agag.) Haman had the Pur (which means the lot) thrown in order to determine when to crush and destroy them.

²⁵ But when this came to the king's attention, he ordered, in the well-known letter, that the evil plan Haman had plotted against the Jews should turn back on his own head. As a result, they hung Haman and his sons on poles.

²⁶ So the Jews called these days Purim, based on the word Pur. Therefore, because of everything that was said in this letter—both what they had seen and what had happened to them—

²⁷ the Jews established a tradition for themselves and their descendants and for anyone who would join them. The tradition was that a person should never fail to observe these two days every year, as they were described and at their appointed time.

²⁸ So these days must be remembered and observed in every age, family, province, and city. These days of Purim must not be ignored among the Jews, and the importance of these days must never be forgotten by the generations to come.

²⁹ Abihail's daughter Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew wrote with full authority in order to establish with

this second letter the well-known celebration of Purim.

³⁰ Mordecai sent official documents granting peace and security to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Xerxes.

³¹ He did this in order to establish these days of Purim at the appointed time. Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther established them for themselves, as they had established for themselves and their descendants the practices of fasting with sadness.

³² Esther's command had established these practices of Purim, and they are written in a book.

10¹ King Xerxes levied a tax on the country and the islands of the sea.

² All his acts of power and might along with the whole account of the greatness of Mordecai, whom the king had

promoted, are recorded in the history of the kings of the Medes and Persians.

³ Mordecai the Jew was ranked second only to King Xerxes. He was greatly respected by, and popular with, all of the other Jews, since he provided for the good of his people and spoke for the welfare of his fellow Jews.

Job

1 ¹ A man named Job lived in Uz. He was a man of integrity: He was decent, he feared God, and he stayed away from evil.

² He had seven sons and three daughters.

³ He owned 7,000 sheep and goats, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen, 500 donkeys, and a large number of servants. He was the most influential person in the Middle East.

⁴ His sons used to go to each other's homes, where they would have parties. (Each brother took his turn having a party.) They would send someone to invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

⁵ When they finished having their parties, Job would send for them in order to cleanse them from sin. He would get up early in the morning and sacrifice burnt offerings for each of them. Job thought, "My children may have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Job offered sacrifices for them all the time.

⁶ One day when the sons of God came to stand in front of the LORD, Satan the Accuser came along with them.

⁷ The LORD asked Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From wandering all over the earth."

⁸ The LORD asked Satan, "Have you thought about my servant Job? No one in the world is like him! He is a man of integrity: He is decent, he fears God, and he stays away from evil."

⁹ Satan answered the LORD, "Haven't you given Job a reason to fear God?"

¹⁰ Haven't you put a protective fence around him, his home, and everything he has? You have blessed everything he does. His cattle have spread out over the land.

¹¹ But now stretch out your hand, and strike everything he has. I bet he'll curse you to your face."

¹² The LORD told Satan, "Everything he has is in your power, but you must not lay a hand on him!" Then Satan left the LORD'S presence.

¹³ One day when Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's home,

¹⁴ a messenger came to Job. He said, "While the oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby,

¹⁵ men from Sheba attacked. They took the livestock and massacred the

servants. I'm the only one who has escaped to tell you."

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "A fire from God fell from heaven and completely burned your flocks and servants. I'm the only one who has escaped to tell you."

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three companies and made a raid on the camels. They took the camels and massacred the servants. I'm the only one who has escaped to tell you."

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine at their oldest brother's home

¹⁹ when suddenly a great storm swept across the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It fell on the young

people, and they died. I'm the only one who has escaped to tell you."

²⁰ Job stood up, tore his robe in grief, and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground and worshiped.

²¹ He said, "Naked I came from my mother, and naked I will return. The LORD has given, and the LORD has taken away! May the name of the LORD be praised."

²² Through all this Job did not sin or blame God for doing anything wrong.

2¹ One day when the sons of God came to stand in front of the LORD, Satan the Accuser came along with them.

² The LORD asked Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From wandering all over the earth."

³ The LORD asked Satan, "Have you thought about my servant Job? No one

in the world is like him! He is a man of integrity: He is decent, he fears God, and he stays away from evil. And he still holds on to his principles. You're trying to provoke me into ruining him for no reason."

⁴ Satan answered the LORD, "Skin for skin! Certainly, a man will give everything he has for his life.

⁵ But stretch out your hand, and strike his flesh and bones. I bet he'll curse you to your face."

⁶ The LORD told Satan, "He is in your power, but you must spare his life!"

⁷ Satan left the LORD'S presence and struck Job with painful boils from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

⁸ Job took a piece of broken pottery to scratch himself as he sat in the ashes.

⁹ His wife asked him, "Are you still holding on to your principles? Curse God and die!"

¹⁰ He said to her, "You're talking like a godless fool. We accept the good that God gives us. Shouldn't we also accept the bad?" Through all this Job's lips did not utter one sinful word.

¹¹ When Job's three friends heard about all the terrible things that had happened to him, each of them came from his home—Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah, Zophar of Naama. They had agreed they would go together to sympathize with Job and comfort him.

¹² When they saw him from a distance, they didn't even recognize him. They cried out loud and wept, and each of them tore his own clothes in grief. They threw dust on their heads.

¹³ Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him because they saw that he was in such great pain.

3¹ After all this, Job finally opened his mouth and cursed the day he was born.

² Job said,

³ "Scratch out the day I was born and the night that said, 'A boy has been conceived!'

⁴ "That day—let it be pitch-black. Let God above not even care about it. Let no light shine on it.

⁵ Let the darkness and long shadows claim it as their own. Let a dark cloud hang over it. Let the gloom terrify it.

⁶ "That night—let the blackness take it away. Let it not be included in the days of the year or be numbered among the months.

⁷ Let that night be empty. Let no joyful singing be heard in it.

⁸ Let those who curse the day (those who know how to wake up Leviathan) curse that night.

⁹ Let its stars turn dark before dawn. Let it hope for light and receive none. Let it not see the first light of dawn

¹⁰ because it did not shut the doors of the womb from which I came or hide my eyes from trouble.

¹¹ "Why didn't I die as soon as I was born and breathe my last breath when I came out of the womb?

¹² Why did knees welcome me? Why did breasts let me nurse?

¹³ Instead of being alive, I would now be quietly lying down. I would now be sleeping peacefully.

¹⁴ I would be with the kings and the counselors of the world who built for themselves what are now ruins.

¹⁵ I would be with princes who had gold, who filled their homes with silver.

¹⁶ I would be buried like a stillborn baby. I would not exist. I would be like infants who never saw the light.

¹⁷ There the wicked stop their raging.
There the weary are able to rest.

¹⁸ There the captives have no troubles
at all. There they do not hear the
shouting of the slave driver.

¹⁹ There you find both the unimportant
and important people. There the slave is
free from his master.

²⁰ "Why give light to one in misery and
life to those who find it so bitter,

²¹ to those who long for death but it
never comes— though they dig for it
more than for buried treasure?

²² They are ecstatic, delighted to find
the grave.

²³ Why give light to those whose paths
have been hidden, to those whom God
has fenced in?

²⁴ "When my food is in front of me, I
sigh. I pour out my groaning like water.

²⁵ What I fear most overtakes me. What
I dread happens to me.

²⁶ I have no peace! I have no quiet!
I have no rest! And trouble keeps
coming!"

4 ¹ Then Eliphaz from Teman replied to
Job,

² "If someone tries to talk to you, will
you become impatient? But who can
keep from talking?"

³ Certainly, you have instructed many
people: When hands were weak, you
made them strong.

⁴ When someone stumbled, you lifted
him up with your words. When knees
were weak, you gave them strength.

⁵ But trouble comes to you, and you're
impatient. It touches you, and you panic.

⁶ Doesn't your fear of God give you
confidence and your lifetime of integrity
give you hope?

⁷ "Now think about this: Which
innocent person ever died an untimely

death? Find me a decent person who has been destroyed.

⁸ Whenever I saw those who plowed wickedness and planted misery, they gathered its harvest.

⁹ God destroys them with his breath and kills them with a blast of his anger.

¹⁰ Though the roar of the lion and the growl of the ferocious lion is loud, the young lions have had their teeth knocked out.

¹¹ The old lions die without any prey to eat, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

¹² "I was told something secretly and heard something whispered in my ear.

¹³ With disturbing thoughts from visions in the night, when deep sleep falls on people,

¹⁴ fear and trembling came over me, and all my bones shook.

¹⁵ A spirit passed in front of me. It made my hair stand on end.

¹⁶ Something stood there. I couldn't tell what it was. A vague image was in front of my eyes. I heard a soft voice:

¹⁷ Can any mortal be righteous to God? Can any human being be pure to his maker?'

¹⁸ "You see, God doesn't trust his own servants, and he accuses his angels of making mistakes.

¹⁹ How much more will he accuse those who live in clay houses that have their foundation in the dust. Those houses can be crushed quicker than a moth!

²⁰ From morning to evening, they are shattered. They will disappear forever without anyone paying attention.

²¹ Haven't the ropes of their tent been loosened? Won't they die without wisdom?

5¹ "Cry out! Is there anyone to answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn?

² Certainly, anger kills a stubborn fool, and jealousy murders a gullible person.

³ I have seen a stubborn fool take root, but I quickly cursed his house.

⁴ His children are far from help. They are crushed at the city gate, and no one is there to rescue them.

⁵ What a stubborn fool gathers, hungry people eat. They take it even from among the thorns, and thirsty people pant after his wealth.

⁶ Certainly, sorrow doesn't come from the soil, and trouble doesn't sprout from the ground.

⁷ But a person is born for trouble as surely as sparks fly up from a fire.

⁸ "But I would seek God's help and present my case to him.

⁹ He does great things that we cannot understand and miracles that we cannot count.

¹⁰ He gives rain to the earth and sends water to the fields.

¹¹ He places lowly people up high. He lifts those who mourn to safety.

¹² He keeps shrewd people from carrying out their plans so that they cannot do anything successfully.

¹³ He catches the wise with their own tricks. The plans of schemers prove to be hasty.

¹⁴ In the daytime they meet darkness and grope in the sunlight as if it were night.

¹⁵ "But he saves other people from their slander and the needy from the power of the mighty.

¹⁶ Then the poor have hope while wrongdoing shuts its mouth.

¹⁷ "Blessed is the person whom God corrects. That person should not despise discipline from the Almighty.

¹⁸ God injures, but he bandages. He beats you up, but his hands make you well.

¹⁹ He will keep you safe from six troubles, and when the seventh one comes, no harm will touch you:

²⁰ "In famine he will save you from death, and in war he will save you from the sword.

²¹ "When the tongue lashes out, you will be safe, and you will not be afraid of destruction when it comes.

²² "You will be able to laugh at destruction and starvation, so do not be afraid of wild animals on the earth.

²³ "You will have a binding agreement with the stones in the field, and wild animals will be at peace with you.

²⁴ "You will know peace in your tent. You will inspect your house and find nothing missing.

²⁵ "You will find that your children are many and your descendants are like the grass of the earth.

²⁶ "You will come to your grave at a ripe old age like a stack of hay in the right season.

²⁷ "We have studied all of this thoroughly! This is the way it is. Listen to it, and learn it for yourself."

6 ¹ Then Job replied to his friends,
² "If only my grief could be weighed, if only my misery could be laid on the scales with it,

³ then they would be heavier than the sand of the seas. I spoke carelessly

⁴ because the arrows of the Almighty have found their target in me, and my spirit is drinking their poison. God's terrors line up in battle against me.

⁵ "Does a wild donkey bray when it's eating grass, or does an ox make a sound over its hay?

⁶ Is tasteless food eaten without salt, or is there any flavor in the white of an egg?

⁷ I refuse to touch such things. They are disgusting to me.

⁸ "How I wish that my prayer would be answered—that God would give me what I'm hoping for,

⁹ that God would finally be willing to crush me, that he would reach out to cut me off.

¹⁰ Then I would still have comfort. I would be happy despite my endless pain, because I have not rejected the words of the Holy One.

¹¹ What strength do I have left that I can go on hoping? What goal do I have that I would want to prolong my life?

¹² Do I have the strength of rocks? Does my body have the strength of bronze?

¹³ Am I not completely helpless? Haven't my skills been taken away from me?

¹⁴ "A friend should treat a troubled person kindly, even if he abandons the fear of the Almighty.

¹⁵ My brothers have been as deceptive as seasonal rivers, like the seasonal riverbeds that flood.

¹⁶ They are dark with ice. They are hidden by snow.

¹⁷ They vanish during a scorching summer. In the heat their riverbeds dry up.

¹⁸ They change their course. They go into a wasteland and disappear.

¹⁹ Caravans from Tema look for them. Travelers from Sheba search for them.

²⁰ They are ashamed because they relied on the streams. Arriving there, they are disappointed.

²¹ "So you are as unreliable to me as they are. You see something terrifying, and you are afraid.

²² Did I ever say, 'Give me a gift,' or 'Offer me a bribe from your wealth,'

²³ or 'Rescue me from an enemy,' or 'Ransom me from a tyrant'?

²⁴ Teach me, and I'll be silent. Show me where I've been wrong.

²⁵ How painful an honest discussion can be! In correcting me, you correct yourselves!

²⁶ Do you think my words need correction? Do you think they're what a desperate person says to the wind?

²⁷ Would you also throw dice for an orphan? Would you buy and sell your friend?

²⁸ "But now, if you're willing, look at me. I won't lie to your face.

²⁹ Please change your mind. Don't permit any injustice. Change your mind because I am still right about this!

³⁰ Is there injustice on my tongue, or is my mouth unable to tell the difference between right and wrong?

7 ¹ "Isn't a mortal's stay on earth difficult like a hired hand's daily work?

² Like a slave, he longs for shade. Like a hired hand, he eagerly looks for his pay.

³ Likewise, I have been given months that are of no use, and I have inherited nights filled with misery.

⁴ When I lie down, I ask, 'When will I get up?' But the evening is long, and I'm exhausted from tossing about until dawn.

⁵ My body is covered with maggots and scabs. My skin is crusted over with sores; then they ooze.

⁶ My days go swifter than a weaver's shuttle. They are spent without hope.

⁷ Remember, my life is only a breath, and never again will my eyes see anything good.

⁸ The eye that watches over me will no longer see me. Your eye will look for me, but I'll be gone.

⁹ As a cloud fades away and disappears, so a person goes into the grave and doesn't come back again.

¹⁰ He doesn't come back home again, and his household doesn't recognize him anymore.

¹¹ So I won't keep my mouth shut, but I will speak from the distress that is in my spirit and complain about the bitterness in my soul.

¹² "Am I the sea or a sea monster that you have set a guard over me?

¹³ When I say, 'My couch may give me comfort. My bed may help me bear my pain,'

¹⁴ then you frighten me with dreams and terrify me with visions.

¹⁵ My throat would rather be choked. My body would prefer death to these dreams.

¹⁶ I hate my life; I do not want to live forever. Leave me alone because my days are so brief.

¹⁷ "What is a mortal that you should make so much of him, that you should be concerned about him?

¹⁸ What is he that you should inspect him every morning and examine him every moment?

¹⁹ Why don't you stop looking at me long enough to let me swallow my spit?

²⁰ If I sin, what can I possibly do to you since you insist on spying on people? Why do you make me your target? I've become a burden even to myself.

²¹ Why don't you forgive my disobedience and take away my sin? Soon I'll lie down in the dust. Then you will search for me, but I'll be gone!"

8 ¹ Then Bildad from Shuah replied to Job,

² "How long will you say these things? How long will your words be so windy?

³ Does God distort justice, or does the Almighty distort righteousness?

⁴ If your children sinned against him, he allowed them to suffer the consequences of their sinfulness.

⁵ If you search for God and plead for mercy from the Almighty,

⁶ if you are moral and ethical, then he will rise up on your behalf and prove

your righteousness by rebuilding your home.

⁷ Then what you had in the past will seem small compared with the great prosperity you'll have in the future.

⁸ "Ask the people of past generations. Find out what their ancestors had learned.

⁹ We have only been around since yesterday, and we know nothing. Our days on earth are only a fleeting shadow.

¹⁰ Won't their words teach you? Won't they share their thoughts with you?

¹¹ "Can papyrus grow up where there is no swamp? Can rushes grow tall without water?

¹² Even if they were fresh and not cut, they would wither quicker than grass.

¹³ The same thing happens to all who forget God. The hope of the godless dies.

¹⁴ His confidence is easily shattered. His trust is a spider's web.

¹⁵ If one leans on his house, it collapses. If one holds on to it, it will not support his weight.

¹⁶ He is like a well-watered plant in the sunshine. The shoots spread over his garden.

¹⁷ Its roots weave through a pile of stones. They cling to a stone house.

¹⁸ But when it is uprooted from its place, the ground denies it and says, 'I never saw you!'

¹⁹ That is its joy in this life, and others sprout from the same ground to take its place.

²⁰ "Certainly, God does not reject a person of integrity or give a helping hand to wicked people.

²¹ He will fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with happy shouting.

²² Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the tent of the wicked will cease to exist."

9¹ Then Job replied to his friends,
² "Yes, I know that this is true. But how can a mortal be declared righteous to God?

³ If he wished to debate with God, he wouldn't be able to answer one question in a thousand.

⁴ "God is wise in heart and mighty in power. Who could oppose him and win?

⁵ He moves mountains without their knowing it, and he topples them in his anger.

⁶ He shakes the earth from its place, and its pillars tremble.

⁷ He commands the sun not to rise. He doesn't let the stars come out.

⁸ He stretches out the heavens by himself and walks on the waves of the sea.

⁹ He made the constellations Ursa Major, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the clusters of stars in the south.

¹⁰ He does great things that are unsearchable and miracles that cannot be numbered.

¹¹ He passes alongside of me, and I don't even see him. He goes past me, and I don't even notice him.

¹² He takes something away, but who can stop him? Who is going to ask him, 'What are you doing?'

¹³ God does not hold back his anger. Even Rahab's helpers bow humbly in front of him.

¹⁴ "How can I possibly answer God? How can I find the right words to speak with him?

¹⁵ Even if I were right, I could not answer him. I would have to plead for mercy from my judge.

¹⁶ If I cried out and he answered me, I do not believe that he would listen to me.

¹⁷ He would knock me down with a storm and bruise me without a reason.

¹⁸ He would not let me catch my breath. He fills me with bitterness.

¹⁹ If it is a matter of strength, then he is the mighty one. If it is about justice, who will charge me with a crime?

²⁰ If I am righteous, my own mouth would condemn me. It would declare that I am corrupt even if I am a man of integrity.

²¹ If I am a man of integrity, I have no way of knowing it. I hate my life!

²² It is all the same. That is why I say, 'He destroys both the man of integrity and the wicked.'

²³ When a sudden disaster brings death, he makes fun of the despair of innocent people.

²⁴ The earth is handed over to the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If he isn't the one doing this, who is?

²⁵ "My days go by more quickly than a runner. They sprint away. They don't see anything good.

²⁶ They pass by quickly like boats made from reeds, like an eagle swooping down on its prey.

²⁷ Even if I say, 'I will forget my complaining; I will change my expression and smile,'

²⁸ I still dread everything I must suffer. I know that you won't declare me innocent.

²⁹ I've already been found guilty. Why should I work so hard for nothing?

³⁰ If I wash myself with lye soap and cleanse my hands with bleach,

³¹ then you would plunge me into a muddy pit, and my own clothes would find me disgusting.

³² A human like me cannot answer God, 'Let's take our case to court.'

³³ There is no mediator between us to put his hand on both of us.

³⁴ God should take his rod away from me, and he should not terrify me.

³⁵ Then I would speak and not be afraid of him. But I know that I am not like that.

10 ¹ "I hate my life. I will freely express my complaint. I will speak as bitterly as I feel.

² I will say to God, 'Don't condemn me. Let me know why you are quarreling with me.

³ What do you gain by mistreating me, by rejecting the work of your hands while you favor the plans of the wicked?

⁴ Do you actually have human eyes? Do you see as a mortal sees?

⁵ Are your days like a mortal's days? Are your years like a human's years?

⁶ Is that why you look for guilt in me and search for sin in me?

⁷ You know I'm not guilty, but there is no one to rescue me from your hands.

⁸ "Your hands formed me and made every part of me, then you turned to destroy me.

⁹ Please remember that you made me out of clay and that you will return me to the dust again.

¹⁰ Didn't you pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese?

¹¹ Didn't you dress me in skin and flesh and weave me together with bones and tendons?

¹² You gave me life and mercy. Your watchfulness has preserved my spirit.

¹³ But in your heart you hid these things. I know this is what you did.

¹⁴ "If I sin, you watch me and will not free me from my guilt.

¹⁵ How terrible it will be for me if I'm guilty! Even if I'm righteous, I dare not

lift up my head. I am filled with disgrace while I look on my misery.

¹⁶ Like a proud, ferocious lion you hunt me down. You keep working your miracles against me.

¹⁷ You keep finding new witnesses against me. You keep increasing your anger toward me. You keep bringing new armies against me.

¹⁸ "Why did you take me out of the womb? I wish I had breathed my last breath before anyone had laid eyes on me.

¹⁹ Then it would be as if I had never existed, as if I had been carried from the womb to the tomb.

²⁰ "Isn't my life short enough? So stop this, and leave me alone. Let me smile a little

²¹ before I go away to a land of darkness and gloom,

²² to a dismal land of long shadows and confusion where light is as bright as darkness. I'll never return.'"

11 ¹ Then Zophar from Naama replied to Job,

² "Shouldn't someone answer this flood of words? Should a good public speaker be acquitted?"

³ Should your empty talk silence others so that you can make fun of us without any shame?"

⁴ You say, 'My teaching is morally correct,' and, 'As you can see, I'm innocent.'

⁵ I only wish God would speak and open his mouth to talk to you.

⁶ He would tell you the secrets of wisdom, because true wisdom is twice as great as your wisdom, and you would know that God forgets your sin.

⁷ "Can you discover God's hidden secrets, or are you able to find the Almighty's limits?

⁸ God's wisdom is higher than heaven. What can you do? It is deeper than the depths of hell. What can you know?

⁹ It is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.

¹⁰ If God comes along and imprisons someone and then calls a court into session, who can stop him?

¹¹ He knows who the scoundrels are. And when he sees sin, doesn't he pay attention to it?

¹² But an empty-headed person will gain understanding when a wild donkey is born tame.

¹³ "If you want to set your heart right, then pray to him.

¹⁴ If you're holding on to sin, put it far away, and don't let injustice live in your tent.

¹⁵ Then you will be able to show your face without being ashamed, and you will be secure and unafraid.

¹⁶ Then you will forget your misery and remember it like water that has flowed downstream.

¹⁷ Then your life will be brighter than the noonday sun. The darkness in your life will become like morning.

¹⁸ You will feel confident because there's hope, and you will look around and rest in safety.

¹⁹ You will lie down with no one to frighten you, and many people will try to gain your favor.

²⁰ But the wicked will lose their eyesight. Their escape route will be closed. Their only hope is to take their last breath."

12 ¹ Then Job replied to his friends,
² "You certainly are wise people, and when you die, wisdom will die.

³ Like you, I have a mind. I am not inferior to you. But who doesn't know these things?

⁴ I am a laughingstock to my neighbors. I am one who calls on God and expects an answer. A man of integrity, a man who is righteous, has become a laughingstock.

⁵ "A person who has an easy life has no appreciation for misfortune. He thinks it is the fate of those who slip up.

⁶ But robbers' tents are prosperous, and there is security for those who provoke God, for those whose god is their power.

⁷ "Instead, ask the animals, and they will teach you. Ask the birds, and they will tell you.

⁸ Or speak with the earth, and it will teach you. Even the fish will relate the story to you.

⁹ What creature doesn't know that the LORD'S hands made it?

¹⁰ The life of every living creature and the spirit in every human body are in his hands.

¹¹ Doesn't the ear distinguish sounds and the tongue taste food?

¹² "Wisdom is with the ancient one. The one who has had many days has insight.

¹³ God has wisdom and strength. Advice and insight are his.

¹⁴ When he tears something down, it cannot be rebuilt. When he puts someone in prison, that person cannot be freed.

¹⁵ When he holds back the waters, there is a drought. When he releases them, they flood the earth.

¹⁶ "God has power and priceless wisdom. He owns both the deceiver and the person who is deceived.

¹⁷ He leads counselors away barefoot and makes fools out of judges.

¹⁸ He loosens kings' belts and strips them of their pants.

¹⁹ He leads priests away barefoot and misleads those who serve in a temple.

²⁰ He makes trusted advisers unable to speak and takes away the good judgment of respected leaders.

²¹ He pours contempt on influential people and unbuckles the belt of the mighty.

²² He uncovers mysteries hidden in the darkness and brings gloom into the light.

²³ He makes nations important and then destroys them. He makes nations large and leads them away.

²⁴ He takes away the common sense of a country's leaders and makes them stumble about in a pathless wilderness.

²⁵ They grope in the dark with no light, and he makes them stumble like drunks.

13¹ "My eye has certainly seen all of this! My ear has heard and understood it.

² After all, I know it as well as you do. I am not inferior to you.

³ However, I want to speak to the Almighty, and I wish to argue my case in front of God.

⁴ But you are smearing me with lies. All of you are worthless physicians.

⁵ I wish you would keep silent. For you, that would be wisdom.

⁶ Please listen to my argument, and pay attention to my plea.

⁷ "Will you talk wickedly for God and talk deceitfully on his behalf?

⁸ Will you favor him as if you were arguing in court on God's behalf?

⁹ Will it go well when he cross-examines you? Will you try to trick him as one mortal tricks another?

¹⁰ Will he really defend you if you secretly favor him?

¹¹ Doesn't his majesty terrify you? Doesn't the fear of him fall upon you?

¹² "Your recollections are worthless proverbs. Your answers are absolutely useless.

¹³ Be quiet, because I want to speak. Let whatever may happen to me happen!

¹⁴ I am biting off more than I can chew and taking my life in my own hands.

¹⁵ If God would kill me, I would have no hope left. Nevertheless, I will defend my behavior to his face.

¹⁶ This also will be my salvation because no godless person could face him.

¹⁷ "Listen carefully to my words. Hear my declaration.

¹⁸ I have prepared my case. I know that I will be declared righteous.

¹⁹ Who can make a case against me? If someone could, I'd be silent and die.

²⁰ "Please don't do two things to me so that I won't have to hide from you:

²¹ Stop oppressing me. Don't let your terror frighten me.

²² Then call, and I'll answer. Otherwise, I'll speak, and you'll answer me.

²³ How many crimes and sins have I committed? Make me aware of my disobedience and my sin.

²⁴ Why do you hide your face from me and consider me your enemy?

²⁵ Are you trying to make a fluttering leaf tremble or trying to chase dry husks?

²⁶ You write down bitter accusations against me. You make me suffer for the sins of my youth.

²⁷ You put my feet in shackles. You follow my trail by engraving marks on the soles of my feet.

²⁸ I am like worn-out wineskins, like moth-eaten clothes.

14¹ "A person who is born of a woman is short-lived and is full of trouble.

² He comes up like a flower; then he withers. He is like a fleeting shadow; he doesn't stay long.

³ You observe this and call me to account to you.

⁴ "If only an unclean person could become clean! It's not possible.

⁵ If the number of his days and the number of his months are determined by you, and you set his limit, then he cannot go past it.

⁶ Look away from him, and he will cease to be. Meanwhile, he loves life as a laborer loves work.

⁷ There is hope for a tree when it is cut down. It will sprout again. Its shoots will not stop sprouting.

⁸ If its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the soil,

⁹ merely a scent of water will make it sprout and grow branches like a plant.

¹⁰ But a human dies and is powerless. A person breathes his last breath, and where is he?

¹¹ As water drains out of a lake, or as a river dries up completely,

¹² so each person lies down and does not rise until the heavens cease to exist. He does not wake up. He is not awakened from his sleep.

¹³ I wish you would hide me in Sheol and keep me hidden there until your anger cools. Set a specific time for me when you will remember me.

¹⁴ "If a person dies, will he go on living? I will wait for my relief to come as long as my hard labor continues.

¹⁵ You will call, and I will answer you. You will long for the person your hands have made.

¹⁶ Though now you count my steps, you will not keep a record of my sins.

¹⁷ My disobedience will be closed up in a bag, and you will cover over my sins.

¹⁸ As surely as a mountain falls and rocks are dislodged,

¹⁹ so water wears away stone, floods wash away soil from the land, and you destroy a mortal's hope.

²⁰ You overpower him forever, and he passes away. You change his appearance and send him away.

²¹ His sons are honored, and he doesn't know it. Or they become unimportant, and he doesn't realize it.

²² He feels only his body's pain. He is only worried about himself."

15 ¹ Then Eliphaz from Teman replied to Job,

² "Should a wise person answer with endless details and fill his stomach with the east wind?

³ Should he argue with words that don't help, with speeches that don't help anyone?

⁴ Yes, you destroy the fear of God and diminish devotion to God.

⁵ Your sin teaches you what to say. You choose to talk with a sly tongue.

⁶ Your own mouth condemns you, not I. Your lips testify against you.

⁷ "Were you the first human to be born? Were you delivered before the hills existed?"

⁸ Did you listen in on God's council meeting and receive a monopoly on wisdom?

⁹ What do you know that we don't know? What do you understand that we don't?

¹⁰ Both the old and the gray-haired are among us. They are older than your father.

¹¹ Isn't God's comfort enough for you, even when gently spoken to you?

¹² Why have your emotions carried you away? Why do your eyes flash

¹³ when you turn against God and spit these words out of your mouth?

¹⁴ Why should a mortal be considered faultless or someone born of a woman be considered righteous?

¹⁵ If God doesn't trust his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in his sight,

¹⁶ how much less will he trust the one who is disgusting and corrupt, the one who drinks wickedness like water.

¹⁷ "I'll tell you; listen to me! I'll relate what I have seen.

¹⁸ I'll tell you what wise people have declared and what was not kept secret from their ancestors.

¹⁹ (The land was given to them alone, and no stranger passed through their land.)

²⁰ "The wicked person is tortured all his days. Only a few years are reserved for the ruthless person.

²¹ Terrifying sounds are in his ears. While he enjoys peace, the destroyer comes to him.

²² He doesn't believe he'll return from the dark. He is destined to be killed with a sword.

²³ He wanders around for food and asks, 'Where is it?' He knows that his ruin is close at hand.

²⁴ "The day of darkness troubles him. Distress and anguish terrify him like a king ready for battle.

²⁵ He stretches out his hand against God and attacks the Almighty like a warrior.

²⁶ He stubbornly charges at him with a thick shield.

²⁷ "His face is bloated with fat, and he is fat around the waist.

²⁸ He lives in ruined cities where no one dwells, in houses that are doomed to be piles of rubble.

²⁹ He won't get rich, and his wealth won't last. His possessions won't spread out over the land.

³⁰ "He won't escape the darkness. A flame will shrivel his branches. He will be blown away by his own breath.

³¹ He shouldn't trust in worthless things and deceive himself because he will get worthless things in return.

³² It will happen before his time has come, and his branch will not become green.

³³ He will drop his unripened grapes like a vine and throw off his blossoms like an olive tree

³⁴ because a mob of godless people produces nothing, and fire burns up the tents of those who offer bribes.

³⁵ They conceive trouble and give birth to evil. Their wombs produce deception."

16 ¹ Then Job replied to his friends,
² "I have heard many things like this before. You are all pathetic at comforting me.

³ Will your long-winded speeches never end? What disturbs you that you keep on answering me?

⁴ I, too, could speak like you if we could trade places. I could string words together against you and shake my head at you.

⁵ I could encourage you with my mouth, and my quivering lips could ease your pain.

⁶ If I speak, my pain is not eased. If I stop talking, how much of it will go away?

⁷ "But now, God has worn me out. You, God, have destroyed everyone who supports me.

⁸ You have shriveled me up, which itself is a witness against me. My frail body rises up and testifies against me.

⁹ "God's anger tore me apart and attacked me. He gritted his teeth at me. My opponent looked sharply at me.

¹⁰ People gaped at me with wide-open mouths. In scorn they slapped my cheeks. They united against me.

¹¹ God handed me over to unjust people and threw me into the hands of wicked people.

¹² I was at ease, and he shattered me. He grabbed me by the back of the neck and smashed my skull. He set me up as his target,

¹³ and his archers surrounded me. He slashes open my kidneys without mercy and spills my blood on the ground.

¹⁴ He inflicts wound after wound on me. He lunges at me like a warrior.

¹⁵ "I have sewn sackcloth over my skin, and I have thrown my strength in the dust.

¹⁶ My face is red from crying, and dark shadows encircle my eyes,

¹⁷ although my hands have done nothing violent, and my prayer is sincere.

¹⁸ "Earth, don't cover my blood. Don't ever let my cry for justice be stopped.

¹⁹ Even now, look! My witness is in heaven, and the one who testifies for me is above,

²⁰ the spokesman for my thoughts. My eyes drip with tears to God

²¹ But my witness will plead for a human in front of God. The Son of Man will plead for his friend!

²² because in a few short years I will take the path of no return.

17¹ "My spirit is broken. My days have been snuffed out. The cemetery is waiting for me.

² Certainly, mockers are around me. My eyes are focused on their opposition.

³ Please guarantee my bail yourself. Who else will guarantee it with a handshake?

⁴ You have closed their minds so that they cannot understand. That is why you will not honor them.

⁵ (Whoever turns in friends to get their property should have his children's eyesight fail.)

⁶ "Now he has made me a laughingstock for many people. Now they spit in my face.

⁷ Now my eyes are blurred from grief. Now all my limbs are like a shadow.

⁸ Decent people are shocked by this, and it stirs up the innocent against godless people.

⁹ Yet, the righteous person clings to his way, and the one with clean hands grows stronger.

¹⁰ "But now, all of you, come and try again! I won't find one wise man among you.

¹¹ My days are passing by. My plans are broken. My dreams are shattered.

¹² You say that night is day. Light has nearly become darkness.

¹³ If I look for the grave as my home and make my bed in the darkness,

¹⁴ if I say to the pit, 'You are my father,' and to the worm, 'You are my mother and sister,'

¹⁵ then where is my hope? Can you see any hope left in me?

¹⁶ Will hope go down with me to the gates of the grave? Will my hope rest with me in the dust?"

18 ¹ Then Bildad from Shuah replied to Job,

² "How long before your words will end? Think it through, and then we'll talk.

³ Why do you think of us as cattle? Why are we considered stupid in your eyes?

⁴ Why do you rip yourself apart in anger? Should the earth be abandoned for your sake or a boulder be dislodged?

⁵ "Indeed, the light of the wicked is snuffed out. The flame of his fire stops glowing.

⁶ The light in his tent becomes dark, and the lamp above him is snuffed out.

⁷ "His healthy stride is shortened, and his own planning trips him up.

⁸ His own feet get him tangled in a net as he walks around on its webbing.

⁹ A trap catches his heel. A snare holds him.

¹⁰ A rope is hidden on the ground for him. A trap is on his path to catch him.

¹¹ "Terrors suddenly pounce on him from every side and chase him every step he takes.

¹² Hunger undermines his strength. Disaster is waiting beside him.

¹³ His skin is eaten away by disease. Death's firstborn son eats away at the limbs of his body.

¹⁴ He is dragged from the safety of his tent and marched off to the king of terrors.

¹⁵ Fire lives in his tent. Sulfur is scattered over his home.

¹⁶ His roots dry up under him. His branches wither over him.

¹⁷ All memory about him will vanish from the earth, and his reputation will not be known on the street corner.

¹⁸ He will be driven from the light into the dark and chased out of the world.

¹⁹ He will not have any children or descendants among his people or any survivor where he used to live.

²⁰ People in the west are shocked by what happens to him. People in the east are seized with horror.

²¹ This is what happens to the homes of wicked people and to those who do not know God."

19 ¹ Then Job replied to his friends,
² "How long will you torment me and depress me with words?

³ You have insulted me ten times now. You're not even ashamed of mistreating me.

⁴ Even if it were true that I've made a mistake without realizing it, my mistake would affect only me.

⁵ If you are trying to make yourselves look better than me by using my disgrace as an argument against me,

⁶ then I want you to know that God has wronged me and surrounded me with his net.

⁷ Indeed, I cry, 'Help! I'm being attacked!' but I get no response. I call for help, but there is no justice.

⁸ "God has blocked my path so that I can't go on. He has made my paths dark.

⁹ He has stripped me of my honor. He has taken the crown off my head.

¹⁰ He beats me down on every side until I'm gone. He uproots my hope like a tree.

¹¹ He is very angry at me. He considers me to be his enemy.

¹² His troops assemble against me. They build a ramp to attack me and camp around my tent.

¹³ "My brothers stay far away from me. My friends are complete strangers to me.

¹⁴ My relatives and my closest friends have stopped coming. My house guests have forgotten me.

¹⁵ My female slaves consider me to be a stranger. I am like a foreigner to them.

¹⁶ I call my slave, but he doesn't answer, though I beg him.

¹⁷ My breath offends my wife. I stink to my own children.

¹⁸ Even young children despise me. If I stand up, they make fun of me.

¹⁹ All my closest friends are disgusted with me. Those I love have turned against me.

²⁰ I am skin and bones, and I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth.

²¹ "Have pity on me, my friends! Have pity on me because God's hand has struck me down.

²² Why do you pursue me as God does? Why are you never satisfied with my flesh?

²³ "I wish now my words were written. I wish they were inscribed on a scroll.

²⁴ I wish they were forever engraved on a rock with an iron stylus and lead.

²⁵ But I know that my defender lives, and afterwards, he will rise on the earth.

²⁶ Even after my skin has been stripped off my body, I will see God in my own flesh.

²⁷ I will see him with my own eyes, not with someone else's. My heart fails inside me!

²⁸ "You say, 'We will persecute him! The root of the problem is found in him.'

²⁹ Fear death, because your anger is punishable by death. Then you will know there is a judge."

20 ¹ Then Zophar from Naama replied to Job,

² "My disturbing thoughts make me answer, and because of them I am upset.

³ I have heard criticism that makes me ashamed, but a spirit beyond my understanding gives me answers.

⁴ "Don't you know that from ancient times, from the time humans were placed on earth,

⁵ the triumph of the wicked is short-lived, and the joy of the godless person lasts only a moment?

⁶ If his height reaches to the sky and his head touches the clouds,

⁷ he will certainly rot like his own feces. Those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?'

⁸ He will fly away like a dream and not be found. He will be chased away like a vision in the night.

⁹ Eyes that saw him will see him no more. His home will not look at him again.

¹⁰ His children will have to ask the poor for help. His own hands will have to give back his wealth.

¹¹ His bones, once full of youthful vigor, will lie down with him in the dust.

¹² Though evil is sweet in his mouth and he hides it under his tongue...

¹³ Though he savors it and won't let go of it and he holds it on the roof of his mouth,

¹⁴ the food in his belly turns sour. It becomes snake venom in his stomach.

¹⁵ He vomits up the riches that he swallowed. God forces them out of his stomach.

¹⁶ The godless person sucks the poison of snakes. A viper's fang kills him.

¹⁷ He won't be able to drink from the streams or from the rivers of honey and buttermilk.

¹⁸ He will give back what he earned without enjoying it. He will get no joy from the profits of his business

¹⁹ because he crushed and abandoned the poor. He has taken by force a house that he didn't build.

²⁰ He will never know peace in his heart. He will never allow anything he desires to escape his grasp.

²¹ "Nothing is left for him to eat. His prosperity won't last.

²² Even with all his wealth the full force of misery comes down on him.

²³ Let that misery fill his belly. God throws his burning anger at the godless person and makes his wrath come down on him like rain.

²⁴ If that person flees from an iron weapon, a bronze bow will pierce him.

²⁵ He pulls it out, and it comes out of his back. The glittering point comes out

of his gallbladder. "Terrors come quickly to the godless person:

²⁶ Total darkness waits in hiding for his treasure. A fire that no one fans will burn him. Whatever is left in his tent will be devoured.

²⁷ Heaven exposes his sin. Earth rises up against him.

²⁸ A flood will sweep away his house, a flash flood on the day of his anger.

²⁹ This is the reward God gives to the wicked person, the inheritance God has appointed for him."

21 ¹ Then Job replied to his friends,
² "Listen carefully to my words, and let that be the comfort you offer me.

³ Bear with me while I speak. Then after I've spoken, you may go on mocking.

⁴ Am I complaining about a person? Why shouldn't I be impatient?

⁵ Look at me, and be shocked, and put your hand over your mouth.

⁶ When I remember it, I'm terrified, and shuddering seizes my body.

⁷ "Why do the wicked go on living, grow old, and even become more powerful?

⁸ They see their children firmly established with them, and they get to see their descendants.

⁹ Their homes are free from fear, and God doesn't use his rod on them.

¹⁰ Their bulls are fertile when they breed. Their cows give birth to calves and never miscarry.

¹¹ They send their little children out to play like a flock of lambs, and their children dance around.

¹² They sing with the tambourine and lyre, and they are happy with the music of the flute.

¹³ They spend their days in happiness, and they go peacefully to the grave.

¹⁴ But they say to God, 'Leave us alone. We don't want to know your ways.'

¹⁵ Who is the Almighty that we should serve him? What do we gain if we pray to him?’

¹⁶ Anyhow, isn’t their happiness in their own power? (The plan of the wicked is foreign to my way of thinking.)

¹⁷ "How often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out? How often does disaster happen to them? How often does an angry God give them pain?

¹⁸ How often are they like straw in the wind or like husks that the storm sweeps away?

¹⁹ "You say, ‘God saves a person’s punishment for his children.’ God should pay back that person so that he would know that it is a punishment.

²⁰ His eyes should see his own ruin. He should drink from the wrath of the Almighty.

²¹ How can he be interested in his family after he's gone, when the number of his months is cut short?

²² "Can anyone teach God knowledge? Can anyone judge the Most High?

²³ One person dies in his prime and feels altogether happy and contented.

²⁴ His stomach is full of milk, and his bones are strong and healthy.

²⁵ Another person, never having tasted happiness, dies with a bitter soul.

²⁶ Together they lie down in the dust, and worms cover them.

²⁷ "You see, I know your thoughts and the schemes you plot against me

²⁸ because you ask, 'Where is the house of the influential person? Where is the tent where wicked people live?'

²⁹ Haven't you asked travelers? But you didn't pay attention to their directions.

³⁰ On the day of disaster the wicked person is spared. On the day of God's anger he is rescued.

³¹ Who will tell him to his face how he lived? Who will pay him back for what he did?

³² He is carried to the cemetery, and his grave is guarded.

³³ The soil in the creekbed is sweet to him. Everyone follows him. Countless others went before him.

³⁴ How can you comfort me with this nonsense when your answers continue to betray me?"

22 ¹ Then Eliphaz from Teman replied to Job,

² "Can a human be of any use to God when even a wise person is only useful to himself?"

³ Is the Almighty pleased when you are righteous? Does he gain anything when you follow the path of integrity?

⁴ Does God correct you and bring you into a court of law because you fear him?

⁵ "Aren't you really very wicked? Is there no end to your wrongdoing?"

⁶ For no reason you take your brothers' goods as security for a loan and strip them of their clothes.

⁷ You don't even give a tired person a drink of water, and you take food away from hungry people.

⁸ A strong person owns the land. A privileged person lives in it.

⁹ You send widows away empty-handed, and the arms of orphans are broken.

¹⁰ That is why traps are all around you and great fear suddenly grips you.

¹¹ That is why darkness surrounds you and you cannot see and a flood of water covers you.

12 "Isn't God high above in the heavens? Look how high the highest stars are!

13 You ask, 'What does God know? Can he judge anything from behind a dark cloud?

14 Thick clouds surround him so that he cannot see. He walks above the clouds.'

15 "Are you following the old path that wicked people have taken?

16 They are snatched up before their time. A river washes their foundation away.

17 They told God, 'Leave us alone! What can the Almighty do for us?'

18 Yet, he filled their homes with good things. (The plan of the wicked is foreign to my way of thinking.)

19 The righteous saw it and were glad, and the innocent made fun of them by saying,

²⁰ Indeed, their wealth has been wiped out, and a fire has burned up what little they had left.'

²¹ "Be in harmony and at peace with God. In this way you will have prosperity.

²² Accept instruction from his mouth, and keep his words in your heart.

²³ If you return to the Almighty, you will prosper. If you put wrongdoing out of your tent,

²⁴ and lay your gold down in the dust, and put your gold from Ophir among the pebbles in the rivers,

²⁵ then the Almighty will become your gold and your large supply of silver.

²⁶ Then you will be happy with the Almighty and look up toward God.

²⁷ You will pray to him, and he will listen to you, and you will keep your vow to him.

²⁸ When you promise to do something, you will succeed, and light will shine on your path.

²⁹ When others are discouraged, you will say, 'Cheer up!' Then he will save the humble person.

³⁰ He will rescue one who is not innocent. That person will be rescued by your purity."

23 ¹ Then Job replied to his friends,
² "My complaint is bitter again today. I try hard to control my sighing.

³ "If only I knew where I could find God! I would go where he lives.

⁴ I would present my case to him. I would have a mouthful of arguments.

⁵ I want to know the words he would use to answer me. I want to understand the things he would say to me.

⁶ Would he sue me and hide behind great legal maneuvers? No, he certainly would press charges against me.

⁷ Then decent people could argue with him, and I would escape my judgment forever.

⁸ However, if I go east, he isn't there. If I go west, I can't find him.

⁹ If I go northward, where he is at work, I can't observe him. If I turn southward, I can't see him.

¹⁰ I can't find him because he knows the road I take. When he tests me, I'll come out as pure as gold.

¹¹ I have followed his footsteps closely. I have stayed on his path and did not turn from it.

¹² I have not left his commands behind. I have treasured his words in my heart.

¹³ "But God is one of a kind. Who can make him change his mind? He does whatever he wants!

¹⁴ He will carry out his orders concerning me as he does with so many other things.

¹⁵ That is why I'm terrified of him.
When I think of it, I'm afraid of him.

¹⁶ God has discouraged me. The
Almighty has filled me with terror.

¹⁷ But I am not silenced by the dark or
by the thick darkness that covers my
face.

24 ¹ "Why doesn't the Almighty set
aside times for punishment? Why
don't those who are close to him see his
days of judgment?"

² "People move boundary markers.
They steal flocks and tend them as
shepherds.

³ They drive away the orphan's donkey.
They take the widow's ox as security for
a loan.

⁴ They force needy people off the road.
All the poor people of the country go
into hiding.

⁵ Like wild donkeys in the desert, poor
people go out to do their work, looking

for food. The plains provide food for their children.

⁶ They harvest animal food in the field to feed themselves. They pick the leftover grapes in the wicked person's vineyard.

⁷ All night they lie naked without a covering from the cold.

⁸ They are drenched by the rainstorms in the mountains. They hug the rocks because they can't find shelter.

⁹ "People snatch the nursing orphan from a breast and take a poor woman's baby as security for a loan.

¹⁰ That is why the poor go around naked. They are hungry, yet they carry bundles of grain.

¹¹ They press out olive oil between rows of olive trees. They stomp on grapes in wine vats, yet they are thirsty.

¹² Those dying in the city groan.
Wounded people cry for help, but God
pays no attention to their prayers.

¹³ "Such people are among those who
rebel against the light. They are not
acquainted with its ways. They do not
stay on its paths.

¹⁴ At dawn murderers rise; they kill the
poor and needy. At night they become
thieves.

¹⁵ Adulterers watch for twilight. They
say, 'No one is watching us,' as they
cover their faces.

¹⁶ In the dark, they break into houses,
but by day they lock themselves in. They
do not even know the light,

¹⁷ because morning and deep darkness
are the same to them, because they
are familiar with the terrors of deep
darkness.

¹⁸ Such people are like scum on the
surface of the water. Their property is

cursed in the land. People do not travel the road that goes to their vineyards.

¹⁹ Just as drought and heat steal water from snow, so the grave steals people who sin.

²⁰ The womb forgets them. Worms feast on them. No one remembers them anymore, and wickedness is snapped like a twig.

²¹ These men take advantage of childless women. These men show no kindness to widows.

²² God will drag away these mighty men by his power. These people may prosper, but they will never feel secure about life.

²³ God may let them feel confident and self-reliant, but his eyes are on their ways.

²⁴ Such people may be prosperous for a little while, but then they're gone. They are brought down low and disappear like

everything else. They wither like heads of grain.

²⁵ "If it isn't so, who can prove I'm a liar and show that my words are worthless?"

25 ¹ Then Bildad from Shuah replied to Job,

² "Authority and terror belong to God. He establishes peace in his high places.

³ Is there any limit to the number of his troops? Is there anyone on whom his light does not rise?

⁴ How can a person be righteous to God? How can anyone born of a woman be pure?

⁵ Even the moon isn't bright, and the stars aren't pure in his sight.

⁶ How much less pure is a mortal—who is only a maggot—a descendant of Adam—who is only a worm!"

26 ¹ Then Job replied to his friends,
² "You have helped the person
who has no power and saved the arm
that isn't strong.

³ You have advised the person who
has no wisdom and offered so much
assistance.

⁴ To whom have you spoken these
words, and whose spirit has spoken
through you?

⁵ "The souls of the dead tremble
beneath the water, and so do the
creatures living there.

⁶ Sheol is naked in God's presence, and
Abaddon has no clothing.

⁷ "He stretches out his heavens over
empty space. He hangs the earth on
nothing whatsoever.

⁸ He holds the water in his thick clouds,
and the clouds don't even split under its
weight.

⁹ He covers his throne by spreading his cloud over it.

¹⁰ He marks the horizon on the surface of the water at the boundary where light meets dark.

¹¹ The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished when he yells at them.

¹² With his power he calmed the sea. With his insight he killed Rahab the sea monster.

¹³ With his wind the sky was cleared. With his hand he stabbed the fleeing snake.

¹⁴ "These are only glimpses of what he does. We only hear a whisper of him! Who can understand the thunder of his power?"

27 ¹ Job continued his poems and said,

² "I swear an oath by God, the one who has taken away my rights, by the Almighty, who has made my life bitter:

³ As long as there is one breath left in me and God's breath fills my nostrils,
⁴ my lips will not say anything wrong, and my tongue will not mumble anything deceitful.'

⁵ It's unthinkable for me to admit that you are right. Until I breathe my last breath, I will never give up my claim of integrity.

⁶ I cling to my righteousness and won't let go. My conscience won't accuse me as long as I live.

⁷ "Let my enemy be treated like wicked people. Let anyone who attacks me be treated like unrighteous people.

⁸ After all, what hope does the godless person have when he is cut off, when God takes away his life?

⁹ Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him?

¹⁰ Can he be happy with the Almighty? Can he call on God at all times?

¹¹ "I will teach you about God's power. I will not hide what the Almighty has done.

¹² Certainly, you have all seen it. Why then do you chatter on about such nonsense?

¹³ This is what God has waiting for the wicked person, the inheritance that tyrants receive from the Almighty:

¹⁴ If he has many children, swords will kill them, and his descendants won't have enough food.

¹⁵ Those who survive him will be buried by a plague, and their widows won't cry for them.

¹⁶ Though he collects silver like dust and piles up clothing like dirt,

¹⁷ righteous people will wear what he piles up, and the innocent will divide the silver among themselves.

¹⁸ He builds his house like a moth, like a shack that a watchman makes.

¹⁹ He may go to bed rich, but he'll never be rich again. When he opens his eyes, nothing will be left.

²⁰ Terrors overtake him like a flood. A windstorm snatches him away at night.

²¹ The east wind carries him away, and he's gone. It sweeps him from his place.

²² It hurls itself at him without mercy. He flees from its power.

²³ It claps its hands over him. It whistles at him from his own place.

28 ¹ "There is a place where silver is mined and a place where gold is refined.

² Iron is taken from the ground, and rocks are melted for their copper.

³ Humans bring an end to darkness there and search to the limit of the gloomy, pitch-black rock.

⁴ They open up a mineshaft far from civilization, where no one has set foot.

In this shaft men dangle and swing back and forth.

⁵ "Above the ground food grows, but beneath it the food decays as if it were burned by fire.

⁶ That place's stones are sapphire. Its dust contains gold.

⁷ No bird of prey knows the way to it. No hawk's eye has ever seen it.

⁸ No proud beast has ever walked on it. No ferocious lion has ever passed over it.

⁹ "Humans exert their power on the flinty rocks and overturn mountains at their base.

¹⁰ They cut out mineshafts in the rocks. Their eyes see every precious thing.

¹¹ They explore the sources of rivers so that they bring hidden treasures to light.

¹² "Where can wisdom be found?
Where does understanding live?

¹³ No mortal knows where it is. It cannot be found in this world of the living.

¹⁴ The deep ocean says, 'It isn't in me.' The sea says, 'It isn't with me.'

¹⁵ You cannot obtain it with solid gold or buy it for any amount of silver.

¹⁶ It can't be bought with the gold from Ophir or with precious onyx or sapphire.

¹⁷ Neither gold nor glass can equal its value. Nor can gold ornaments, jewels, or crystal

¹⁸ be exchanged for it. Wisdom is more valuable than gems.

¹⁹ Topaz from Ethiopia cannot equal its value. It cannot be bought for any amount of pure gold.

²⁰ "Where does wisdom come from? Where does understanding live?

²¹ It is hidden from the eyes of every living being, hidden even from the birds in the air.

²² Decay and Death say, 'We've heard a rumor about it.'

²³ "God understands the way to it. He knows where it lives

²⁴ because he can see to the ends of the earth and observe everything under heaven.

²⁵ When he gave the wind its force and measured the water in the sea,

²⁶ when he made rules for the rain and set paths for the thunderstorms,

²⁷ then he saw it and announced it. He confirmed it and examined it.

²⁸ So he told humans, 'The fear of the Lord is wisdom! To stay away from evil is understanding.'"

29 ¹ Job continued his poems and said,

² "If only my life could be like it used to be, in the days when God watched over me,

³ when he made his lamp shine on my head, when I walked through the dark in his light.

⁴ If only I were in the prime of my life again, when God was an adviser in my tent.

⁵ When the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me,

⁶ my steps were bathed in buttermilk, and the rocks poured streams of olive oil on me.

⁷ When I went through the city gate and took my seat in the town square,

⁸ young men saw me and kept out of sight. Old men stood up straight out of respect for me.

⁹ Princes held back their words and put their hands over their mouths.

¹⁰ The voices of nobles were hushed, and their tongues stuck to the roofs of their mouths.

¹¹ "Any ears that heard me blessed me.
Any eyes that saw me spoke well of me,

¹² because I rescued the poor who
called for help and the orphans who had
no one to help them.

¹³ I received a blessing from the dying. I
made the widow's heart sing for joy.

¹⁴ I put on righteousness, and it was my
clothing. I practiced justice, and it was
my robe and my turban.

¹⁵ I was eyes for the blind person. I was
feet for the lame person.

¹⁶ I was father to the needy. I carefully
investigated cases brought by strangers.

¹⁷ I broke the teeth of the wicked
person and made him drop the prey out
of his mouth.

¹⁸ "I thought, 'I may die in my own
house, but I will make my days as
numerous as the sand.

¹⁹ My roots will grow toward the water,
and dew will lie on my branches all night.

²⁰ My power will be fresh every day, and the bow in my hand will remain new.'

²¹ "People listened to me eagerly, quietly waiting for my advice.

²² After I had spoken, they wouldn't speak again. After all, my words fell gently on them.

²³ They were as eager to hear me as they were for rain. They opened their mouths wide as if waiting for a spring shower.

²⁴ When I smiled at them, they could hardly believe it, but the expression on my face did not change.

²⁵ I decided how they should live. I sat as their leader. I lived like a king among his troops, like one who comforts mourners.

30¹ "But now those who are younger than I am laugh at me. I

didn't think their fathers were fit to sit with the dogs of my flock.

² Of what use to me was the strength of their hands? Their strength is gone.

³ Shriveled up from need and hunger, they gnaw at the dry and barren ground during the night.

⁴ They pick saltwort from the underbrush, and the roots of the broom plant are their food.

⁵ They are driven from the community. People shout at them in the same way they shout at thieves.

⁶ They have to live in dry riverbeds, in holes in the ground, and among rocks.

⁷ They howl in bushes and huddle together under thornbushes.

⁸ Godless fools and worthless people are forced out of the land with whips.

⁹ "And now they make fun of me with songs. I have become a joke to them.

¹⁰ Since they consider me disgusting, they keep their distance from me and don't hesitate to spit in my face.

¹¹ Because God has untied my cord and has made me suffer, they are no longer restrained in my presence.

¹² They have attacked me on my right side like a mob. They trip my feet and then prepare ways to destroy me.

¹³ Yes, they remove all traces of my path in order to destroy me. No one is there to help me against them.

¹⁴ They come through a wide hole in the wall. They crawl through the ruins.

¹⁵ Terrors are directed toward me. They blow away my dignity like the wind. My prosperity vanishes like a cloud.

¹⁶ "Now my life is pouring out of me. Days of suffering seize me.

¹⁷ At night God pierces my bones. My body doesn't rest.

¹⁸ With great strength he grabs my clothes. He seizes me by the collar of my robe.

¹⁹ He throws me into the dirt so that I become like dust and ashes.

²⁰ "I call to you for help, but you don't answer me. I stand up, but you just look at me.

²¹ You have begun to treat me cruelly. With your mighty hand you assault me.

²² You pick me up and let the wind carry me away. You toss me around with a storm.

²³ I know you will lead me to death, to the dwelling place appointed for all living beings.

²⁴ "But God doesn't stretch out his hand against one who is ruined when that person calls for help in his disaster.

²⁵ Didn't I cry for the person whose days were difficult? Didn't my soul grieve for the poor?

²⁶ When I waited for good, evil came.
When I looked for light, darkness came.

²⁷ My insides are churning and won't calm down. Days of misery are ahead of me.

²⁸ I walk in the dark without the sun. I stand up in public and call for help.

²⁹ I'm a brother to jackals and a companion of ostriches.

³⁰ My skin turns dark and peels. My body burns with fever.

³¹ So my lyre is used for mourning and my flute for loud weeping.

31 ¹ "I have made an agreement with my eyes. Then how can I look with lust at a virgin?

² What would God above do to me? What would be my inheritance from the Almighty on high?

³ Aren't there catastrophes for wicked people and disasters for those who do wrong?

⁴ Doesn't he see my ways and count all my steps?

⁵ "If I have walked with lies or my feet have run after deception,

⁶ then let God weigh me on honest scales, and he will know I have integrity.

⁷ "If my steps have left the proper path, or my heart has followed the desire of my eyes, or my hands are stained with sin,

⁸ then let someone else eat what I have planted, and let my crops be uprooted.

⁹ "If I have been seduced by a woman or I have secretly waited near my neighbor's door,

¹⁰ then let my wife grind for another man, and let other men kneel over her.

¹¹ That would be a scandal, and that would be a criminal offense.

¹² It would be a fire that burns even in Abaddon. It would uproot my entire harvest.

¹³ "If I have abused the rights of my servants, male or female, when they have disagreed with me,

¹⁴ then what could I do if God rises up? If he examines me, how could I answer him?

¹⁵ Didn't he who made me in my mother's belly make them? Didn't the same God form us in the womb?

¹⁶ "If I have refused the requests of the poor or made a widow's eyes stop looking for help,

¹⁷ or have eaten my food alone without letting the orphan eat any of it....

¹⁸ (From my youth the orphan grew up with me as though I were his father, and from my birth I treated the widow kindly.)

¹⁹ If I have seen anyone die because he had no clothes or a poor person going naked....

²⁰ (If his body didn't bless me, or the wool from my sheep didn't keep him warm....)

²¹ If I have shaken my fist at an orphan because I knew that others would back me up in court,

²² then let my shoulder fall out of its socket, and let my arm be broken at the elbow.

²³ "A disaster from God terrifies me. In the presence of his majesty I can do nothing.

²⁴ "If I put my confidence in gold or said to fine gold, 'I trust you'....

²⁵ If I enjoyed being very rich because my hand had found great wealth....

²⁶ If I saw the light shine or the moon move along in its splendor

²⁷ so that my heart was secretly tempted, and I threw them a kiss with my hand,

²⁸ then that, too, would be a criminal offense, and I would have denied God above.

²⁹ "If I enjoyed the ruin of my enemy or celebrated when harm came to him

³⁰ (even though I didn't speak sinfully by calling down a curse on his life)....

³¹ "If the people who were in my tent had said, 'We wish we had never filled our stomachs with his food'....

³² (The visitor never spent the night outside, because I opened my door to the traveler.)

³³ "If I have covered my disobedience like Adam and kept my sin to myself,

³⁴ because I dreaded the large, noisy crowd and because the contempt of the local mobs terrified me so that I kept quiet and didn't go outside....

³⁵ "If only I had someone who would listen to me! Look, here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me. Let the

prosecutor write his complaint on a scroll.

³⁶ I would certainly carry it on my shoulder and place it on my head like a crown.

³⁷ I would tell him the number of my steps and approach him like a prince.

³⁸ "If my land has cried out against me, and its furrows have wept....

³⁹ If I have eaten its produce without paying for it and made its owners breathe their last,

⁴⁰ then let it grow thistles instead of wheat, and foul-smelling weeds instead of barley." This is the end of Job's words.

32 ¹ These three men stopped answering Job because Job thought he was righteous.

² Then Elihu, son of Barachel, a descendant of Buz from the family of Ram, became very angry with Job

because Job thought he was more righteous than God.

³ Elihu was also very angry with Job's three friends because they had found no answer. They made it look as if God were wrong.

⁴ Elihu waited as they spoke to Job because they were older than he was.

⁵ When Elihu saw that the three men had no further responses, he became very angry.

⁶ So Elihu, son of Barachel, the descendant of Buz, replied to Job, "I am young, and you are old. That's why I refrained from speaking and was afraid to tell you what I know.

⁷ I thought, 'Age should speak, and experience should teach wisdom.'

⁸ However, there is in humans a Spirit, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding.

⁹ People do not become wise merely because they live long. They don't understand what justice is merely because they're old.

¹⁰ "That is why I say, 'Listen to me! Let me tell you what I know.'

¹¹ I waited for you to speak. I listened for you to share your understanding until you could find the right words.

¹² I've paid close attention to you, but none of you refuted Job. None of you has an answer to what he says.

¹³ So don't say, 'We've found wisdom. Let God, not humans, defeat him.'

¹⁴ Job did not choose his words to refute me, so I won't answer him with your speeches.

¹⁵ "Job's friends have been overwhelmed and don't have any more answers. They don't have another word to say.

¹⁶ Should I wait because they don't speak, because they stand there and don't have any more answers?

¹⁷ "I'll give my answer. I'll tell you what I know.

¹⁸ I'm full of words. The Spirit within me forces me to speak.

¹⁹ My belly is like a bottle of wine that has not been opened, like new wineskins that are ready to burst.

²⁰ I must speak to get relief. I must open my mouth and answer.

²¹ I won't be partial toward anyone or flatter anyone.

²² I don't know how to flatter. If I did, my maker would soon carry me away.

33 ¹ "Please, Job, listen to my words and consider everything I say.

² I've opened my mouth. The words are on the tip of my tongue.

³ My words are straight from the heart, and I sincerely speak the knowledge that is on my lips.

⁴ "God's Spirit has made me. The breath of the Almighty gives me life.

⁵ Answer me if you can. Present your case to me, and take your stand.

⁶ Indeed, I stand in front of God as you do. I, too, was formed from a piece of clay.

⁷ You certainly don't need to be terrified of me. I won't put too much pressure on you.

⁸ "But you spoke directly to me, and I listened to your words.

⁹ You said, 'I'm pure—without any rebellious acts against God. I'm clean; I have no sin.

¹⁰ God is only looking for an excuse to attack me. He considers me his enemy.

¹¹ He puts my feet in the stocks and watches all my paths.'

¹² You aren't right about this! I've got an answer for you: God is greater than any mortal.

¹³ Why do you quarrel with him since he doesn't answer any questions?

¹⁴ "God speaks in one way, even in two ways without people noticing it:

¹⁵ In a dream, a prophetic vision at night, when people fall into a deep sleep, when they sleep on their beds,

¹⁶ he opens people's ears and terrifies them with warnings.

¹⁷ He warns them to turn away from doing wrong and to stop being arrogant.

¹⁸ He keeps their souls from the pit and their lives from crossing the River of Death.

¹⁹ In pain on their sickbeds, they are disciplined with endless aching in their bones

²⁰ so that their whole being hates food and they lose their appetite for a delicious meal.

²¹ Their flesh becomes so thin that it can't be seen. Their bones, not seen before, will be exposed.

²² Their souls approach the pit. Their lives come close to those already dead.

²³ "If they have a messenger for them, a spokesman, one in a thousand, to tell people what is right for them,

²⁴ then he will have pity on them and say, 'Free them from going into the pit. I have found a ransom.'

²⁵ Then their flesh will become softer than a child's. They will go back to the days of their youth.

²⁶ They will pray to God, who will be pleased with them. They will see God's face and shout for joy as he restores their righteousness.

²⁷ Each one sings in front of other people and says, 'I sinned and did wrong instead of what was right, and it did me no good.

²⁸ The messenger has freed my soul from going into the pit, and my life will see the light.'

²⁹ Truly, God does all this two or three times with people

³⁰ to turn their souls away from the pit and to enlighten them with the light of life.

³¹ "Pay attention, Job! Listen to me! Keep quiet, and let me speak.

³² If you have a response, answer me. Speak, because I'd be happy if you were right.

³³ If not, you listen to me. Keep quiet, and I'll teach you wisdom."

34 ¹ Elihu continued to speak to Job and his friends,

² "Listen to my words, you wise men.
Open your ears to me, you intelligent
men.

³ The ear tests words like the tongue
tastes food.

⁴ Let's decide for ourselves what is right
and agree among ourselves as to what is
good,

⁵ because Job has said, 'I'm righteous,
but God has taken away my rights.

⁶ I'm considered a liar in spite of
my rights. I've been wounded by a
deadly arrow, though I haven't been
disobedient.'

⁷ What person is like Job, who drinks
scorn like water,

⁸ who travels with troublemakers and
associates with evil people?

⁹ He says, 'It doesn't do any good to try
to please God.'

¹⁰ "You people who have understanding,
listen to me. It is unthinkable that God

would ever do evil or that the Almighty would ever do wicked things.

¹¹ God will repay humanity for what it has done and will give each person what he deserves.

¹² Certainly, God will never do anything evil, and the Almighty will never pervert justice.

¹³ Who put him in charge of the earth? Who appointed him to be over the whole world?

¹⁴ If he thought only of himself and withdrew his Spirit and his breath,

¹⁵ all living beings would die together, and humanity would return to dust.

¹⁶ "If you understand, listen to this. Open your ears to my words!

¹⁷ Should anyone who hates justice be allowed to govern? Will you condemn the one who is righteous and mighty?

¹⁸ Should anyone even say to a king, 'You good-for-nothing scoundrel!' or to nobles, 'You wicked people!'

¹⁹ The one who is righteous and mighty does not grant special favors to princes or prefer important people over poor people because his hands made them all.

²⁰ They die suddenly in the middle of the night. People have seizures and pass away. Mighty people are taken away but not by human hands.

²¹ God's eyes are on a person's ways. He sees all his steps.

²² There's no darkness or deep shadow where troublemakers can hide.

²³ He doesn't have to set a time for a person in order to bring him to divine judgment.

²⁴ He breaks mighty people into pieces without examining them and puts others in their places.

²⁵ He knows what they do, so he overthrows them at night, and they're crushed.

²⁶ In return for their evil, he strikes them in public,

²⁷ because they turned away from following him and didn't consider any of his ways.

²⁸ They forced the poor to cry out to him, and he hears the cry of those who suffer.

²⁹ If he keeps quiet, who can condemn him? If he hides his face, who can see him whether it is a nation or a single person?

³⁰ He does this so that godless people cannot rule and so that they cannot trap people.

³¹ "But suppose such a person says to God, 'I am guilty, I will stop my immoral behavior.

³² Teach me what I cannot see. If I've done wrong, I won't do it again.'

³³ Should God reward you on your own terms since you have rejected his? You must choose, not I. Tell me what you know. Speak!

³⁴ "People of understanding, the wise people who listen to me, will say,

³⁵ 'Job speaks without knowledge. His words show no insight.'

³⁶ "My Father, let Job be thoroughly tested for giving answers like wicked people do.

³⁷ He adds disobedience to his sin. He claps his hands to insult us. He multiplies his words against God."

35 ¹ Elihu continued to speak to Job and his friends,

² "Do you think this is right when you say, 'My case is more just than God's,'

³ when you ask, 'What benefit is it to you?' and, 'What would I gain by sinning?'

⁴ I will answer you and your friends.

⁵ "Look at the heavens and see. Observe the clouds high above you.

⁶ If you've sinned, what effect can you have on God? If you've done many wrongs, what can you do to him?

⁷ If you're righteous, what can you give him, or what can he get from you?

⁸ Your wickedness affects only someone like yourself. Your righteousness affects only the descendants of Adam.

⁹ The weight of oppression makes them cry out. The power of mighty people makes them call for help.

¹⁰ But no one asks, 'Where is God, my Creator, who inspires songs in the night,

¹¹ who teaches us more than he teaches the animals of the earth, who makes us wiser than the birds in the sky?'

¹² Then they cry out, but he doesn't answer them because of the arrogance of those evil people.

¹³ "Surely, God doesn't listen to idle complaints. The Almighty doesn't even pay attention to them.

¹⁴ Although you say that you pay attention to him, your case is in front of him, but you'll have to wait for him.

¹⁵ And now you say that his anger doesn't punish anyone and he isn't too concerned about evil.

¹⁶ Job opens his mouth for no good reason and talks a lot without having any knowledge."

36 ¹ Elihu continued to speak to Job,
² "Be patient with me a little longer, and I will show you that there is more to be said in God's defense.

³ I will get my knowledge from far away and prove that my Creator is fair.

⁴ Certainly, my words are not lies. The one who knows everything is speaking with you.

⁵ "Certainly, God is mighty. He doesn't despise anyone. He is mighty and brave.

⁶ He doesn't allow the wicked person to live. He grants justice to those who are oppressed.

⁷ He doesn't take his eyes off righteous people. He seats them on thrones with kings to honor them forever.

⁸ However, if righteous people are bound in chains and tangled in ropes of misery,

⁹ he tells them what they've done wrong and that they've behaved arrogantly.

¹⁰ He makes them listen to his warning and orders them to turn away from wrong.

¹¹ "If righteous people listen and serve him, they will live out their days in prosperity and their years in comfort.

¹² But if they don't listen, they will cross the River of Death and die like those who have no knowledge.

¹³ But those who have godless hearts remain angry. They don't even call for help when he chains them up.

¹⁴ They die while they're young, or they live on as male prostitutes in the temples of idols.

¹⁵ He rescues suffering people through their suffering, and he opens their ears through distress.

¹⁶ "Yes, he lured you away from the jaws of trouble into an open area where you were not restrained, and your table was covered with rich foods.

¹⁷ But you are given the judgment evil people deserve. A fair judgment will be upheld.

¹⁸ Be careful that you are not led astray with riches. Don't let a large bribe turn you to evil ways.

¹⁹ Will your riches save you from having to suffer? Will all your mighty strength help you?

²⁰ Don't look forward to the night, when people disappear from their places.

²¹ Be careful! Don't turn to evil, because you have chosen evil instead of suffering.

²² "God does great things by his power. Is there any teacher like him?

²³ Who can tell him which way he should go? Who can say to him, 'You did wrong'?

²⁴ Remember that you should praise his work. People have sung about it.

²⁵ Every person has seen it. Mortals have looked at it from a distance.

²⁶ "Certainly, God is so great that he is beyond our understanding. The number of his years cannot be counted.

²⁷ He collects drops of water. He distills rain from his mist,

²⁸ which then drips from the clouds. It pours down on many people.

²⁹ Can anyone really understand how clouds spread out or how he thunders from his dwelling place?

³⁰ Look, he scatters his flashes of lightning around him and covers the depths of the sea.

³¹ This is how he uses the rains to provide for people and to give them more than enough food.

³² He fills his hands with lightning and orders it to hit the target.

³³ The thunder announces his coming. The storm announces his angry wrath.

37 ¹ "My heart pounds because of this and jumps out of its place.

² Listen! Listen to the roar of God's voice, to the rumbling that comes from his mouth.

³ He flashes his lightning everywhere under heaven. His light flashes to the ends of the earth.

⁴ It is followed by the roar of his voice. He thunders with his majestic voice. He doesn't hold the lightning back when his thunder is heard.

⁵ God's voice thunders in miraculous ways. It does great things that we cannot understand.

⁶ "He says to the snow, 'Fall to the ground,' and to the pouring rain, 'Rain harder!'

⁷ He makes it impossible to do anything so that people will recognize his work.

⁸ Animals go into their dens and stay in their lairs.

⁹ A storm comes out of its chamber. It is cold because of the strong winds.

¹⁰ God's breath produces ice, and the seas freeze over.

¹¹ Yes, he loads the thick clouds with moisture and scatters his lightning from the clouds.

¹² He guides the clouds as they churn round and round over the face of the inhabited earth to do everything he orders them.

¹³ Whether for discipline, or for the good of his earth, or out of mercy, he makes the storm appear.

¹⁴ "Open your ears to this, Job. Stop and consider God's miracles.

¹⁵ Do you know how God controls them and makes the lightning flash from his clouds?

¹⁶ Do you know how the clouds drift (these are the miracles of the one who knows everything),

¹⁷ you whose clothes are hot and sweaty, when the earth is calm under a south wind?

¹⁸ Can you stretch out the skies with him and make them as firm as a mirror made of metal?

¹⁹ Teach us what we should say to him. We are unable to prepare a case because of darkness.

²⁰ Should he be told that I want to speak? Can a person speak when he is confused?

²¹ People can't look at the sun when it's bright among the clouds or after the wind has blown and cleared those clouds away.

²² A golden light comes from the north. A terrifying majesty is around God.

²³ The Almighty, whom we can't reach, is great in power and judgment, has more than enough righteousness, and does not oppress.

²⁴ That is why people should fear him. He does not respect those who think they're wise."

38 ¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm.

² "Who is this that belittles my advice with words that do not show any knowledge about it?

³ Brace yourself like a man! I will ask you, and you will teach me.

⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have such insight.

⁵ Who determined its dimensions? Certainly, you know! Who stretched a measuring line over it?

⁶ On what were its footings sunk? Who laid its cornerstone

⁷ when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

⁸ "Who shut the sea behind gates when it burst through and came out of the womb,

⁹ when I clothed it with clouds and wrapped it up in dark clouds,

¹⁰ when I set a limit for it and put up bars and gates,

¹¹ when I said, 'You may come this far but no farther. Here your proud waves will stop'?

¹² "Have you ever given orders to the morning or assigned a place for the dawn

¹³ so that it could grab the earth by its edges and shake wicked people out of it?

¹⁴ The earth changes like clay stamped by a seal, and parts of it stand out like folds in clothing.

¹⁵ Wicked people are deprived of their light, and an arm raised in victory is broken.

¹⁶ Have you gone to the springs in the sea or walked through the valleys of the ocean depths?

¹⁷ Have the gateways to death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gateways to total darkness?

¹⁸ Have you even considered how wide the earth is? Tell me, if you know all of this!

¹⁹ "What is the way to the place where light lives? Where is the home of darkness

²⁰ so that you may lead it to its territory, so that you may know the path to its home?

²¹ You must know because you were born then and have lived such a long time!

²² Have you been to the warehouses where snow is stored or seen the warehouses for hail

²³ that I have stored up for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?

²⁴ Which is the way to the place where light is scattered and the east wind is spread across the earth?

²⁵ "Who made a channel for the flooding rains and a path for the thunderstorms

²⁶ to bring rain on a land where no one lives, on a desert where there are no humans,

²⁷ to saturate the desolate wasteland in order to make it sprout with grass?

²⁸ Does the rain have a father? Who gave birth to the dewdrops?

²⁹ From whose womb came the ice, and who has given birth to the frost in the air?

³⁰ The water hardens like a stone, and the surface of the ocean freezes over.

³¹ "Can you connect the chains of the constellation Pleiades or untie the ropes of Orion?

³² Can you bring out the constellations at the right time or guide Ursa Major with its cubs?

³³ Do you know the laws of the sky or make them rule the earth?

³⁴ Can you call to the clouds and have a flood of water cover you?

³⁵ Can you send lightning flashes so that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'?

³⁶ Who put wisdom in the heart or gave understanding to the mind?

³⁷ Who is wise enough to count the clouds or pour out the water jars of heaven

³⁸ when the dirt hardens into clumps and the soil clings together?

³⁹ "Can you hunt prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of her cubs

⁴⁰ as they crouch in their dens and lie ready to ambush from their lairs?

⁴¹ "Who provides food for the crow when its young ones cry to God and wander around in need of food?

39 ¹ "Do you know the time when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch the does when they are in labor?

² Can you count the months they are pregnant or know the time when they'll give birth?

³ They kneel down to give birth and deliver their young. Then the pain of giving birth is over.

⁴ Their young are healthy and grow up in the wild. They leave and don't come back.

⁵ "Who lets the wild donkey go free? Who unties the ropes of the wild donkey?

⁶ I gave it the desert to live in and the salt flats as its dwelling place.

⁷ It laughs at the noise of the city and doesn't even listen to the shouting of its master.

⁸ It explores the mountains for its pasture and looks for anything green.

⁹ "Will the wild ox agree to serve you, or will it stay at night beside your feeding trough?

¹⁰ Can you guide a wild ox in a furrow, or will it plow the valleys behind you?

¹¹ Can you trust it just because it's so strong or leave your labor to it?

¹² Can you rely on it to bring your grain back and take it to your threshing floor?

¹³ "Does the ostrich flap its wings in joy, or do its wings lack feathers?

¹⁴ It lays its eggs on the ground and warms them in the dust.

¹⁵ It forgets that a foot may crush them or a wild animal may trample them.

¹⁶ It acts harshly toward its young as if they weren't its own. It is not afraid that its work is for nothing

¹⁷ because God has deprived it of wisdom and did not give it any understanding.

¹⁸ It laughs at the horse and its rider when it gets up to flee.

¹⁹ "Can you give strength to a horse or dress its neck with a flowing mane?

²⁰ Can you make it leap like a locust, when its snorting causes terror?

²¹ It paws in strength and finds joy in its power. It charges into battle.

²² It laughs at fear, is afraid of nothing, and doesn't back away from swords.

²³ A quiver of arrows rattles on it along with the flashing spear and javelin.

²⁴ Anxious and excited, the horse eats up the ground and doesn't trust the sound of the ram's horn.

²⁵ As often as the horn sounds, the horse says, 'Aha!' and it smells the battle far away—the thundering orders of the captains and the battle cries.

²⁶ "Does your understanding make a bird of prey fly and spread its wings toward the south?

²⁷ Is it by your order that the eagle flies high and makes its nest on the heights?

²⁸ It perches for the night on a cliff. Its fortress is on a jagged peak.

²⁹ From there it seeks food, and its eyes see it from far away.

³⁰ Its young ones feed on blood. It is found wherever there are dead bodies."

40 ¹ The LORD responded to Job,
² "Will the person who finds fault with the Almighty correct him? Will the person who argues with God answer him?"

³ Job answered the LORD,

⁴ "I'm so insignificant. How can I answer you? I will put my hand over my mouth.

⁵ I spoke once, but I can't answer—twice, but not again."

⁶ Then the LORD responded to Job out of a storm,

⁷ "Brace yourself like a man! I will ask you, and you will teach me.

⁸ "Would you undo my justice? Would you condemn me so that you can be righteous?

⁹ Do you have power like God's? Can you thunder with a voice like his?

¹⁰ Then dress yourself in majesty and dignity. Clothe yourself in splendor and glory.

¹¹ Unleash your outbursts of anger. Look at all who are arrogant, and put them down.

¹² Look at all who are arrogant, and humble them. Crush wicked people wherever they are.

¹³ Hide them completely in the dust,
and cover their faces in the hidden place.

¹⁴ Then even I will praise you because
your right hand can save you.

¹⁵ "Look at Behemoth, which I made
along with you. It eats grass as cattle do.

¹⁶ Look at the strength in its back
muscles, the power in its stomach
muscles.

¹⁷ It makes its tail stiff like a cedar. The
ligaments of its thighs are intertwined.

¹⁸ Its bones are bronze tubes. They are
like iron bars.

¹⁹ Behemoth is the first of God's
conquests. Its maker approaches it with
his sword.

²⁰ The hills bring it food, and all the wild
animals play there.

²¹ It lies down under the lotus plants in
a hiding place among reeds and swamps.

²² Lotus plants provide it with cover.
Poplars by the stream surround it.

²³ Though the river flows powerfully against it, it's not alarmed. It's confident even when the Jordan rushes against its mouth.

²⁴ Can anyone blind its eyes or pierce its nose with snares?

41 ¹ "Can you pull Leviathan out of the water with a fishhook or tie its tongue down with a rope?

² Can you put a ring through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook?

³ Will it plead with you for mercy or speak tenderly to you?

⁴ Will it make an agreement with you so that you can take it as your permanent slave?

⁵ Can you play with it like a bird or keep it on a leash for your girls?

⁶ Will traders bargain over it and divide it among the merchants?

⁷ Can you fill its hide with harpoons or its head with fishing spears?

⁸ Lay your hand on it. Think of the struggle! Don't do it again!

⁹ Certainly, any hope of defeating it is a false hope. Doesn't the sight of it overwhelm you?

¹⁰ No one is brave enough to provoke Leviathan. Then who can stand in front of me?

¹¹ Who can confront me that I should repay him? Everything under heaven belongs to me!

¹² "I will not be silent about Leviathan's limbs, its strength, or its graceful form.

¹³ Who can skin its hide? Who can approach it with a harness?

¹⁴ Who can open its closed mouth? Its teeth are surrounded by terror.

¹⁵ Its back has rows of scales that are tightly sealed.

¹⁶ One is so close to the other that there is no space between them.

¹⁷ Each is joined to the other. They are locked together and inseparable.

¹⁸ When Leviathan sneezes, it gives out a flash of light. Its eyes are like the first rays of the dawn.

¹⁹ Flames shoot from its mouth. Sparks of fire fly from it.

²⁰ Smoke comes from its nostrils like a boiling pot heated over brushwood.

²¹ Its breath sets coals on fire, and a flame pours from its mouth.

²² Strength resides in its neck, and power dances in front of it.

²³ The folds of its flesh stick to each other. They are solid and cannot be moved.

²⁴ Its chest is solid like a rock, solid like a millstone.

²⁵ "The mighty are afraid when Leviathan rises. Broken down, they draw back.

²⁶ A sword may strike it but not pierce it. Neither will a spear, lance, or dart.

²⁷ It considers iron to be like straw and bronze to be like rotten wood.

²⁸ An arrow won't make it run away. Stones from a sling turn to dust against it.

²⁹ It considers clubs to be like stubble, and it laughs at a rattling javelin.

³⁰ Its underside is like sharp pieces of broken pottery. It stretches out like a threshing sledge on the mud.

³¹ It makes the deep sea boil like a pot. It stirs up the ocean like a boiling kettle.

³² It leaves a shining path behind it so that the sea appears to have silvery hair.

³³ Nothing on land can compare to it. It was made fearless.

³⁴ It looks down on all high things. It is king of everyone who is arrogant."

42 ¹ Then Job answered the LORD,
² "I know that you can do everything and that your plans are unstoppable.

³ "You said, 'Who is this that belittles my advice without having any knowledge about it?' Yes, I have stated things I didn't understand, things too mysterious for me to know.

⁴ "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak. I will ask you, and you will teach me.'

⁵ I had heard about you with my own ears, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

⁶ That is why I take back what I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show that I am sorry."

⁷ After the LORD had said those things to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz from Teman, "I'm very angry with you and your two friends because you didn't

Speak what is right about me as my servant Job has done.

⁸ So take seven young bulls and seven rams. Go to my servant Job, and make a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you. Then I will accept his prayer not to treat you as godless fools. After all, you didn't speak what is right about me as my servant Job has done."

⁹ Then Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah, and Zophar of Naama went and did what the LORD had told them to do. And the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

¹⁰ After Job prayed for his friends, the LORD restored Job's prosperity and gave him twice as much as he had before.

¹¹ Then all his brothers and sisters and everyone who had previously known him came to him. They ate with him at his house, sympathized with him, and comforted him for all the evil the LORD

had brought to him. Each one gave him some money and a gold ring.

¹² The LORD blessed the latter years of Job's life more than the earlier years. He had 14,000 sheep and goats, 6,000 camels, 2,000 oxen, and 1,000 donkeys.

¹³ He also had seven sons and three daughters.

¹⁴ He named the first daughter Jemimah, the second Cassia, and the third Keren Happuch.

¹⁵ Nowhere in the whole country could be found women who were as beautiful as Job's daughters. Their father gave them and their brothers an inheritance.

¹⁶ Job lived 140 years after this. He saw his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

¹⁷ Then at a very old age, Job died.

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GOD'S WORD to the Nations

P.O. Box 30699

Cleveland, Ohio 44130-0699

Call: 1-877-GODSWORD

E-mail: bible_at_godsword.org

Web Site: <http://www.godsword.org/>